



# TAILS AND TALES

PETS

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## A NOTE TO PARENTS

This lesson is written to be completed with the guidance of an adult.

In this lesson plan, children will learn about animals by reading, writing, listening, and completing fun activities! This lesson is adaptable and can be simplified or made more complicated as desired.

Go to [christiancountylibrary.org/lessons](http://christiancountylibrary.org/lessons) for a PDF version of this lesson plan with clickable links. You can also find all of our past lessons and booklists here. An active Christian County Library card is necessary to checkout digital materials from Hoopla.



This lesson plan uses items available on Hoopla. To checkout from Hoopla, download the Hoopla app or go to [hoopladigital.com](http://hoopladigital.com) and create an account with your Christian County Library card. Each library card is limited to 5 Hoopla checkouts a month.



# PETS: WHAT ARE THEY?

Humans have been keeping animals for a very long time, some say as long as 40,000 years. We domesticated farm animals like cows and chickens about the same time that humans first started planting seeds in the ground. Domestication is the process of adapting wild plants and animals for human use. Domestic species are raised for food, work, clothing, medicine, and many other uses. These plants and animals must be raised and cared for by humans and, most importantly, are not wild.



Goats were probably the first animals to be domesticated. They provided early humans meat and milk. Though goats were the first animals to be domesticated they were not pets to early peoples.

Though it may not look like it, this goat is the domestic relative of the wild goat (bezoar goat) above.

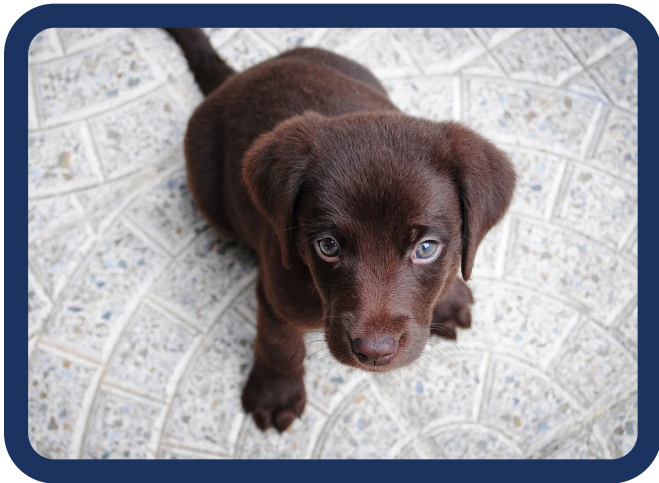




# DOGS: THE FIRST PET

## History of Domesticity

To find out how we got our furry friends we have to go back over 27,000 years to when cavemen first encountered wolves. Wolves would follow traveling ancient humans and eat scraps left behind. Eventually humans began to feed the wolves. They became the first pets, different from animals people would use for food.



This allowed the wolves to be fed and allowed ancient humans to have protection at night. This is called mutualism, where two members of different species work together and both benefit.

Eventually people started finding traits they liked in certain wolves and when those wolves had puppies they would have the desirable traits of their parents. Humans did this all over the world which is why we have so many different types of dogs. Things like rounded ears, curled tails, and bigger eyes are all traits changed by humans to make wolves appear more friendly. These traits are very noticeable in modern dogs.

# Dog and Wolf Differences

Find the differences between dogs and wolves. Circle the parts of a dog that are different from the wolf.



# JOBS FOR DOGS

Though many of us no longer go running after caribou with our canine companions, there are still many important ways dogs help us in our lives. Some dogs even have jobs like working on a farm or as a guide dog.



Dogs that work on farms have to always be ready to protect livestock like cows and chickens. They also help farmers move animals from place to place by barking or running behind them.

There is even a special breed of sheepdog that works to protect endangered penguins on a small island near Australia called the **Maremma Sheepdog**. The dogs chase away foxes, which had hunted the penguins down to only four in number. Since the dogs were brought over in 2006 there are now around 200 penguins that migrate to the island each year to lay their eggs.

Check out this link for 15 Unique Jobs Only Dogs Can Do:

<https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/lifestyle/working-dogs-jobs-dogs-can/>



# CATS

Much like wolves, wild cats followed humans because many times people had food or their houses had pests like mice. Early humans and cats lived together, the cats ate the mice and rats that would carry sickness, and the humans would be safe from disease.



In ancient Egypt, cats were praised for killing poisonous snakes and protecting humans. People would even mummify their cats, and have them buried in family tombs. **Bastet** was the cat-headed goddess of protection.

**Ancient Egyptian** wildcats look very similar to our pet cats, but today's kitties come in many more colors and sizes.





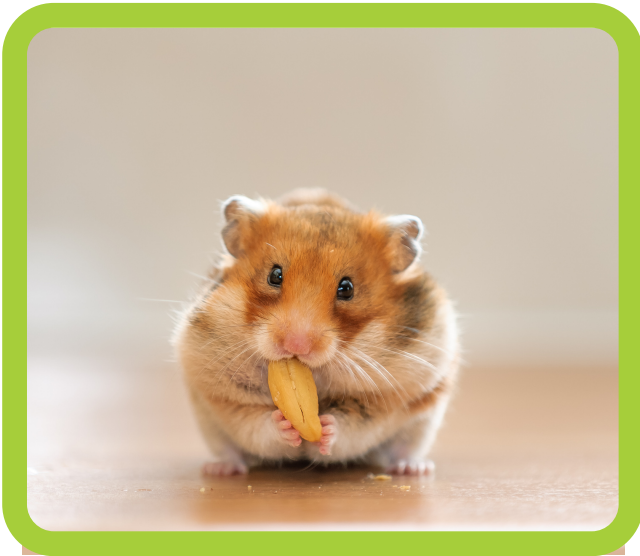






# SMALL PETS

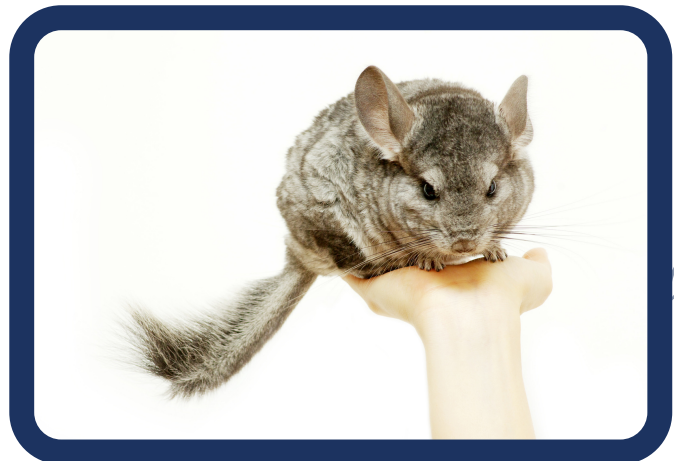
Small mammals, such as rodents, were only domesticated as pets in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The most common household pets from the rodent family are **hamsters, gerbils, mice, rats, chinchillas,** and **guinea pigs.**



Many rodents are **nocturnal**, meaning they are most active at night, or **crepuscular**, meaning active during twilight. Because rodents are more active at night they can be tricky pets to care for. They need bedding made of small, soft pieces of wood, and most eat seeds and small grains.

Want help selecting the best pet, rodent or otherwise? Look at this article from the American Veterinary Medical Association for more information about choosing the right pet:

<https://www.avma.org/resources/pet-owners/petcare/selecting-pet-rodent>



# BIRDS

Some of the most popular pet birds are budgies, cockatiels, and doves. These pets need a lot of time with their humans to be happy. Many types of pet birds can be trained to do tricks, sing songs, and even talk!



The African Gray Parrot is the most intelligent of the birds. These birds need a lot of time to spend with their person and can become bored easily, which leads them to pluck their own feathers and screech.

Happy African Gray Parrots mimic their owners, and some can even understand words and reply back. Alex the African Gray, a parrot studied by scientists, learned different colors, opposites, and even how to count.



Use your library card to read **Balancing the Birds** by **Susie Ghahremani** on

**hoopla**

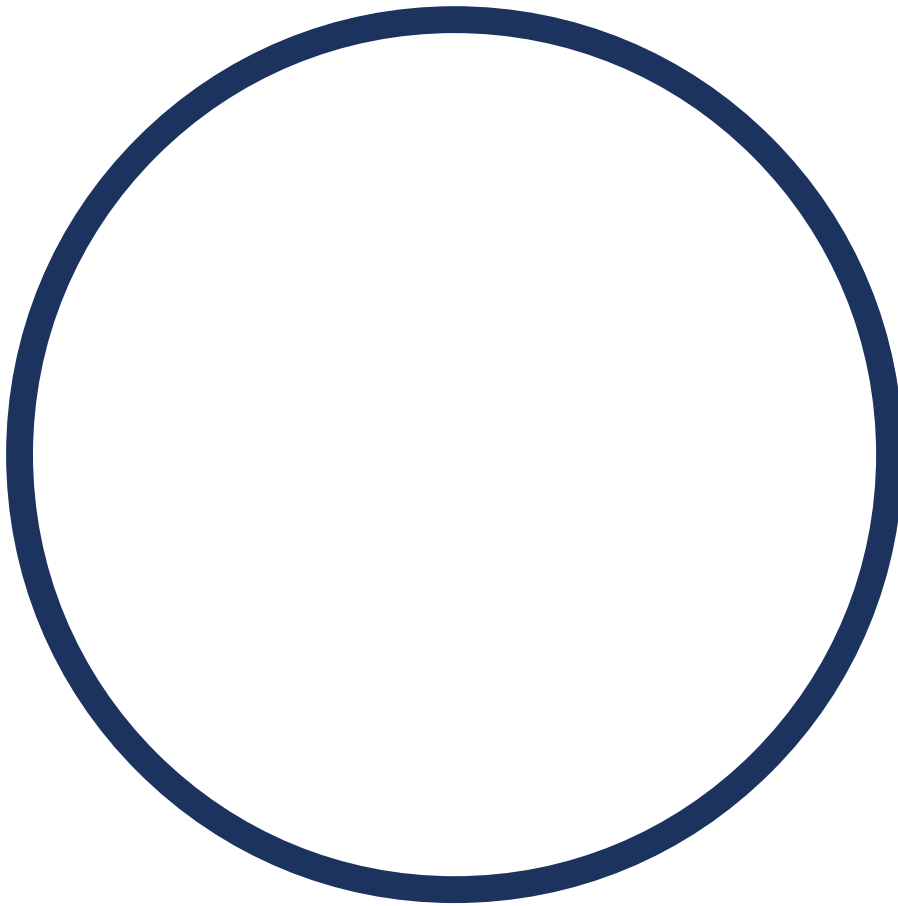
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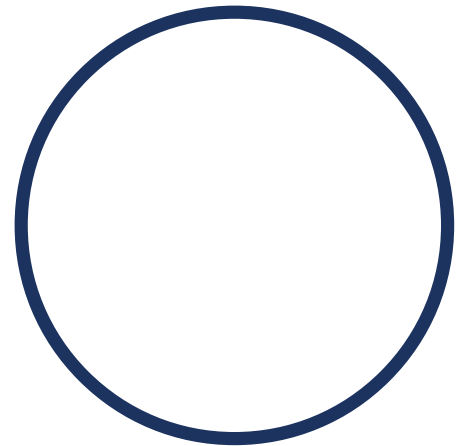


# Balancing Bird Craft

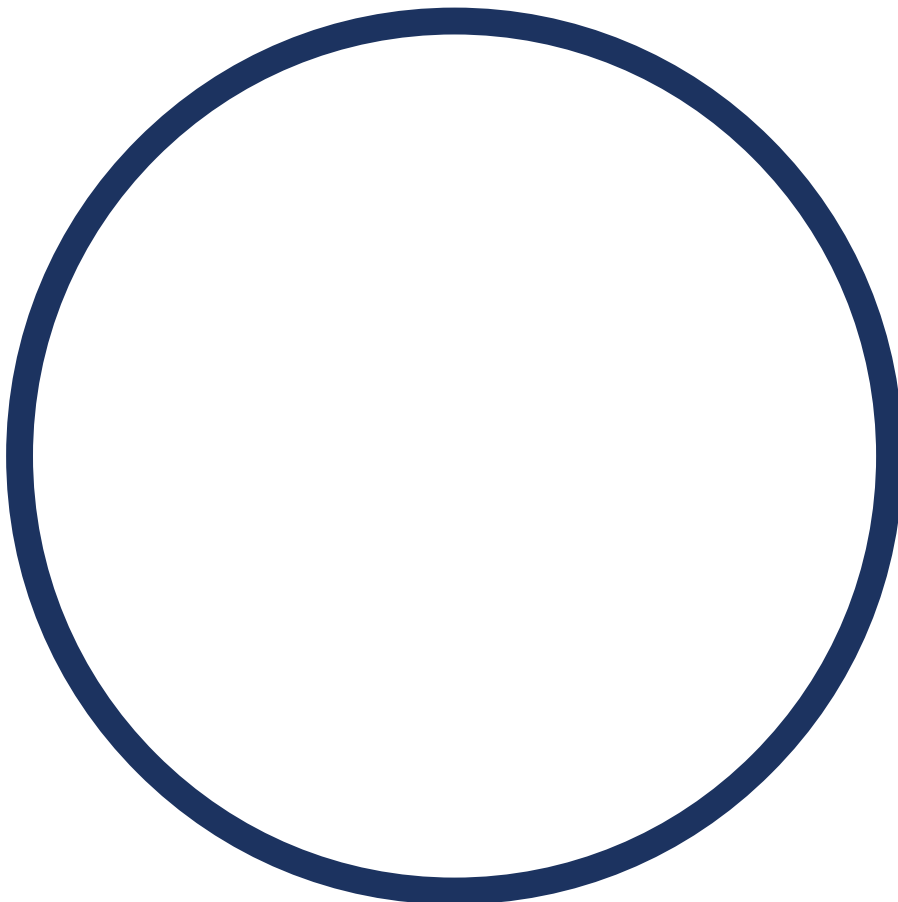
Go to the link below to watch a how to video on creating your bird craft:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a80VcYzQQE4>



Bird Body



Bird head



Bird Eyes



Bird Beak





# REPTILES

Looking for some reptile crafts you can do at home? Check out [Crafts for Kids Who Are WILD about Reptiles](https://www.hoopladigital.com/play/11773514) by Kathy Ross on Hoopla <https://www.hoopladigital.com/play/11773514>

Reptiles can be hard to take care of due to the special foods and climates many wild reptiles need to live. Learning about them and handling, or spending time holding them, can help prepare people for a life with these creatures.

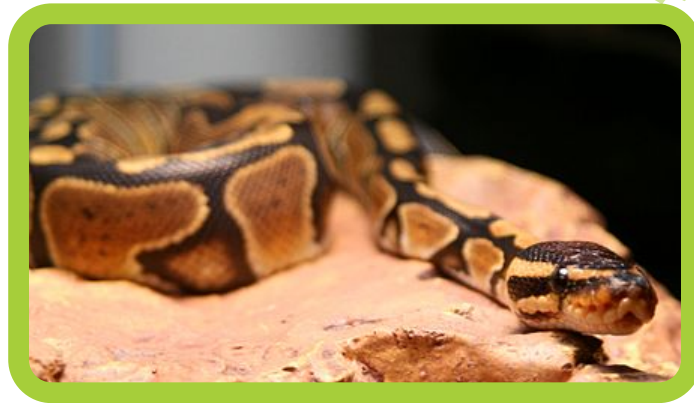


Lizards and turtles are among the most popular reptiles to keep as pets. Tortoises can even outlive their owners!

Bearded Dragons are one of the most calm and people friendly reptiles to have as pets. They are omnivores which means that you can feed them bugs and veggies.

Snakes are a little misunderstood when it comes to pets. Some people see them as scary monsters, but many pet snakes are calm and enjoy hanging out with or on their person.

Pythons are a favorite of snake owners for their easy-going nature as well as the many colors and patterns they come in.





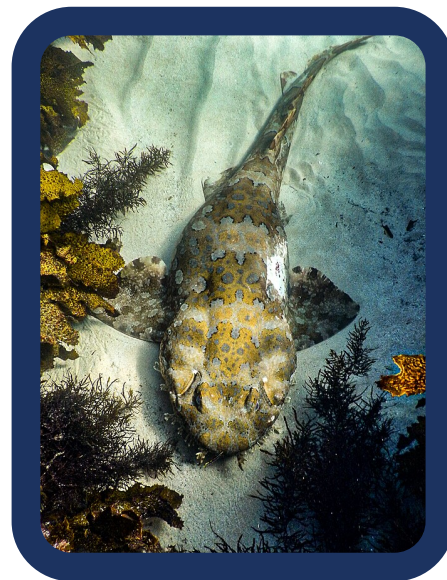
# FISH

Fish are perfect pets for people who are busy or who don't want to have to clean up after a dog or cat. Though these pets many seem boring, watching fish swim and explore their tank can be very entertaining. There is even evidence that fish can feel emotions like fear, joy, relaxation, and playfulness.



Bettas and gold fish are great first pets for anyone wanting to take care of an animal. They do need a lot of room to swim around and get exercise. A 3 gallon tank is perfect for a single betta fish!

For those that like to live dangerously, there are certain types of sharks and stingrays that can be pets. The Wobbegong is a shark that can be kept as a pet, but it needs a lot of special care, including a tank size of 135 gallons. They eat dried foods like squid and crab.







# WEIRD PETS

People are always trying to stand out and one way they do is by owning an exotic or very different pet. Popular exotic pets include the capybara, fennec fox, and axolotl. Some people even own larger animals like cheetahs! Though some states ban owning these pets.



The reason some states ban owning certain exotic pets is that many times the people buying these pets are unable to give them the special care they need. For example, fennec foxes may look cute but they dig most of the night in their natural habitat, so when they are in a person's home they will dig into anything including the furniture.

Though exotic pets may look cute and cuddly, they are wild animals. We have had hundreds of years with domestic animals like cats and dogs which makes them the perfect animal companions.

# RECIPES

Use this recipe to make a treat for your dog or cat!



## Pet Cookies

Ingredients: 2 cups wheat germ, 3 (2.5 ounces) jars strained chicken baby food, 1 tablespoon water

### Directions:

Step 1 - Preheat oven to 350 degrees F

Step 2 - In a medium bowl, mix the wheat germ, baby food, and water together. Add more water if necessary to form a dough.

Step 3: Roll dough into 1 inch balls and place on cookie sheet. Flatten slightly with a fork dipped in water.

Step 4: Bake for 20 to 25 minutes.

For more pet treat recipes check out this link to All Recipes:  
<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipes/853/everyday-cooking/more-meal-ideas/pet-food/pet-treats/>

# PET ROCK!

## Materials:

- Smooth Rock
- Googly Eyes
- Paint Pen
- Glue



## Instructions

1. Wash off your rock and let it dry before adding details.
2. Add your eyes to the rock wherever you like on the rock.
3. Add details with your paint pen.
4. Enjoy your new pet rock!

For extra fun think about where your pet rock would like to live.

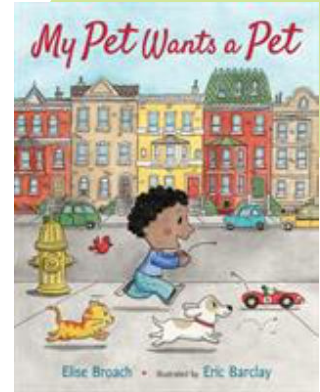
Do they live in a shoe box with a blanket? Or do they live in a cage with some toys? Build them the perfect pet house to live in!





# BOOK LISTS

[My Pet Wants a Pet](#) by Elise Broach



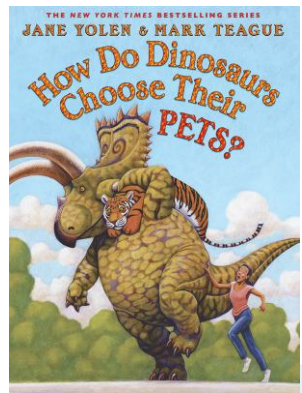
[How do Dinosaurs Choose Their Pets?](#) by Jane Yolen

[Lola Gets a Cat](#) by Anna McQuinn

[I Want a Dog](#) by Jon Agee

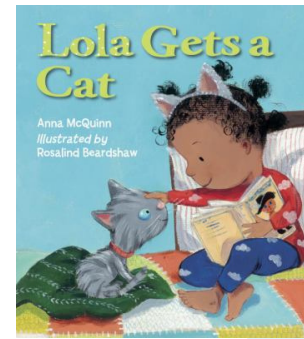
[Who Wants a Tortoise?](#) by Dave Keane

[Katie's Vet Loves Pets](#) by Fran Manushkin



[Little Kids First Big Book of Pets](#) by Catherine D. Hughes

[Pets](#) by Jill McDonald



[My Pets, Your Pets, Our Pets](#) by Emma Carlson Berne

[You Don't Want a Dragon!](#) by Ame Dyckman

[Wanted, The Perfect Pet](#) by Fiona Robertson

[Strictly No Elephants](#) by Alisa Mantchev

