

Smithsonian Associates Presents

Reptiles and Amphibians: A Closer Look- Handout

Matt Felperin, Roving Naturalist

1. Introduction and guide to iNaturalist

<https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/getting+started>

iNaturalist is a great way to both identify local wildlife and share your observations to contribute to community science. However, it may be a bit overwhelming at first! That's why they have put together a guide to get you started. Check it out and you'll be out there submitting your observations in no time!

2. Quick guide to identifying snakes using field marks

<https://www.wildernesscollege.com/identify-snakes.html>

This article is an excellent place to start when it comes to learning how to identify snakes using field marks: physical characteristics of the snake's anatomy (head shape, scale textures, colors/patterns, pupil type, etc.). This skill is especially useful when trying to safely identify a venomous snake, or dealing with snakes that look very similar to other species.

3. Smithsonian Magazine article on neoteny in a population of Tiger Salamanders

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/the-salamanders-that-refuse-to-grow-up-64827289/>

Neoteny is the retainment of juvenile characteristics in adults, regardless of species. Some salamanders have adapted to harsh environments by remaining in their larval stage into adulthood, and this is a very interesting article about a small population of Tiger Salamanders in Wisconsin that has done just that!

4. Complete guide to binoculars for wildlife observation

<https://www.audubon.org/gear/binocular-guide>

This is an incredible resource for finding a pair of binoculars that best fit your needs and budget. The best bang for your buck in my opinion are the Vortex Diamondback 8x42 magnification.

5. Best budget superzoom cameras for wildlife photography

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-superzoom-camera/amp/>

These articles will help you select the best quality superzoom camera you can get on a budget. Note that the cameras are not cheap, but by having a built in zoom lens, you won't need to shell out more money for a telephoto lens. My personal combination is not a superzoom all-in-one, I use the Canon R5 with Canon 100-400mm lens.