

## Learning about Reptiles

Children often, at one time or another, will have an interest in learning about reptiles. Even if they are only vaguely interested, it is helpful to teach them should they ever encounter a reptile in the wild or at a relative or friend's house. It is quite possible to encounter a reptile even if one has lived within the confines of the city one's entire life.

Children are not the only ones who can benefit from learning about reptiles, of course. Adults should at least learn some basic information even if they never have the slightest desire to come in contact with a reptile.

You may be one of the fortunate people who enjoy animals of all kinds and soak up information like a sponge. If you are planning a career in animal care or with some other form of contact, you would do well to learn about reptiles even if your specialty will not lie with reptiles. You may be surprised when the information comes in handy later on in life.

If you've ever entertained the idea of owning a turtle, which is quite a common occurrence in children raised in the country setting, you may be interested in knowing there are several types to choose from. There are four kinds of painted turtles in the United States for a good pet choice. The Eastern box turtle is also a popular choice for people to have as pets. Not all turtles are the same or require exactly the same care, but most turtles usually feed on snails, worms, and plants.

Country kids will often capture a garter snake at some point and try to keep it as a pet. A garter snake needs access to water. They like to eat fish.

Snakes often need less food than other reptiles, sometimes eating only once a year if it is a big snake and have had a big meal. Of course, smaller snakes are not quite as fortunate as they aren't able to consume as much at one time. But because the snake requires feeding less often, it takes a little effort on the part of the owner to remember to feed them because of the time lapse between feedings.

Obvious places to learn about reptiles are zoos. This is certainly a much safer choice than deciding to take it upon yourself to get your experience first-hand by capturing a reptile in the wild! The experts on television make it seem easy, but they also advise against trying such stunts at home for a very good reason. Snakes are not the only dangerous reptile and not all snakes are dangerous.

Other places to learn about reptiles include museums, summer camps, books, vet

pamphlets, bookstores, libraries, safaris, a trip to the jungle, and museums. Natural science museums offer great displays and information about reptiles from long ago and those in the present. You could encourage your child's interest in reptiles in many ways, but remember to educate them as to the possible dangers of close encounters.