

A Family Guide to Lizards & Snakes Alive!

Meet over 60 squamates — legged and legless lizards, including snakes!

You'll Discover:

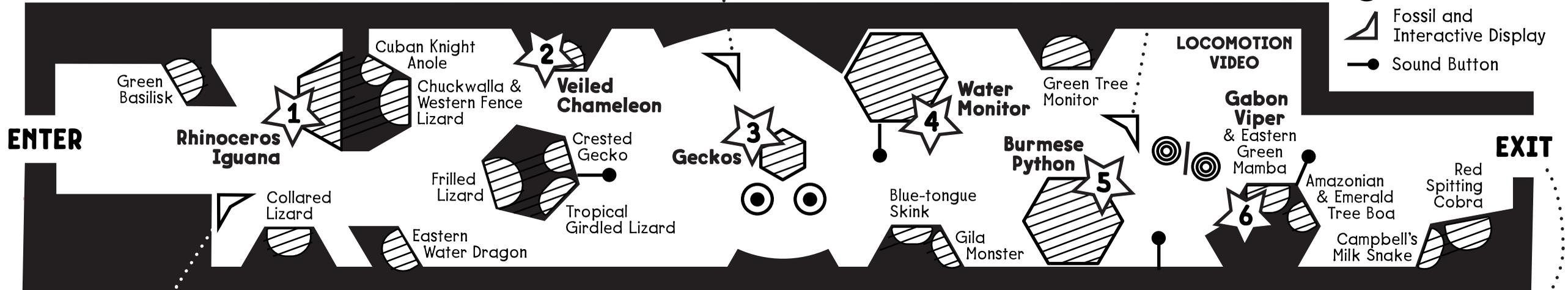
- Squamates are a **DIVERSE** group of animals. Nearly 8,000 kinds come in really different colors, shapes, and sizes!
- Squamates have **AMAZING ADAPTATIONS**. Super-sticky toes, night vision, deadly venom—squamates have them!



FEEL the armor on this fossil cast

OPEN a snake's jaws with this interactive

-  Live Animal Habitat
-  Gecko Zoom Camera
-  Snake Interactive
-  Fossil and Interactive Display
-  Sound Button



SEE like a chameleon!

1 DISCOVER where the Rhinoceros Iguana lives. Why is it endangered?

2 LOOK at the color patterns on the Veiled Chameleon. Could the colors say something to other chameleons?

3 WATCH the geckos get a grip on glass! Why don't they fall?

4 COUNT how many times the Water Monitor flicks its tongue in one minute. Why does it do that?

5 EXAMINE the Burmese Python and look for a picture of its bones. Can you find a clue to how snakes have changed over time?

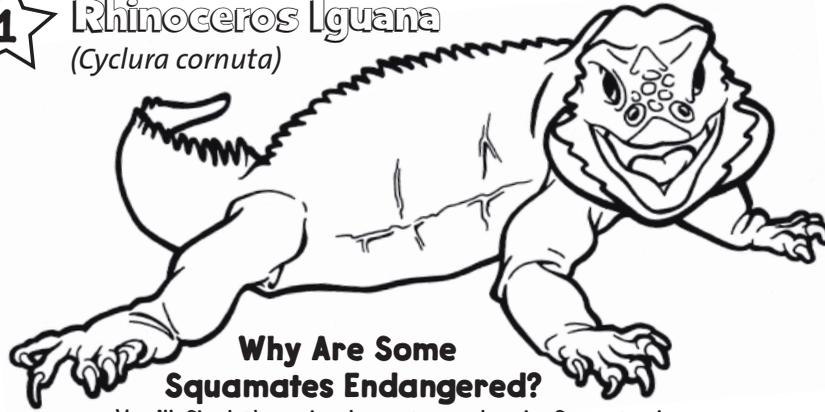
6 LOOK at the shape and color of the Gabon Viper. How do these help it hide and hunt?

EXPLORE more lizards and snakes in the Hall of Reptiles & Amphibians on the third floor. And VISIT the Hall of Vertebrate Origins on the fourth floor to see a marine lizard fossil!



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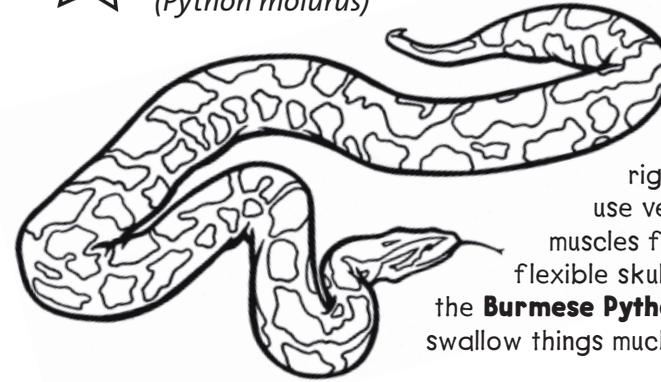
1 **Rhinoceros Iguana**
(*Cyclura cornuta*)



Why Are Some Squamates Endangered?

You'll find them in deserts and rain forests, in oceans and underground. But some, like **Rhinoceros Iguanas**, are losing their habitats and hunted as food. They are endangered—at risk of disappearing forever.

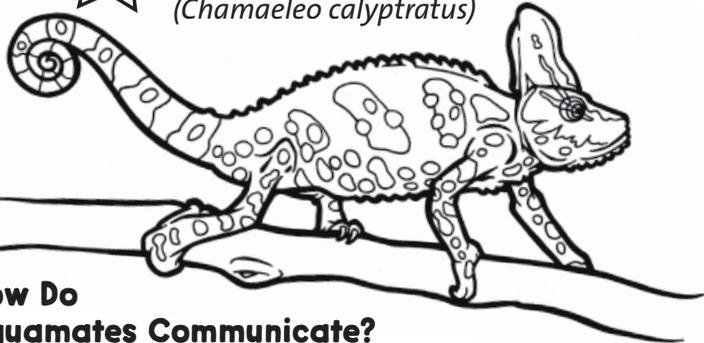
6 **Burmese Python**
(*Python molurus*)



What's Life Like Without Arms and Legs?

Snakes use their muscles and hundreds of ribs to move on the ground, in the ocean, or right up a tree. To get food, snakes use venom, heat sensing, and strong muscles for squeezing prey. Thanks to flexible skulls and lower jaws, snakes like the **Burmese Python** can eat huge meals. They can swallow things much bigger than their own heads!

2 **Veiled Chameleon**
(*Chamaeleo calytratus*)



How Do Squamates Communicate?

Geckos click and snakes may hiss, but most squamates are silent. Instead, they use their bodies, bobbing their heads or sticking out their tongues. **Chameleons** change their color patterns to communicate. Each kind even has its own "language"!

3 **Madagascan Giant Day Gecko**
(*Phelsuma madagascariensis*)



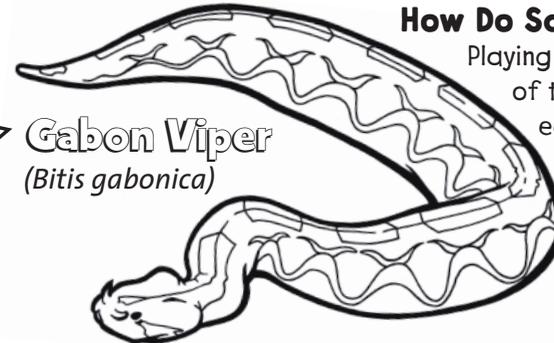
How Do Squamates Move?

Their many shapes and sizes allow squamates to move in amazing ways. Some fly, some burrow, and some even sprint across water! Each of the **Day Gecko's** toes has millions of tiny "hairs" that help it cling to surfaces—even upside down!

DID YOU KNOW?

People often think of squamates as "cold-blooded" animals. But in fact, when it gets really hot outside, some squamates can have body temperatures that are warmer than yours and mine! Most squamates are **ectothermic**. "Ecto" means outside and "thermic" means heat. They control their body temperature by moving to warmer or cooler places in their environment.

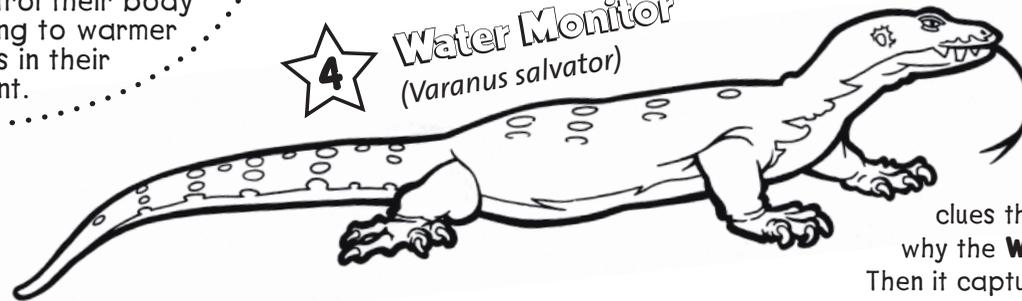
5 **Gabon Viper**
(*Bitis gabonica*)



How Do Squamates Protect Themselves?

Playing dead and spitting venom are only two of the many ways squamates avoid being eaten! The many-colored **Gabon Viper** blends into the leaves on the forest floor. It may hiss to keep danger away, or bite with its huge fangs and deadly venom.

4 **Water Monitor**
(*Varanus salvator*)



How Do Squamates Detect Food?

Some squamates, like chameleons, use their eyes to locate food and their tongues to grab it. Others use their tongues to collect clues that help them track prey. That's why the **Water Monitor** flicks its tongue. Then it captures the prey with its teeth.

Lizards and Snakes: Alive! is organized by the American Museum of Natural History, New York (www.amnh.org), in collaboration with the Fernbank Museum of Natural History, Atlanta, and the San Diego Natural History Museum, with appreciation to Clyde Peeling's Reptiland.