



Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

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SWAN LAKE SNAKE PROGRAM

The Swan Lake Snake Program is a one-hour presentation that can be delivered in your classroom or at Swan Lake

For classroom presentations please provide the following

- a) Large easy-to-read student nametags.
- b) Board space: about 8 ft. needed OR smaller length and flip chart with markers.
- c) Wall clips / or magnetic blackboard / or place to display charts and hanging cloth display.
- d) (optional but useful) A list of student questions, which you could categorize into the 4 topics listed below, if it is appropriate for your students.
- e) 2 large tables, or 2 sets of 4 desks

GOALS

The goals of this program for your student are to:

- a) understand more about snakes -- their anatomy, what they eat, how they move and where they live;
- b) appreciate and respect snakes and the important role they play in their environment;
- c) recognize the variations of colour patterns of Garter Snakes on Vancouver Island.
- d) see, and if so desired, touch two local or exotic snakes.

INITIAL PRESENTATION - 40 minutes

This presentation to the whole class covers the following general topics:

- a) Body of snake - Internal and external aspects, main internal organs, senses.
- b) Food and feeding - What is eaten, how it is eaten.
- c) Skin, shedding - Why and how of shedding, frequency.
- d) Size - Both the largest and smallest are featured, as well as a discussion of enemies and economic importance.
Depending on the time available we may mention habitats, but we often find students' questions fill this part of the program.

STATIONS - 20 minutes

Please have your class divided into 4 groups. Each group will visit all 4 stations.

- 1) Skeletons, skins, snake artifacts - (large table or 4 desks together)
- 2) Charts (local species, internal views, etc.) Various books and magazines that are directly related to the topic - (large propping space, and large table or 4 desks together))
- 3,4) Snake visiting (2 different animals) - (Chairs for adults required)

We will also bring a word search/true-false sheet for each student for you to put out at a time of your choice.

SNAKE VISITORS

The choice of snakes we bring to your class may vary. There will be two from the following collection:

- a) MISS SCARLET, CHOCOLATE, LICORICE: North Western Garter Snakes – eat worms and sometimes slugs – gentle – eat by grabbing and swallowing quickly.
- b) PEACH PITS: Royal or Ball Python – approximately 4 feet long – native to Central Africa, living in savannas and dry forest -- rests in tree branches – prefers mice – kills by constriction – gentle slow-moving snake – prefers not to be touched on the head.
- c) MONTY: Rainbow Boa – approximately 4 feet long – native to Costa Rica south to Argentina – in native habitat lives in trees and eats small mammals – kills by constriction – gentle temperament.
- d) CHECKERS: Corn Snake - native to S.E. United States – a constrictor – somewhat shy

Payment:

An invoice will accompany the confirmation letter you receive. **Payment** is due at the time of the program, and cheques should be made out to **Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary** and given to the programmer: **VISA or MC** can be phoned in.

Receipts will be sent by mail the week following your program date.

Change of Dates and/or Times:

If you wish to change the date or time of your program please contact **Scott Mair** at **250.479.0211** or at programs@swanlake.bc.ca. We will do our best to accommodate your request, depending on available times and dates.

If you have any questions or comments please don't hesitate to contact us; we always welcome your feedback.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Behler, John L. The Audubon Field Guide of North American Reptiles and Amphibians, Alfred A. Knopf, 1979

Campbell, R. Wayne and Gregory, Patrick T. The Reptiles of British Columbia, B.C. Provincial Museum Handbook #44, 1984.

Carr, Archie The Reptiles, Time Life Series (Life Nature Series), 1963

Eyewitness Reptiles

Froom, Barbara The Snakes of Canada, McClelland and Stewart, 1972

Griehl, Klaus Snakes, Barron's, New York, 1982

Mathewson, Robert. The How and Why Wonder Book of Reptiles and Amphibians, Allan Publishers, Inc., 1981

St. John, Alan, Reptiles of the Northwest – British Columbia to California Lone Pine, 2002
Stebbins, Robert C. A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1966

Time-Life Series Reptiles and Amphibians, Wild Wild World of Animals, 1963

Snakes in Question, Smithsonian

Your school library probably has several colourful books on snakes and reptiles that could be useful for classroom research.

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