



NYSDEC Environmental Education

Meet the Animals

A 45-minute program designed to introduce students to a wide variety of live animals and animal adaptations.

For Students in Grades Pre-K through 2

Goal: Students will learn about animals from different families and discuss how each animal may survive in its distinctive habitat. Live animals may be used, many of which can be touched by the students. Focus on native animals of New York.

NYS Elementary Science Core Curriculum

Standard 1: *Scientific Inquiry*

Key Idea 1: The central purpose of scientific inquiry is to develop explanations of natural phenomena in a continuing, creative process.

Standard 4: *The Living Environment*

Key Idea 3: Individual organisms and species change over time.

Key Idea 5: Organisms maintain a dynamic equilibrium that sustains life.

Key Idea 6: Plants and animals depend on each other and their physical environment.

Potential Classroom Visitors:

Live: snake, turtle, toad, rabbit

Key topics:

- All animals are to be respected and appreciated; no matter their appearance.
- Animals have special traits which make them capable in surviving in each individual habitat.
- Some animals are ok to have at home as pets, but some should remain wild.
- Animals come in all shapes and sizes, for different reasons.

Meet the Animals:

Instruct students to sit in a semicircle facing you. Explain safety procedures (seated at all times, quiet voices and gentle hands). Explain that none of the animals are dangerous, but still must be respected.

Show and discuss each animal for 5 to 10 minutes. Ask the students questions pertinent to the animals class, adaptations, diet and habitat. Explain any key topics missed by the class discussion. Take the animal around the semi-circle and give each student a chance to touch the animal. Do not force students to touch the creatures, but encourage them to try. Some animals will not be able to be handled by the students for safety reasons.

For each animal, tell the children the animals' personal story and end with a discussion of pet care and responsible ownership. Through this, students will be introduced to the "wild vs. domestic" concept.

Critical Thinking Questions directed to the group: (examples)

- What kind of animal is this? (bird, fish, mammal, amphibian, reptile)
- What covers this animals' body?
- Does this animal look like other animals? What colors can you see on the animal?
- If this animal had babies how would they care for it?
- If this animal was your pet how would you care for it?

After the presentation, allow students to ask you questions about the animals, or questions related to their favorite animals.