



REPTILE & AMPHIBIAN STUDY

Merit Badge Requirements

- 1) Describe the identifying characteristics of six species of reptiles and four species of amphibians found in the United States. For any four of these, make sketches from your own observations or take photographs. Show markings, color patterns, or other characteristics that are important in the identification of each of the four species. Discuss the habits and habitats of all ten species.
- 2) Discuss with your merit badge counselor the approximate number of species and general geographic distribution of reptiles and amphibians in the United States. Prepare a list of the most common species found in your local area or state.
- 3) Describe the main differences between:
 - A) Amphibians and reptiles.
 - B) Alligators and crocodiles.
 - C) Toads and frogs.
 - D) Salamanders and lizards.
 - E) Snakes and lizards.
- 4) Explain how reptiles and amphibians are an important component of the natural environment. List four species that are officially protected by the federal government or state you live in, and tell why each is protected. List three species of reptiles and three species of amphibians found in your local area that are not protected. Discuss the food habits of all ten species.
- 5) Describe how reptiles and amphibians reproduce.
- 6) From observation, describe how snakes move forward. Describe the functions of the muscles, ribs, and belly plates.
- 7) Describe in detail six venomous snakes and the one venomous lizard found in the United States. Describe their habits and geographic range. Tell what you should do in case of a bite by a venomous species.
- 8) Do ONE of the following:
 - A) Maintain one or more reptiles or amphibians for at least a month. Record food accepted, eating methods, changes in coloration, shedding of skins, and general habits; or keep the eggs of a reptile from the time of laying until hatching; or keep the eggs of an amphibian from the time of laying until their transformation into tadpoles (frogs) or larvae (salamanders).
 - B) Choose a reptile or amphibian that you can observe at a local zoo, aquarium, nature center, or other such exhibit (such as your classroom or school). Study the specimen weekly for a period of three months. At each visit, sketch the specimen in its captive habitat and note any changes in its coloration, shedding of skins, and general habits and behavior. Find out, either from information you locate on your own or by talking to the caretaker, what this species eats and what are its native habitat and home range, preferred climate, average life expectancy, and natural predators. Also identify any human caused threats to its population and any laws that protect the species and its habitat. After the observation period, share what you have learned with your counselor.
- 9) Do TWO of the following:
 - A) Identify at night three kinds of toads or frogs by their voices. Imitate the song of each for your counselor. Stalk each with a flashlight and discover how each sings and from where.
 - B) Identify by sight eight species of reptiles or amphibians.
 - C) Using visual aids, give a brief talk to a small group on three different reptiles and amphibians.
- 10) Tell five superstitions or false beliefs about reptiles and amphibians and give a correct explanation for each. Give seven examples of unusual behavior or other true facts about reptiles and amphibians.

NOTE: Scouts must not use venomous reptiles in fulfilling requirements 8a. Species listed by federal or state law as endangered, protected, or threatened must not be used as live specimens in completing requirements 8a unless official permission has been given. In most cases all specimens should be returned to the wild at the location of capture after the requirement has been met. Check with your merit badge counselor for those instances where the return of these specimens would not be appropriate.

Requirement 1

Describe the identifying characteristics of six species of reptiles and four species of amphibians found in the United States. Under the name and description of each, tell about the habits and habitats of all ten species.

Reptile Name: _____

Habitat: _____

Identifying Characteristics: _____

Habits: _____

Reptile Name: _____

Habitat: _____

Identifying Characteristics: _____

Habits: _____

Reptile Name: _____

Habitat: _____

Identifying Characteristics: _____

Habits: _____

Reptile Name: _____

Habitat: _____

Identifying Characteristics: _____

Habits: _____

Reptile Name: _____

Habitat: _____

Identifying Characteristics: _____

Habits: _____

Reptile Name: _____

Habitat: _____

Identifying Characteristics: _____

Habits: _____

Scout Name: _____ Unit #: _____ Date: _____

Amphibian Name: _____

Habitat: _____

Identifying Characteristics: _____

Habits: _____

Amphibian Name: _____

Habitat: _____

Identifying Characteristics: _____

Habits: _____

Amphibian Name: _____

Habitat: _____

Identifying Characteristics: _____

Habits: _____

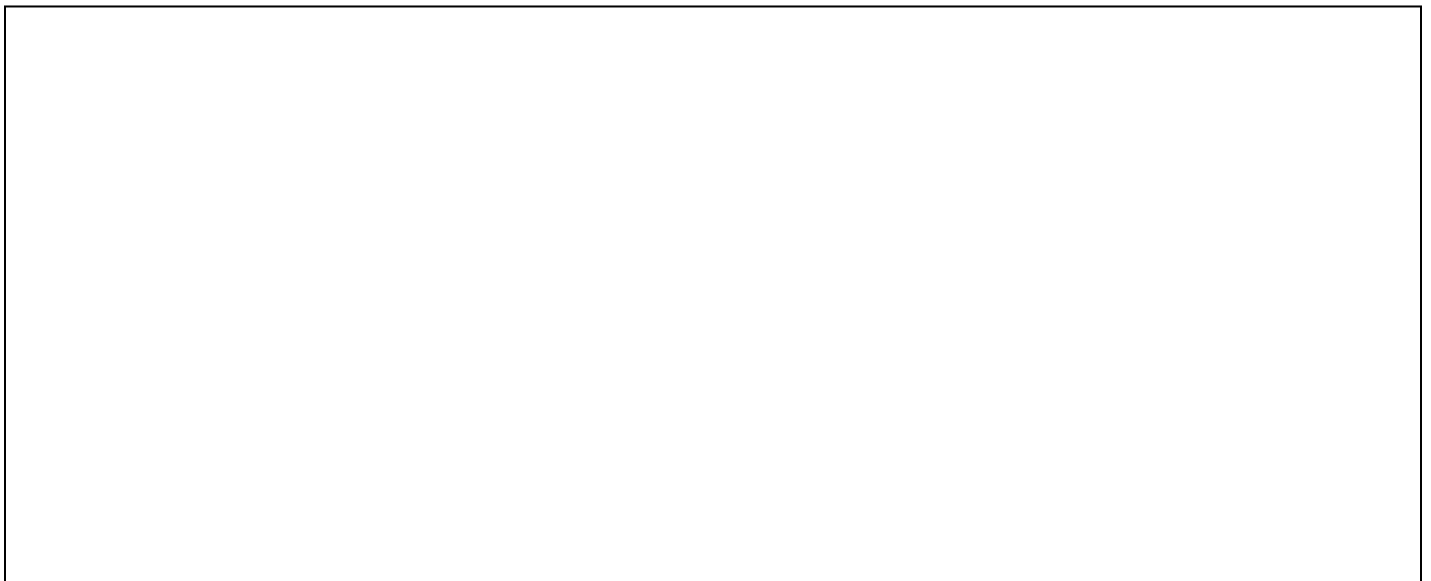
Amphibian Name: _____

Habitat: _____

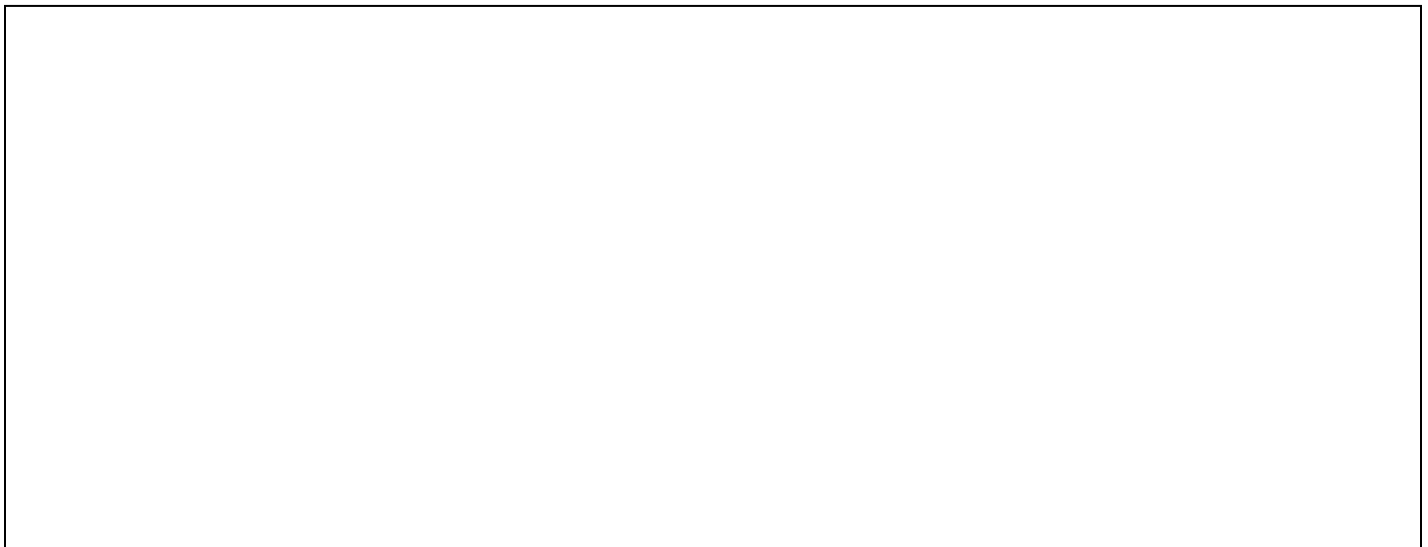
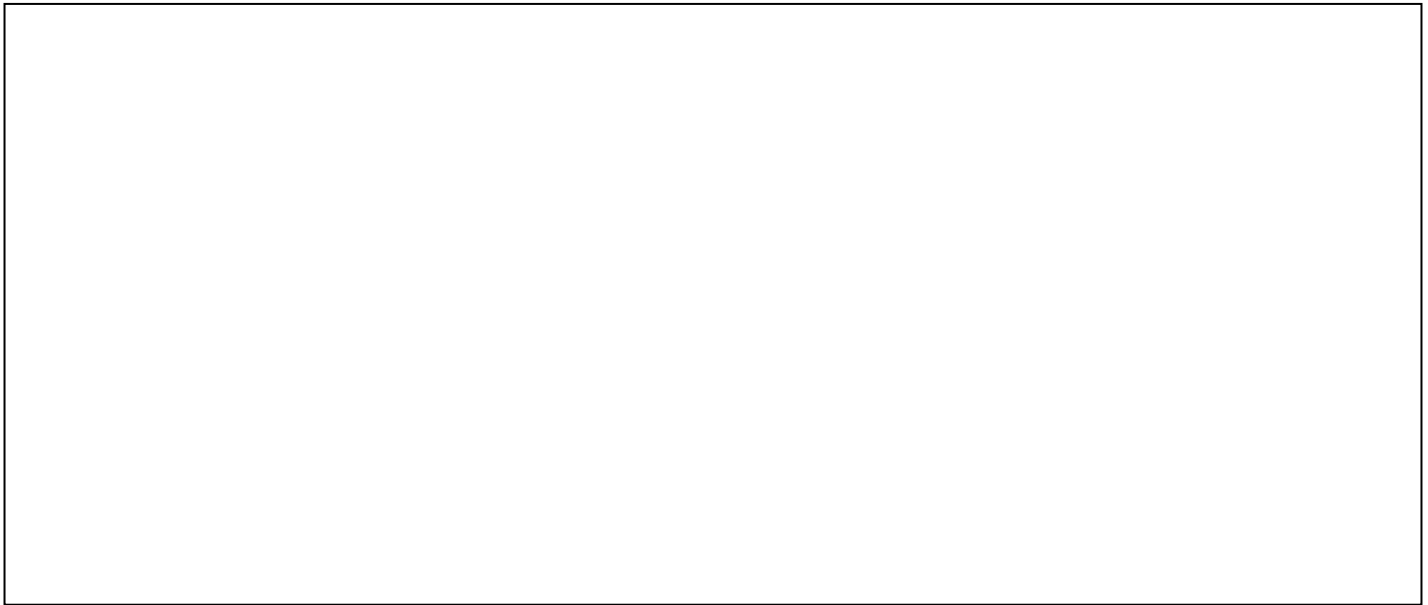
Identifying Characteristics: _____

Habits: _____

In the area below and on the following page make a sketch of any four of the reptiles or amphibians that you described above. Make sure your sketches include markings, color patterns, or other characteristics that are important in the identification of each of the four species.



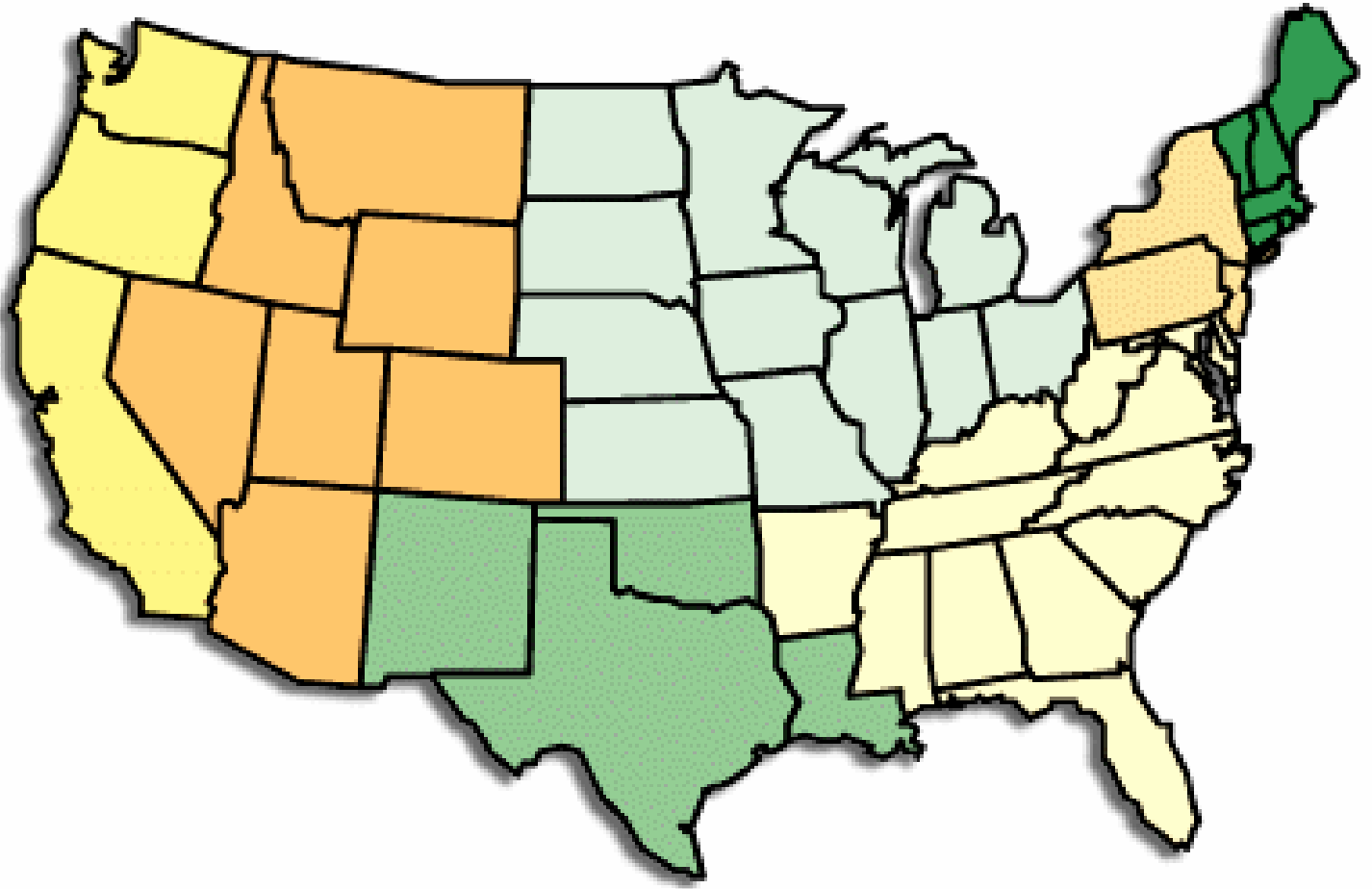
Scout Name: _____ Unit #: _____ Date: _____



Requirement 2

Discuss with your merit badge counselor the approximate number of species of reptiles and amphibians in the United States. What number did you come up with for reptiles? _____ What number did you come up with for amphibians? _____

During your meeting with your counselor, discuss the general geographic distribution of reptiles and amphibians in the United States. You can use the map below to give a visual of your discussion.



Use the area below to prepare a list of the most common species of reptiles and amphibians found in your local area or state:

AMPHIBIANS

REPTILES

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Requirement 3

Describe the main differences between *Amphibians* and *Reptiles*: _____

Describe the main differences between *Alligators* and *Crocodiles*: _____

Describe the main differences between *Toads* and *Frogs*: _____

Describe the main differences between *Salamanders* and *Lizards*: _____

Describe the main differences between *Snakes* and *Lizards*: _____

Requirement 4

Explain how reptiles and amphibians are an important component of the natural environment: _____

List four species that are officially protected by the federal government or by the state you live in and tell why each is protected. Tell also the food habits of each.

Protected Species: _____ Why is it protected? _____

Food Habits: _____

Protected Species: _____ Why is it protected? _____

Food Habits: _____

Protected Species: _____ Why is it protected? _____

Food Habits: _____

Protected Species: _____ Why is it protected? _____

Food Habits: _____

Requirement 6

After observing a snake, describe how snakes move forward: _____

Describe the functions of the muscles: _____

Describe the functions of the ribs: _____

Describe the functions of the belly plates: _____

Requirement 7

Using the area below describe six venomous snakes found in the United States.

Snake Name: _____ Geographic Range: _____

Visual Description: _____

Habits: _____

Snake Name: _____ Geographic Range: _____

Visual Description: _____

Habits: _____

Snake Name: _____ Geographic Range: _____

Visual Description: _____

Habits: _____

Snake Name: _____ Geographic Range: _____

Visual Description: _____

Habits: _____

Snake Name: _____ Geographic Range: _____

Visual Description: _____

Habits: _____

If you selected **Option B**:

Choose a reptile or amphibian that you can observe at a local zoo, aquarium, nature center, or other such exhibit (such as your classroom or school).

What reptile or amphibian did you choose to study? _____

Study the specimen weekly for a period of three months. At each visit, sketch the specimen in its captive habitat and note any changes in its coloration, shedding of skins, and general habits and behavior. Do this on separate sheets of paper. At the end of your study period, collect all your sketches and add them to this worksheet.

Find out, either from information you locate on your own or by talking to the caretaker, the following information:

What does this species eat? _____

What are its native habitat and home range? _____

What is its preferred climate? _____

What is the average life expectancy? _____

What are its natural predators? _____

Identify any human caused threats to its population: _____

Identify any laws that protect the species and its habitat: _____

After the observation period, share what you have learned with your counselor.

Requirement 9

You have been given three options for this requirement. Select and complete TWO of them.

If you selected **Option A**:

List the three toads or frogs you identified at night by their voices:

___ Imitate the song of each for your counselor.

After stalking each, describe how each sings and from where:

Toad/Frog #1: _____

Toad/Frog #2: _____

Toad/Frog #3: _____

Scout Name: _____ Unit #: _____ Date: _____

Superstition: _____

Correct Explanation: _____

Superstition: _____

Correct Explanation: _____

Give seven examples of unusual behavior or other true facts about reptiles and amphibians

Behavior/Fact: _____

Behavior/Fact: _____

Behavior/Fact: _____

Behavior/Fact: _____

Behavior/Fact: _____

Behavior/Fact: _____

Behavior/Fact: _____