

Creature Features

Grades PreK – Kindergarten
Educational Program Guide

OAS

K-LS1-1 | Science Practices 1, 2, 4, 6, 8 | Core Ideas LS1
Crosscutting Concepts, Structure and Function, Patterns

Program Overview

The museum educator will lead the class in a discussion about animals with backbones. The class will go over the four major groups of land vertebrates: amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals and then participate in a hands-on activity using museum specimens that will reinforce the information they have just learned.

Objectives

After participating in this program, students will be able to:

- Identify four types of terrestrial vertebrates and give examples of each
- Recognize identifying characteristics of each major group of terrestrial vertebrates
- Be familiar with several native Oklahoma animals.

Background

What makes a tiger a mammal or a turtle a reptile? While there are many scientific characteristics that separate mammals from reptiles, there is one basic and simple way to categorize land dwelling animals with backbones: body coverings. Mammals are animals that have fur or hair. Birds are covered with feathers. Reptiles are covered with scales. Amphibians have smooth, wet skin.

At the Museum

Hall of Natural Wonders

Look for mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians in each of the five exhibits: Upland Stream, Oak-Hickory Forest, Limestone Cave, Mixed Grass Prairie and Black Mesa. As your class visits each exhibit, ask them to find a mammal, a bird, a reptile, and an amphibian. There is at least one example of all four kinds of land animals with backbones in each of the four exhibits. You may have to look closely for the amphibians, they are usually pretty small.

Hall of Ancient Life

Animals have been living on land for at least 400 million years. As your class visits this gallery, ask them to find ancient terrestrial vertebrate animals. It may be easy to find the large reptiles so look closely at some of the smaller animals in this gallery. You may spot some mammals, birds, or amphibians!

Vocabulary

Backbone	the skeleton on the trunk and tail of an animal; the bones in the middle of the back of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish.
Egg	a small object made by an animal that holds its young and the food required for development.
Mammal	an animal with a backbone that has a body covering of fur.
Bird	an animal with a backbone that has a body covering of feathers.
Reptile	an animal with a backbone that has a body covering of scales.
Amphibian	an animal with a backbone that has a body covering of smooth, wet skin.
Fur	the hairy coat of a mammal.
Feathers	the light structure that is the body covering of birds.
Scales	