

# Audubon Center & Sanctuary

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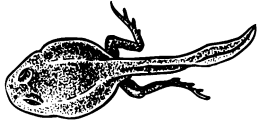
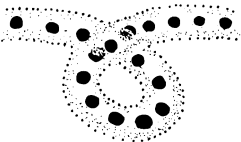


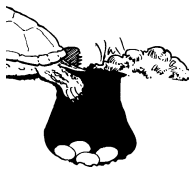


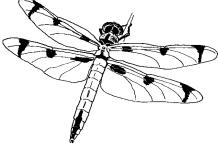
An Audubon naturalist  
visited our class.

## We learned about life cycles!

**Toad  
Life  
Cycle**

**Turtle  
Life  
Cycle**

**Dragonfly  
Life Cycle**

|   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
|  |  |  | toad eggs<br> |
|  |  |  | Cut and glue in the<br>right order on the<br>circles above.  |
|  |  |  |  |

## Wetland Life Cycles

### Background Information:

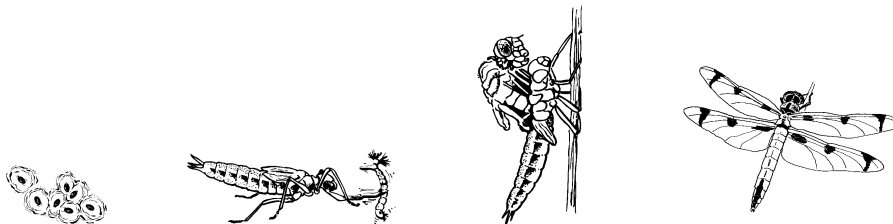
A *Life Cycle* is how an individual grows, reproduces and dies. Many animals have life cycles much like a person. This information is for **teacher reference** to answer student questions. *Please do not teach this material to the students before your Audubon visit.*

**Snapping Turtle life cycles** start as eggs, which are laid in the ground. The young turtles hatch and are on their own. They eat the same type of food when they are young as when they are older: plants and meat. Young turtles eat insects, older ones eat fish and frogs. As they grow, they will just get bigger and bigger till they are full grown, just like a person. Snapping turtles eggs are laid on land, but once hatched they will spend most of their life in the water.

**Frog Life Cycles** start in the pond as eggs. The tadpole that hatches out generally eats plants. It stays in the pond, slowly growing back legs and then front legs. As it turns into an adult frog, its whole body slowly changes. Its mouth and tongue become better suited for catching insects and other living things. It gives up its plant diet entirely. As adults, only two of our local frogs spend much time in the pond when they are not mating: the Bullfrog and the Green Frog. Several of our frogs live in forests, including the Gray Tree Frog, Spring Peeper and the Wood Frog. Leopard Frogs live in fields and American Toads (all toads are frogs) live in forests, fields and anywhere damp outside the water. All of these frogs return to the water to start the life cycle – the eggs are laid in the water and the young all grow up as tadpoles.

**Dragonfly Life Cycles** start out under the water. The young dragonfly (*nymph*) hatches out of the egg as a predator. It has a jaw that folds up under its body like a long arm. (It is called the *labium*, if you want to sound like a smart intellectual type.) This can be used to reach out and grab insects, small fish, and tadpoles for food. When it is ready to emerge as an adult, it climbs on a cattail stem, tree or rock and the skin, called an exoskeleton, across its back cracks open. The adult slowly emerges from the exoskeleton in a process that takes about one or two hours. The nymph exoskeleton is left behind and the adult dragonfly uses air and blood pressure to expand its wings and body to full size, which is much larger than the nymph it started as. The adults fly about to catch insects around ponds, fields and forests. Only the sexually mature dragonflies are found around ponds. The males often defend a territory there; the females come to mate and then return to the fields and forests once they lay their eggs in the water.

**Wetlands** are important because they contain more life than any other habitat in our area. Mosquitos, dragonflies, frogs, salamanders, and many other animals need wetlands as a key part in their life cycles. They also provide habitat for herons, egrets, ducks, geese and swans to live in and rest in as they migrate. Wetlands are the most diverse habitat in our area.



*The dragonfly experiences gradual metamorphosis. There is no pupal stage in its life cycle.*