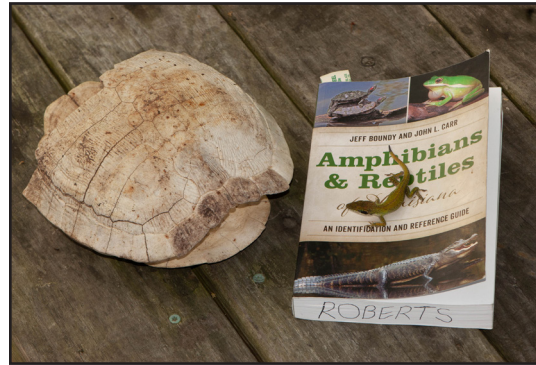


# What are Herps?

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Herpetology is the study of amphibians and reptiles. "Herp" comes from the Greek root word *herpetón*, which means "creeping animal."



Cold-blooded is an informal term that means the animal body temperature changes with the environment. All herps are ectotherms, meaning their body temperature changes with the temperature of the air or water. They control their body temperature by doing things like basking in the sun to warm up or laying in the shade to cool off.

## Amphibians

Amphibians are cold-blooded vertebrates (vertebrates have backbones) that don't have scales. They usually live part of their lives in water and part on land.

There are three kinds of amphibians: anura or frogs (which includes toads), urodela or salamanders (which includes newts), and apoda or caecilians.



Anura (Frogs) above  
Urodela (Salamanders) below  
Apoda (caecilians) lower left

Caecilians are limbless amphibians that look like snakes or worms but are more closely related to salamanders. Their name comes from New Latin and means "blind ones," which refers to the fact that they have small eyes or sometimes no eyes at all!



## Reptiles

Reptiles are cold-blooded vertebrates. They have dry skin covered with scales or bony plates and usually lay soft-shelled eggs.

The major groups of reptiles are: Chelonia (turtles, above), Crocodylia (crocodiles and alligators, top left), Squamata (lizards, top right, and snakes, bottom left), and Rhynchocephalia (tuatara bottom right).

