

Winter Wildlife Series: Week Six: *Reptiles*

Vocabulary:

Cold-blooded: An animal that cannot make its own body heat and has to rely on outside sources like the sun to stay warm.

Brumation: A state of inactivity, slowed metabolism, and deep sleep that reptiles go into during cold weather.

Scales: Small, thin, bony, overlapping plates on a reptile's body.

Scutes: On a snake: the belly scales that assist with movement. On a turtle: The individual geometric plates on the top of a turtle's shell. Most turtles have 13 scutes on their shells.

Soft-shell Hard-shell:

Materials:

Eggs, cup, white vinegar

Directions:

1. Fill your cup with white vinegar.
2. Gently place your egg inside the cup, make sure the egg is fully submerged in vinegar.
3. Check back in two to three days to find the calcium in the shell has dissolved, leaving behind a rubbery translucent egg.
4. Some reptiles lay hard-shell eggs, and some lay soft-shell eggs. Try to think of the advantages of both kinds of eggs. A hardshell offers protection, but a soft shell doesn't break as easily. What other advantages can you think of?

Reptile Tissue Collage (PreK-2):

Materials:

Worksheet, glue, tissue paper

Directions:

1. Glue layers of tissue paper onto the snake to create a collage. The layers of tissue paper represent the snake's skin, which sheds multiple times a year when it becomes dry, itchy, and too tight on the snake's body.

Snake Dinner Party (3-5):

Materials:

Pencil

Directions:

1. Read the clues, then match the snake to its dinner.

Get Outside!

To better understand how a reptile's scaly skin looks and feels, head outside and look for a pinecone. A pinecone has a similar layered structure to the scales on a reptile's body. Just like reptiles, the pinecone's layered, tough, scaly exterior is protecting the rest of its body from danger. If you look into the scales on a pinecone you might be able to find seeds and sticky sap. The pinecone has scales to protect its seeds, the same way a reptile has scales to protect its body!