

WVMN Class Description

Title:	AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES
Objectives:	Become familiar with the characteristics that define amphibians and reptiles and with aspects of their life histories. Learn to recognize common WV species.
Class type:	Core curriculum
Time:	3 hours
Optimal season:	Spring, summer, fall
Materials:	Buckets for temporary holding of live specimens, dip nets.

The student will gain a basic understanding of:

- the physical characteristics that distinguish an animal as amphibian or reptile.
- the physical characteristics that define the orders within these two classes.
- some species that occur locally.
- some aspects of reproductive behavior, diet, and habitat of WV reptiles and amphibians.
- available resources for further study, including helpful references.

WVMN Class Outline

1. Characteristics of amphibians
 - a. Require moisture
 - b. Cold-blooded
 - c. Mating and mating rituals
 - d. Reproduction and larval stages
 - e. Diet
2. Salamanders
 - a. Characteristics of five families (hellbenders, mudpuppies, mole salamanders, newts, and plethodons)
 - b. Characteristics, distribution, and life histories of the 35 WV species
3. Toads and frogs
 - a. Difference between frogs and toads
 - b. Differences among the cricket frogs, tree frogs, chorus frogs, and true frogs
 - c. Life histories and distribution of the 3 toads and 12 frogs found in WV
4. Characteristics of reptiles
 - a. Physical characteristics
 - b. Mating and mating rituals
 - c. Reproduction
 - d. Diet
 - e. Characteristics of the two orders (Testudines and Squamata)
 - Turtles
 - Lizards and skinks
 - Snakes
 - Poisonous snakes and snakebite

Field exercise (2 hours):

Select a site where both woodland and stream salamanders may be encountered. Have individual students flip rocks, logs, etc. to search for and capture salamanders. After about 15 minutes, have group reform and discuss salamanders found. (It will be virtually impossible to find sites where turtles, frogs, toads, lizards, skinks, or snakes may be reliably encountered, so it is easiest to focus on salamanders.)