

Reptile and Amphibian Studies

Prerequisites

Note: Scouts must not use venomous reptiles in fulfilling requirement 8(a). When you decide that keeping your specimen is no longer possible or desired, be sure to find another appropriate home for it or return it to the wild at the location of capture. Check with your counselor for those instances where the return of these specimens would not be appropriate.

Under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, some plants and animals are, or may be, protected by federal law. The same ones and/or others may be protected by state law. Be sure that you do not collect protected species.

Your state may require that you purchase and carry a license to collect certain species. Check with the wildlife and fish and game officials in your state regarding species regulations before you begin to collect.

8. Do ONE of the following:

- (a) Take custody of one or more reptiles or amphibians in a manner approved by your counselor. 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). Whichever you chose, keep records of and report to your counselor how you cared for your animal/eggs/larvae to include lighting, habitat, temperature and humidity maintenance and any veterinary care requirements. Unless you are the long-term owner, at the conclusion of this study, turn the animal(s) over to another responsible party approved by your counselor.

Resource: [Pet Journaling: Track Your Pet's Needs and Your Time Efficiently \(website\)](#)

- (b) Choose a reptile or amphibian that you can observe or foster at a local zoo, aquarium, nature center, local rescue, 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. Discuss with your counselor how the animal you observed was cared for to include its housing and habitat, how the lighting, temperature, and humidity were maintained, and any veterinary care requirements. 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.