



Protecting Southwest Florida's unique natural environment and quality of life ... now and forever.

Guided Nature Center Experience Pre and Post-Program Activities

Grade Level: Kindergarten

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards

- SC.K.L.14.3; SC.K.N.1.2

Program Overview

Encounter live animals in the Dalton Discovery Center, look for jumping fish on an electric boat ride, and take a peek into the von Arx Wildlife Hospital where we care for more than 3,200 wild animals per year. Learn how you can help the Conservancy protect Florida's water, land, and wildlife.

Learning Objectives Students will be able to:

1. Make observations of the natural world using the five senses.
2. Observe plants and animals, and describe how they are alike and how they are different.

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Conservancy of Southwest Florida has been awarded Charity Navigator's prestigious 4-Star top rating for good governance, sound fiscal management and commitment to accountability and transparency. Charity Navigator is America's largest and most respected independent evaluator of charities.

Pre-Program Activity 1: Reptiles!

Duration of Activity: 30 – 60 minutes

Materials: worksheet (provided), coloring utensils (optional)

Background: When the students go to the Conservancy they are going to see many types of animals and one group of animals will be reptiles. While they all have some similar traits as well as different traits, reptiles may look different because of a certain reason. That could depend on where they live in the world or what they eat. Reptiles are a class of vertebrates (animals with backbones) with certain characteristics or traits. They are all cold-blooded, have dry skin that is covered in scales, and females lay eggs on land. There are four major groups of reptiles: turtles, snakes, lizards and crocodilians. Reptiles are found in various habitats around the world. Explain to the students that the place an animal lives is called its habitat. This is the place where the animal finds all of the food it needs, all of the water it needs, and a home to live in.

Directions:

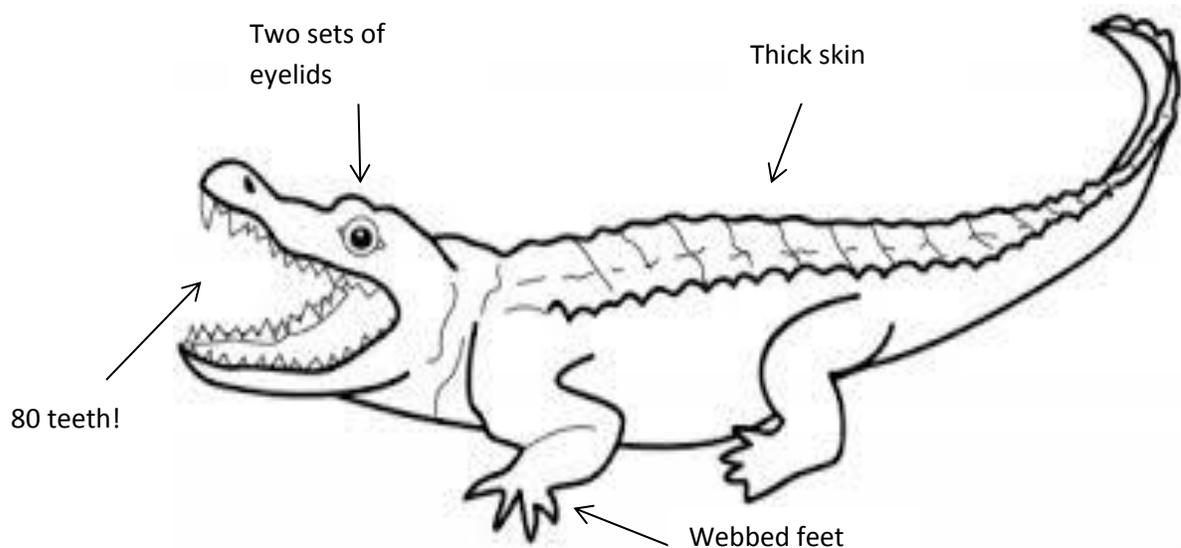
1. Ask the students if they know what reptiles are and if they can name any reptile animals. Explain to the students that there are four types of reptiles: alligators, snakes, turtles and lizards. Explain to them that they will get to see each type when they visit the Conservancy of Southwest Florida!
2. Project each reptile on the board to teach students about their traits. As you mention each trait, have students think about how that trait helps the animal survive in its habitat.
3. Start with the alligator picture. Have the students raise their hand to say something they know about alligators. They have **webbed feet** because they spend a lot of the time in the water so they need it to swim. They have **two sets of eyelids**. You can say one is the same as ours where they blink up and down and they have a second one that is clear and closes side to side. This can be explained as being like the goggles you wear in the pool, and because alligators swim, they use these built-in goggles to protect their eyes underwater. The **thick skin** is like armor that covers their body and they have **80 big teeth**. These traits help make alligators the top predators in their food chain.
4. The next animal is the snake. Snakes have **no eyelids** and **dry scales** that cover their bodies. Snakes are dry and smooth, NOT slimy and wet. Unlike the other reptiles, snakes have **no legs** so will slither on the

ground to get from place to place using muscles throughout their bodies. Snakes also have a **forked tongue**. They will use this tongue to smell and the fork allows them to smell in two different directions. Snakes, like all reptiles, have lungs and breathe air.

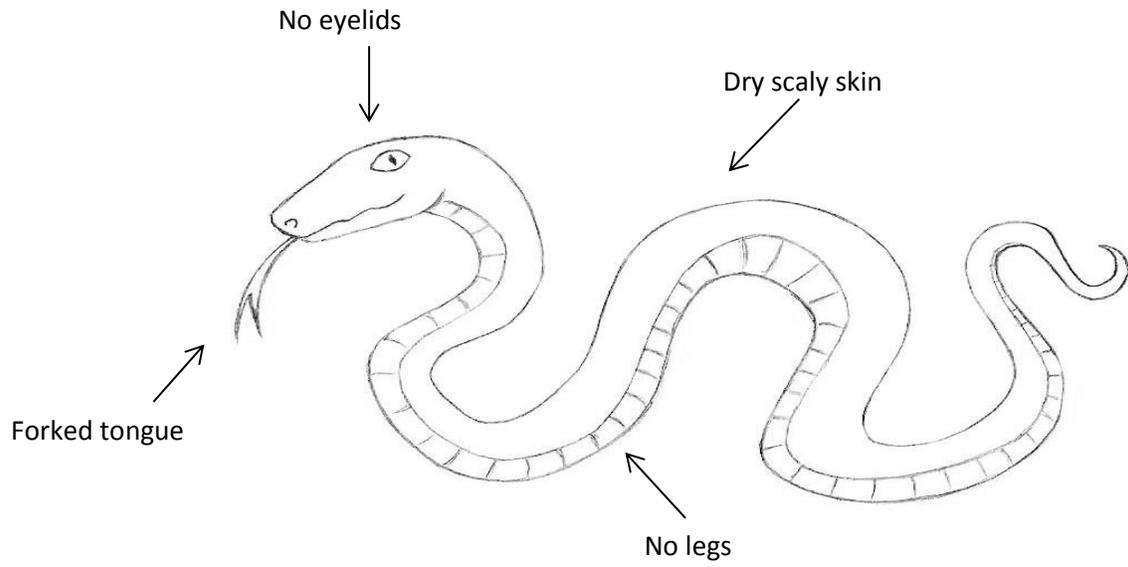
5. Next are the turtles. Turtles have only **one eyelid** like humans do. They also have a **hard shell** on their backs to protect them from predators. Turtles have **no teeth**, but have a beak and powerful jaws that they use to crush their prey with.
6. The last animal on the sheet is a lizard. Lizards also have **dry scaly skin** that covers their body as well as **one set of eyelids** that they use to protect their eyes. All lizards have a **long tail** and some can fall off and grow back again. Lizards also do not have webbed feet, but legs and feet with **claws** at the end. This is because lizards spend most of their time on land, so the claws help them grip the ground.

Optional: You may print out the reptile pictures and have students color them.

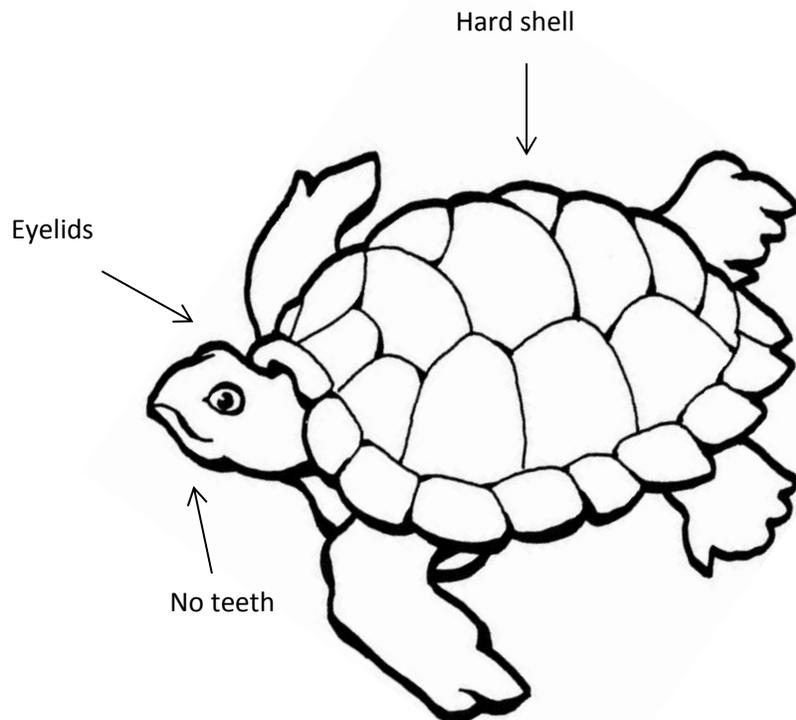
1. ALLIGATORS



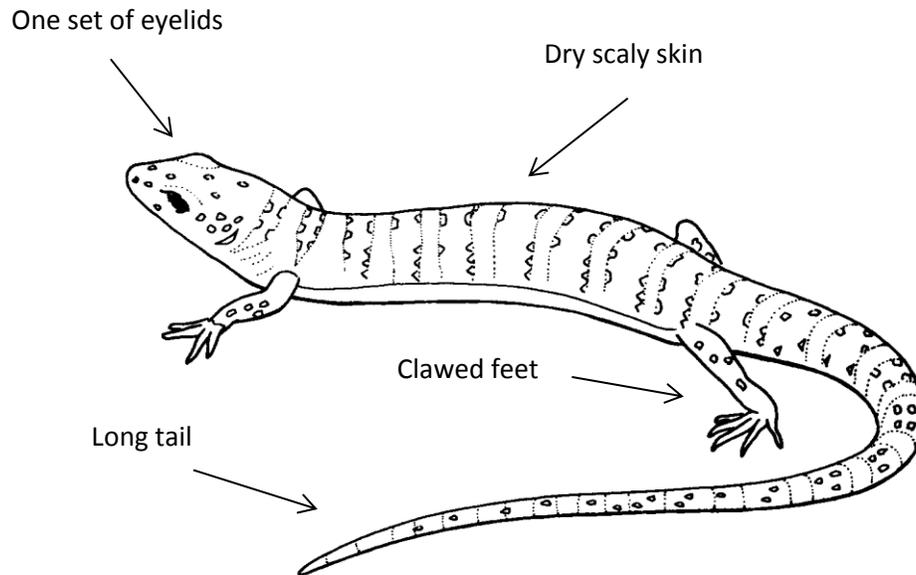
2. SNAKES



3. TURTLES



LIZARDS



Post-Program Activity 1: Learning to Look, Looking to See

Adapted from Project WILD

Duration of activity: 1 hour

Materials: Designate an outdoor space for observation.

Background: Students will spend time sharpening their observational skills. Looking and seeing can be entirely different things depending on the purpose for looking. Students look at classrooms every school day, but if questioned about simple details they may find they are totally unaware of the existence of certain objects, colors, sounds and textures. When looking at a sidewalk, students may miss a community of ants, or when leaving a trail in the woods to get closer look at a tree a student may entirely miss a wildflower even while looking at the forest floor. Same idea in the classroom or when out in nature.

Directions:

1. Begin the activity with a discussion on observation. Ask the students to leave the room or cover their eyes. Place a sheet over something that had been very visible to them during the observation discussion. Distribute notepads or have the students take out a piece of paper. Ask the student

- to write down what they think is under the sheet, what it looks like, what it would feel like, and the color. When their sheets are completed, ask them to turn their paper over on the desk. Remove the sheet. On the other side of the list have the students make a list of what was actually under the sheet. What did they remember? What types of things were missed and why did they think this would happen?
2. Next, have the students go outdoors and pick a spot spread out from one another, about 50 feet. Allow the students about 5 minutes for silent observation. Have the students “look” using all their senses, including touch, smell, listening and seeing. Instruct them to record or draw what they “observe” or have them record it in their minds.
 3. When the 5 minutes are up, bring the students together to discuss the process they went through to gather their list of observations. Did they focus on one area for a long time? Did their gaze drift? How did they focus their hearing and smelling? Closing their eyes can enhance the hearing, etc. What else did the students see? Any living things? What were they? Were they a plant or animal? What makes something living or non-living?
 4. Next, discuss the joy and importance of seeing as fully as possible. This is a way of appreciating, respecting and learning more about the world. These skills will help open students’ eyes to seeing things they may have missed before, which allows students to better understand the world around them.

Resources:

Project Wild K-12 Curriculum & Activity Guide, 2011. pg. 278-279

Post-Program Activity 2: Educational Sea Turtle Song and Mural

Duration of Activity: 30-60 minutes

Materials: computer and projector screen (or whiteboard), large sheet paper, coloring utensils

Directions:

1. Watch the educational sea turtle video/song as a class (4 min, 15 sec).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXe7Rx3w9ro>

2. Have a discussion with your students about the video and ask them to share some facts that they learned about sea turtles.

Some sea turtle facts:

- Sea turtles are reptiles.
- ALL reptiles breathe air (have lungs, just like us!)
- Sea turtles have a shell called a carapace (care-uh-piss).
- Sea turtles have a backbone (vertebrate) and cannot climb out of their shell.
- Sea turtles have four flippers and a tail, and cannot hide inside their shell.
- Sea turtles spend most of their lives in the ocean but lay eggs on the beach in the sand.
- Sea turtles eat food like sea grass, jellyfish, crabs, lobsters, and seashells (mollusks).
- Sea turtles have been around for 100 million years.
- Sea turtle hatchlings use their instincts to make it to the ocean and know what to eat.
- Bright lights on the beach can confuse sea turtles and they can head inland, away from the ocean.
- Sea turtles sometimes travel using ocean currents.
- There are seven species of sea turtle: leatherback, green, loggerhead, hawksbill, kemp's ridley, olive ridley, flatback.
- Six out of seven species are endangered (loggerheads are *threatened*).

3. Create a class mural! Lay out a large piece of sheet paper and draw a line indicating the ocean surface. Also have a section for the beach. Have students draw/color sea turtles in their habitat, using the concepts from the song/video, as well as in the bullet points above.

Optional: You could choose any of the other habitats that students learned about at the Conservancy, as well. For example, the Uplands (snakes) or Everglades (alligators).