

Animals of the World: Reptiles



REPTILES



Reptiles are vertebrate animals that are characterized by having a skin covered with keratin scales. It is interesting to know that their name is due to their particular way of walking because they crawl, that is, they move by dragging their belly on the ground or very close to it.

Its origin dates back to Mesozoic, a time when dinosaurs arose and where these animals predominated.

There are four sets of reptiles.

1. **Turtles:** adapt to aquatic and terrestrial environments, are quadruped, and have a rigid shell that is integrated into the skeleton.
2. **Alligators and crocodiles:** terrestrial, but typically feed in aquatic environments, are fierce predators because of their large jagged jaw and their body because of their powerful muscles.
3. **Scaled lizards:** among these are lizards and snakes, some with legs and others without legs, respectively. They have long bodies and thick, rough scales that protect them.
4. **Tuataras or sphenodonts:** are similar to iguanas but not closely related. They measure around 70 cm in length, and their evolution is very close to dinosaurs. They are known as living fossils, of which there is only one genus of three that are already extinct. They currently live in New Zealand.



Reptiles are generally terrestrial, but some have been found to adapt to aquatic environments, especially for predation. This means that they breathe through the lungs and that they have a series of adaptations that allow them to be in the water for a long time.

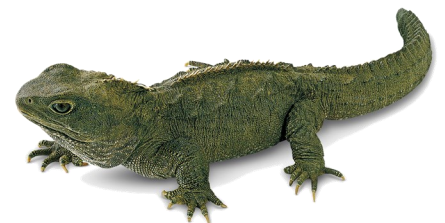


These kinds of animals are cold-blooded, which means that they do not internally regulate their temperature. To warm up, they lie in the sun all day. To cool down, they hide in burrows, go into the water, or simply take refuge in the shade.

They live in places far from the poles, since they prefer temperate and humid climates. Larger species can be found in tropical and subtropical areas because the steady temperature of warm climates favors their development and growth.

The ways reptiles feed are diverse. Some species are herbivorous, that is, they eat herbs and fruits, such as iguanas. However, most species are carnivorous, so they eat insects, amphibians, birds, and mammals. Reptiles have slower digestion than mammals, which is reflected in their inability to chew, divide the food, and their slow metabolism requires very low energy expenditure. This is why animals like crocodiles and snakes can live on one big meal for months since they digest it little by little.

The reproduction of reptiles is sexual; the male fertilizes the female. Then the female lays eggs in a nest that they make themselves to protect them from predators. The young are identical to their parents but smaller. They do not undergo any type of metamorphosis or transformation from one thing to another.



Name _____

Date _____



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Answer the questions.



1. According to the text, what are the main characteristics of reptiles?

2. What is crawling?

3. How many sets of reptiles are there and what are they?

4. In what habitat do reptiles live?

5. What allows reptiles to last a long time in the water?



Name _____

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6. What is a living fossil?

7. What climate do reptiles prefer?

8. What does it mean that reptiles are cold-blooded?

9. What does carnivore and herbivore mean? Furthermore, explain what is meant by “slow metabolism”.

10. How do reptiles reproduce? And it explains why they do not need a metamorphosis.

