**BALL PYTHON “KAA”**
Acquired January 18, 1990

**Meet the Animal**
This is one of our ball pythons we named Kaa. Ball pythons are typically found in open forests or savanna grasslands in sub-Saharan central and western Africa. Pythons possess labial (lip) scales that have up to 13 pairs of depressions called labial dimples. These dimples sense infrared heat of warm-blooded prey. This functions like a lensless camera. It is possible they can “superimpose” their visual image upon their infrared one, creating a complete sensory “picture” of their prey.

**How Can I Help**
In order to help our local snakes, manage your habitat in a sustainable way by soil and water conservation, controlling exotic species, and using organic practices for plant and pest management.

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**CHUCKWALLA “MURPHY”**
Acquired June 14, 2014

**Meet the Animal**
This is our Chuckwalla we named Murphy. Chuckwallas are commonly found in the desert boulders of southern California, southern Nevada, southwestern Utah, western Arizona, Sonora, and Baja California. These diurnal lizards are frequently observed basking on rocks in late morning and afternoon. They are tolerant of temperatures above 102° F. Extremely well adapted to desert-living, they are able to modestly change color from dark to light or vice versa in order to reflect or absorb heat from the sun. They also can adjust body posture to maximize or minimize sun exposure.

**How Can I Help**
Environmentally friendly ways to keep cool: Dress for the weather; wear light-colored clothing to reflect the sun’s rays; stay hydrated. In your home, use light-blocking curtains to prevent your house from warming from the sun and use LED light bulbs that give off less heat.
**KENYAN SAND BOA “JAWA”**  
Acquired June 14, 2014

**Meet the Animal**  
This is our Kenyan sand boa we named Jawa. Sand boas are found in arid areas of Africa including Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Tanzania. Sand boas have a spade-like scale on their snout that allows them to quickly burrow down into sand or soil without rubbing scales off their snout. The high placement of the eyes allows the snake to see above ground, while remaining hidden. These snakes often eat small rodents.

**How Can I Help**  
Use natural methods to control household pests rather than harsh chemicals which may cause unintentional harm to our native snakes that eat these pests.

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**BLUE-TONGUED SKINK “AZUL”**  
Acquired February 20, 1999

**Meet the Animal**  
This is our blue-tongued skink we named Azul. Blue-tongued skinks are usually found in the open woodlands, dry grasslands, semi-deserts, or brushlands of north and east Australia, as well as Tasmania. These lizards are ground-dwelling and well adapted for burrowing into the substrate. Some of their adaptations for burrowing include osteoderms, which make the body more rigid for pushing through substrate, countersinking of the lower jaw (lower jaw doesn’t come out as far as upper jaw), a robust tail, reduction in limbs, and a spade-shaped head.

**How Can I Help**  
In order to provide a healthy habitat for our local burrowing animals, you can improve the structure of the soil in your own backyard by composting. Composting requires aeration, which supplies oxygen for the decomposition process. As it decomposes, your waste heats up, breaks down, and develops beneficial bacteria and fungi, excellent byproducts for growing healthy plants.
Eurasian legless lizard “Bubbles”  
Acquired April 13, 2007  

Meet the Animal  
Eurasian legless lizards like Bubbles can be found in a variety of habitats including woodlands in southeastern Europe, the Middle East, and southwestern Asia. They are also known as “glass lizards,” a name derived from the common, but mistaken, belief that these lizards can break into several pieces then rejoin again as a whole animal. Like many other types of lizards, the legless lizard can autotomize, or break off, the tail when caught by a predator; however, the body cannot break into pieces.

How Can I Help  
When visiting woodlands, remember to embody the principles of “leave no trace.” Plan ahead and prepare; travel and camp on durable surfaces; dispose of waste properly; leave what you find; minimize campfire impacts; respect wildlife; be considerate of other visitors.

Leopard tortoises “Kobe” (left)  
Acquired September 2, 2004  

“Ollie” (right)  
Acquired January 10, 1992  

Meet the Animal  
These are our leopard tortoises, Ollie and Kobe, that were someone’s pets before they arrived at the Academy. Leopard tortoises are found in the savannahs of central and south Africa. These animals have a well-developed homing instinct. They have been known to return home after being moved miles away.

How Can I Help  
In order to help conserve your local turtles, please remember that if you see a turtle in the road, safely move it off the road in the same direction it is traveling so that it does not end up back in the road after you have moved on.
WOOD TURTLE “SYCAMORE”
Acquired September 6, 1999

Meet the Animal
This is our North American wood turtle we named Sycamore. Wood turtles are always found near moving water such as streams, rivers, lakes, and in adjacent meadows, forests, swamps and shrub or berry thickets. They range from Maine to Virginia, west to the Great Lakes region, and in Nova Scotia and Ontario. Wood turtles have a peculiar technique for finding earthworms. They alternately stamp or “tap” their feet on the ground, which lures earthworms to the surface, where they are quickly consumed.

How Can I Help
In order to provide healthy options for your local turtles to eat, remember to use natural forms of pest and weed control in your gardens. Manage garden pests using natural methods and use natural barriers to weed formation such as applying mulch early in the season, before most weeds have a chance to grow.

YELLOW-BELLIED SLIDER “LEMON”
Acquired November 1993

Meet the Animal
This is our yellow-bellied slider we named Lemon. Yellow-bellied sliders are found in rivers, ponds, streams, lakes, swamps and even water-filled roadside ditches and canals central and southeastern U.S. They are mostly seen when basking on logs or rafts of matted vegetation. Like other pond turtles, when space is limited they will climb on top of one another to find the best basking sites. They are called “ sliders” because they quickly slide into the water when they sense danger.

How Can I Help
Put simply, conserve water. Turn off the faucet while you brush your teeth; take showers instead of baths; use less water when you flush; if you wash dishes by hand, plug the sink; be smart about laundry; increase the amount of plant based foods in your diet.