Vertebrates



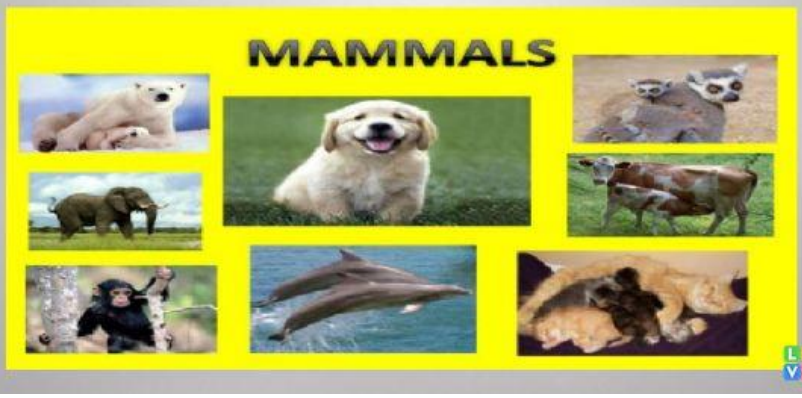
LIVEWORKSHEETS

Animals with backbones are called vertebrates. A backbone is a row of bones in the back of an animal. Scientists classify animals with backbones into five groups. These five groups are mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish.



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Mammals are covered with hair or fur. They give birth to live young and feed them with milk. They use lungs to breathe. Mammals are warm-blooded animals. This means that their body temperature stays the same. Goats, sheep, lions, elephants, tigers, dog, cats, monkeys, rats, mice, whales and dolphins are mammals.



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Birds are covered with feathers. Feathers help to keep birds warm. Some feathers also help birds to fly. Birds have wings for flying . Like mammals, birds have lungs to breathe air. Birds reproduce by laying eggs. Baby birds hatch from eggs. Many birds also care for their young for a while after they hatch. Birds have beaks to eat with. The shape of a bird's beak determines what they eat. The shape of a bird's feet can be used to tell where birds live. They are warm blooded animals. This means that their body temperature stays the same.





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Reptiles have dry scaly skin. They live mostly on land. They use lungs to breathe air. They lay eggs with thick leathery shells. Most reptiles live on land. Most of the young are able to meet their needs as soon as they are born. Reptiles are cold blooded animals.

There are three main groups of retiles. *Lizards and snakes* are in one group. Their bodies have rows of scales that overlap. *Alligators and crocodiles* are another group. They live in water most of the time. They come out of the water to sun themselves. *Tortoises and turtles* make up the third group of reptiles. They are the only reptiles with shells. Tortoises live on land and turtles live in the water.





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Amphibians are vertebrates with smooth moist skin. Amphibians lay eggs in water where their young hatch and remain until they are adults. Young amphibians do not look like their parents. As they grow their bodies change. For example, tadpoles live in water and look very different from adult frogs who live on land. Young amphibians breathe through their gills while living in the water. As they develop into adults, they grow lungs to breathe. Amphibians can also breathe through their skin. Amphibians are cold blooded animals. They depend on sunlight to be warm. To cool down, amphibians may go underground in muddy areas. Examples of amphibians are frogs, salamanders and newts



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Fish live in water. They are covered with scales and have fins. Fins help them move through the water. Fish breathe through their gills. They lay eggs to reproduce. Fish are cold-blooded animals.

The Nassau Grouper is one of the largest fish on the reef. It has (5) five dark brown bars on the body and, a dark band running from the snout, through the eye to the forehead side of the dorsal fin and a dark spot on the base of the tail fin. It changes color depending on the environment it is in. This helps to hide it so it can ambush fish to eat. Humans are the predators that have the biggest impact on the grouper populations.





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