

**LITTLE FERRY FREE
PUBLIC LIBRARY
PRESENTS**

ZOOPHORIA!

REPTILES

FOR OUR END OF THE SUMMER READING PROGRAM!

**THURSDAY AUGUST 31 @ 1:00PM
PLEASE CALL OUR LIBRARY AND REGISTER YOUR CHILD
AT 201-641-3721**

239 LIBERTY STREET LITTLE FERRY NJ 07643

Summer Reading Outline

"All Together Now"

2023

Science that Serves

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Below I have outlined the main discussion topics on how we can improve the environment based on the specific challenges my exotic animals face in their natural habitats. All photos are of my pets that will be participating in this program. Feel free to use them for any promotional posts, emails, etc.



Hamburger the Cane Toad:

How frogs are affected by pollution:

- Frogs eat bugs that can be contaminated with pesticides
- Frogs are indicator species as their skin absorbs water contents
 - Pesticide runoff into waterways or chemical dumping harms them greatly and we can assume an area is polluted if frogs are dying.

How can we help:

- Read labels on chemicals to make sure they are being thrown away properly
- Don't spray chemical pesticides or use a natural alternative like diatomaceous earth

Maisy the Rat:



How are rats helpful to humans:

- Rats are being trained to locate people in rubble after natural disasters. They are outfitted with a backpack with a two-way microphone and GPS location transmitter. Their small size allows them to fit into cracks to find people effectively. The biggest challenge they are facing is making the backpack small enough, so the rat is not limited in its mobility.
- They have also been using rats for over 10 years in Africa to detect land mines and tuberculosis.

How do rats help the ecosystem:

- Rats play an important role in the food chain as they are prey to many predators
- They also help with seed dispersal by eating plants and defecating the seeds while traveling to other places

How can we help:

- Keep your community clean and there will be less rat pests
- See rats as a positive and encourage pet ownership so people gain more experience with training and so humans can find more incredible things rats can help us with.

Pumpkin the Nigerian Uromastyx:



How do Uromastyx' help the ecosystem:

- Uromastyx are great diggers and the burrows they dig tend to become homes for many animals who are not able to dig themselves
- When they dig, they dig up fresh dirt that turns the soil, allowing for better plant growth
- They also help with seed dispersal as they are herbivores and only eat plants
- They are prey animals for predators like birds, wolves, monitors, and snakes
- They are hosts for internal parasites and therefore provide a habitat

How Uromastyx are challenged in the wild:

- Humans trap them to eat them as a delicacy or to use them for traditional medicines

- They also lay in the roads because the asphalt gets hot and then they get hit by cars

How can we help:

- Always drive slowly when we see animal crossing signs
- *show some animal crossing signs in NJ*
- Talk about taking too many animals from the wild and why its important to only take animals that have reached a certain size like with crabbing and fishing

Boo and Hiss the Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches:

How Cockroaches are important to ecosystems:

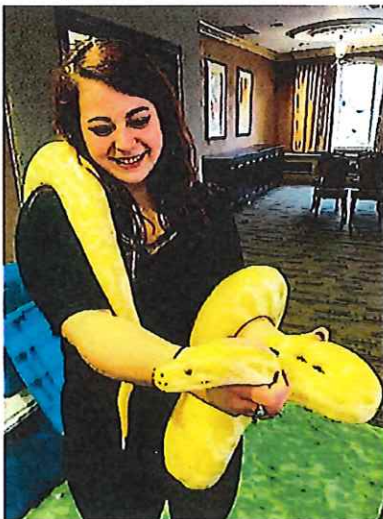


- They are prey to many animals
- They are decomposers so they act as the jungle's janitors, cleaning up debris and turning it into useable soil through defecation
- This allows for better plant growth which then produces more food for animals

How we can help:

- Cockroaches can make for great pets because they are clean and do not bite, sting, jump, or fly
- They are great at composting. We have barely any food waste in our home because of our cockroach colonies
- Other ways of composting are worm farming
- By composting food waste, we reduce the amount of methane produced by landfills which, in turn, helps prevent the global temperatures from rising

Velveeta the Burmese Python:



How Pythons are important to the ecosystem:

- Large predators like snakes eat pest animals that can invade our homes

How can we help:

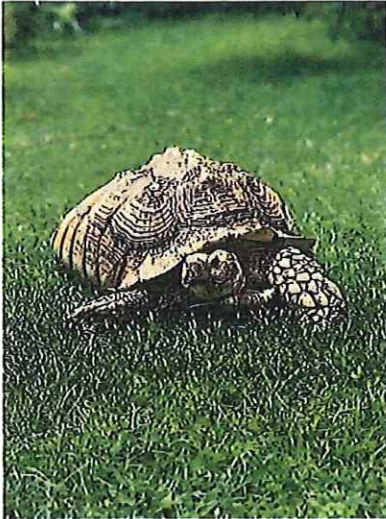
- Burmese pythons are invasive animals to Florida. They are eating animals that are native like skunks, raccoons, and opossums, disrupting the natural flow of the ecosystem
- When we have pets we are looking to rehome, never let your pet go into the wild as most exotic reptiles cannot survive in NJ through the winter or if they do, they can breed and overtake an ecosystem
- Don't sneak animals home from other countries

- Always check your luggage and clothing before flying back to the United States from other countries

tripod the Sulcata Tortoise:

How do tortoises help our ecosystems:

- Tortoises dig large burrows that other animals use
- They keep brush down and spread seeds



Challenges faced by wild tortoises

- Habitat loss is their biggest threat
- They also face over collection for the pet trade

How can we help:

- These tortoises are high maintenance and long-term pets as they live for over 150 years
- These tortoises are from Africa, but we have plenty of turtle species here in NJ we can help
- Keep wildlife preserves protected and make as many of them as possible
- You can make your own backyard a certified wildlife habitat through the National Wildlife Federation
 - Must have a water source like a pond or birdbath
 - Must provide at least 3 food sources through native plants or feeders
 - Must have 2 areas for wildlife shelter like bushes or trees for shading
 - Must provide at least 2 places to support young (like the bushes or shelter boxes)
 - Must engage in sustainable practices like composting, collecting rainwater, or using natural herbicides/pesticides
 - This provides a habitat that was lost by the construction of suburbs
 - By displaying their provided signage, you may be able to encourage other neighbors to do the same

Bertha the Green Iguana:



How do iguanas help our ecosystem:

- Remove unwanted vegetation
- Seed dispersal
- Food source for birds

How can we help:

- Iguanas are the number one most abandoned pet because they live for over 15 years, and they are very inexpensive to purchase

- Do research before buying a pet so you can ensure you are able to care for them for the duration of their lives