

Reptiles and Amphibians Part 1 (Video Transcript)

[Video opens with music and a montage of various reptiles and amphibians]

Narrator: Reptiles and amphibians are some of the most awesome animals in Virginia. What's their life cycle? Where do they live? What do they eat? Let's join the Cub Scouts from pack 706 as we journey to Virginia's most remote habitats to learn about some of the coolest animals around, reptiles and amphibians! It's a look outside!

Clay: Hi, I'm Clay from Den 4.

Jacob: Hi, I'm Jacob from Den 4.

Jon: Hi, I'm Jon from Den 4.

Woody: Hi, I'm Woody from Den 4.

Brandon: Hi, I'm Brandon from Den 4.

Jacob: Hi, I'm Jacob from Den 4.

Dennis: Hi, I'm Dennis McIlhenny, Den Leader, Den 4, pack 706 of the Heart of Virginia Council.

Narrator: The scouts are visiting Three Lakes Nature Center in Richmond. Where Susan Watson, a wildlife biologist and expert on all things creepy and crawly, will introduce them to some very special creatures.

Susan: Hi everyone.

Den 4: Hi!

Susan: We are going to have a great day today. Does everyone know what we are going to talk about today?

Jon: Amphibians and reptiles.

Susan: That's right, amphibians and reptiles. Does everybody know how amphibians differ from reptiles?

Jacob: Reptiles have scales and amphibians have slimy skin.

Susan: That's right. Amphibians do not have the scales that reptiles have.

Narrator: Amphibians differ from reptiles in that they have smooth moist skin and they undergo a metamorphosis phase in which their body changes. Reptiles have scales that cover most of their bodies and the young resemble the adults. Virginia has three major groups of amphibians: Frogs, Toads, and Salamanders. There are also three major groups of reptiles: Turtles, Snakes, and Lizards.

Susan: This is an eastern tiger salamander. This is actually a state endangered species in Virginia. This is one of the largest, but not the largest salamander in the state. Tiger salamanders are interesting in that most of their life they are on land – they like to live under stuff like moss, like you see on this guy, under logs, rotting soil or wood. What do you think they like to eat?

Jon: Worms?

Susan: Worms. Very good. Yes they like to eat worms. What else?

Jacob: Bugs like termites if they're in a log?

Susan: Yup, they eat bugs like termites and whatever they can find. Another neat thing about these guys when they have babies they need to find water. And what is really important is that they need water that doesn't have fish in it.

Narrator: Amphibians like the tiger salamander need a unique habitat to live in and bare their young like the shallow pools created by spring rain and melting snow. These fertile pools can dry up completely in the summer so they don't support predators like fish that would eat the salamander larvae. But amphibians such as frogs, toads and the spotted salamander find the fertile pools the perfect place to lay eggs.

[Music]

Every year on a dark and rainy night in February, instinct drives these spotted salamanders to migrate to a tiny fertile pool near the James River - where they breed and lay their eggs - insuring their species survival. In the past this journey ended badly for some salamanders as they got run over by cars along River Road. But luckily for these little amphibians the local neighbors along with the James River park employees make sure they have a safe passage along River Road.

Ralph White: These salamanders require certain conditions. In order to live they have to have some sort of shaded hillside with deep rich soil and they have to have a place where they can breed without fish around. These fertile pools, on the edge of the road way and ditches, serve that purpose. Isn't it wonderful that creatures about this big *[hold up about 3 inches]*, slow moving, virtually no teeth (like tiny little sand paper inside), no claws, no speed, walking hotdogs in turns of the food value for other creatures. In order to protect them we close the road. So that when some of the

salamanders meander onto the asphalt surface they don't get squished by automobiles. And interestingly enough people who live in this community are delighted to close down the road to save the salamanders.

[Music]

Narrator: Both the Tiger and the Spotted salamanders are pretty big, but not the biggest. Growing up to 2 feet long, the Hellbender is Virginia's largest salamander. They are aquatic animals that live in rocky streams where they nest under rocks and logs. Fishermen who happen to catch a hellbender by accident wonder what this strange fish is that has grown arms and legs. These little amphibians are pretty cool too.

[Music and montage of Susan showing Den 4 various amphibians]