Reptile and Amphibian Study

Merit Badge Workbook

This workbook can help you but you still need to read the merit badge pamphlet.

This Workbook can help you organize your thoughts as you prepare to meet with your merit badge counselor.
You still must satisfy your counselor that you can demonstrate each skill and have learned the information.
You should use the work space provided for each requirement to keep track of which requirements have been completed,
and to make notes for discussing the item with your counselor, not for providing full and complete answers.
If a requirement says that you must take an action using words such as "discuss", "show",
"tell", "explain", "demonstrate", "identify", etc, that is what you must do.

Merit Badge Counselors may not require the use of this or any similar workbooks.

No one may add or subtract from the official requirements found in Boy Scout Requirements (Pub. 33216 – SKU 637685).

The requirements were last issued or revised in 2006 • This workbook was updated in June 2017.

Scout's Name:_____ Unit: _____

Counselor's Name: _____ Counselor's Phone No.: _____

http://www.USScouts.Org • http://www.MeritBadge.Org

Please submit errors, omissions, comments or suggestions about this **workbook** to: Workbooks@USScouts.Org
Comments or suggestions for changes to the **requirements** for the **merit badge** should be sent to: Merit.Badge@Scouting.Org

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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.

Reptiles

Species	
Identifying Characteristics	
Habits:	
Habitat:	

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Species	
Identifying Characteristics	
Habits:	
Habitat:	

Species	
Identifying Characteristics	
Habits:	
Habitat:	

Species	
Identifying Characteristics	
Habits:	
Habitat:	

Species	
Identifying Characteristics	
Habits:	
Habitat:	

Species	
Identifying Characteristics	
Habits:	
Habitat:	

Amphibians

Species	
Identifying Characteristics	
Habits:	
Habitat:	

Species	
Identifying Characteristics	
Habits:	
Habitat:	

Species	
Identifying Characteristics	
Habits:	
Habitat:	

Species	
Identifying Characteristics	
Habits:	
Habitat:	

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.

1	2

3	4

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.

Reptiles		Amphibians	

3. Describe the main differences between:

Amphibians and reptiles.	
Alligators and crocodiles.	
Toads and frogs.	
Salamanders and lizards.	
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.

Protected Species

1. Species

Why protected?

Food habits:

2. Species

Why protected?

Food habits:

3. Species

Why protected?

Food habits:

4. Species

Why protected?

Food habits:

Unprotected Reptiles

1. Species

Food habits:

2. Species

Food habits:

3. Species

Food habits:

Unprotected Amphibians

1. Species

Food habits:

2. Species

Food habits:

3. Species

Food habits:

5. Describe how reptiles and amphibians reproduce.

Reptiles

Amphibians

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.

Venomous Snake 1	
Description:	
Habits:	
Range:	

Venomous Snake 2	
Description:	
Habits:	
Range:	

Venomous Snake 3	
Description:	
Habits:	
Range:	

Venomous Snake 4	
Description:	
Habits:	
Range:	

Venomous Snake 5	
Description:	
Habits:	
Range:	

Venomous Snake 6	
Description:	
Habits:	
Range:	

Venomous Lizard	
Description:	
Habits:	
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 the 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).

Reptile(s) or Amphibian(s) Maintained:	
Dates:	

Day	Food Accepted	Eating Methods	Color Changes	Skin Shedding	General Habits
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					

10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					
26					
27					
28					
29					
30					
31					

☐ 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.

(Note: Make your sketches on separate pages and attach them to the workbook.)

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.

☐ 1.	
☐ 2.	
☐ 3.	

☐ b. Identify by sight eight species of reptiles or amphibians.

☐ 1.	
☐ 2.	
☐ 3.	
☐ 4.	
☐ 5.	
☐ 6.	
☐ 7.	
☐ 8.	

☐ c. Using visual aids, give a brief talk to a small group on three different reptiles and amphibians.

10. Give five superstitions about reptiles and amphibians and a correct explanation for each.

	Superstition	Explanation
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

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

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

NOTE: Scouts must not use venomous reptiles in fulfilling requirement 8a. Species listed by federal or state law as endangered, protected, or threatened must not be used as live specimens in completing requirement 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.

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.

When working on merit badges, Scouts and Scouters should be aware of some vital information in the current edition of the *Guide to Advancement* (BSA publication 33088).Important excerpts from that publication can be downloaded from http://usscouts.org/advance/docs/GTA-Excerpts-meritbadges.pdf.
You can download a complete copy of the *Guide to Advancement* from http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf.