

Herpetology Vocabulary

Adaptation:	special characteristics of an animal that help it to survive
Ectothermic:	an organism whose body temperature is determined by the surrounding environment (cold-blooded)
Endothermic:	an animal that regulates its own body temperature internally (warm-blooded)
Herpetology:	the study of reptiles and amphibians
Jacobson's Scent Organ:	small opening in the upper mouth in some reptiles allowing the molecules picked up by the tongue to be interpreted
Keystone Species:	a species that has a disproportionate effect on its environment relative to its abundance; an ecosystem may experience a dramatic shift if a keystone species is removed, even though that species was a small part of the ecosystem by measures of biomass or productivity
Metamorphosis:	a change in the form or function of an organism by a natural process of growing or development
Nictitating Membrane:	a third clear eyelid found in some animals that protects the eyes
Scute:	an enlarged scale on a reptile
Venomous:	a toxic substance that causes harm by injection