

Predators, NOT Pets

Teacher's Lesson Plan
Time: 40 minutes



Introduction:

Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge's mission is to provide lifetime refuge for abandoned, abused, and neglected big cats with an emphasis on tigers, lions, leopards, and cougars. Our vision is through public education we can work to end the Exotic Animal Trade, making sanctuaries like Turpentine Creek no longer necessary; together, we can preserve and protect these magnificent predators in the wild for our children's future.

This lesson plan provides students the ability to identify what a predator is, why Turpentine Creek has to rescue and care for them, and that they are meant to be in the wild, not kept as pets.

Background:

Currently there are more tigers in backyards as pets (~5,000) in the United States than in the entire wild in Asia (~3,800). By teaching our students early on about how wildlife should be treated, we can make a huge impact on their survival. This lesson plan was developed to aid educators in teaching students the difference between domesticated and wild animals, why wild animals are not good pets, and what we can do to help save wildlife for the future. By learning how to protect wildlife, we can make a difference in animal welfare, saving animals from a life of abuse and neglect.

Title: Predators, NOT Pets

Theme: Predators are dangerous animals who hunt for their food, and use their skills as a predator for survival. Wild animals do not lose their natural hunting instincts and protective nature when taken out of the wild, and placed into captivity. Wild animals deserve a life of freedom. However, when people try and keep them as pets, they lose their fear of humans, cannot care for themselves, and cannot be released into the wild. Sanctuaries like Turpentine Creek save these animals from people who do not care for them, and provide them with the most natural life possible in captivity free from human contact.

Objective: Identify differences between predators and pets, and wild versus domesticated animals. Students will understand the issues facing exotic pet ownership, and what they can do to help protect wildlife for the future.

Resources: Lesson plan for appropriate grade level, printed activity books, and vocabulary list

Online Resources: TCWR Website, TCWR You-tube Channel, Lesson Plan Evaluation

Please feel free to use any worksheets appropriate for your classroom.

Teacher Materials: dry erase board and marker, pictures or videos of animals, crayons/markers, pencil.

*Worksheets are for educational, classroom or personal use only, and should not be shared publicly, reproduced, or posted Online at any time. Please contact TCWR's Education Department at: education@tcwr.org with questions or concerns.



Procedure 1st grade:

1-LS1-1

- 1) Introduce the theme of the lesson with the class. Ask students to brainstorm what they think a predator is and what they do. What kinds of animals are predators? Form a list of words and examples as a class.
 - a) What is a predator?
 - b) Where do they live?
 - c) What do they eat?
 - d) How do they survive?
- 2) What is a domestic animal? Have students brainstorm a list of characteristics of a domesticated animal, answering questions above. **Worksheets 4 & 5**
- 3) Ask students to compare a predator and a pet. How are they the same? How are they different? What do they both need to survive? **Worksheet 6**
- 4) After brainstorming, discuss with students that wild animals are often kept as pets. Ask them if they think it is a good idea to keep an animal that can eat you. Can they meet their needs of survival in each habitat? **Worksheets 7 & 8**
- 5) What are some problems with owning wild animals? **Worksheet 9**
- 6) Have students make up their own **argument** on what wild animals need to survive, how humans effect wildlife, and **design a solution** to keep wild animals wild. **Worksheets 10 & 11**
 - a) How do humans effect the environment?
 - b) What happens when wild animals are taken from the wild?
 - c) What do wild animals need to be happy?
 - d) Are there ways that humans can help wild animals survive, grow, and meet their needs?
- 7) Introduce activity sheets throughout the lesson and allow students to work individually or as a group. They may use their vocabulary list to describe the pictures, color the picture sheets, and you should read the instructions as a class before getting started.

Discussion:

- 1) What is something new that you learned about animals?
- 2) Should wild animals be kept as pets? Why?
- 3) Can they meet their needs for survival?
- 4) How can we help save wild animals?
- 5) Where should wild animals be kept in captivity?
 - a) A zoo or sanctuary
- 6) What kind of animals are good pets?

Conclusion:

- 1) Wild animals should never be kept as pets. They are **“predators, not pets”**-say as a class together
- 2) We can protect wildlife by saving their natural habitat and leaving them in the wild.
- 3) Domesticated animals are okay to keep as pets, and need to be cared for just like we care for ourselves.
- 4) Sanctuaries like Turpentine Creek are important to save wild animals from captivity, giving them forever care.



Vocabulary List

Captivity: **not able** to roam free, need people to survive

Carnivore: an animal that eats **only meat**

Conservation: **protecting** of natural environment and wildlife

Dangerous: able or likely to **cause harm** or injury

Domestic Animal: tame or **friendly**, lives with humans, dogs, cats, farm animals

Endangered Species: a type of animal seriously at risk of **disappearing forever**, becoming **extinct**

Environment: **surroundings** or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives

Exotic Animal: **not native** or from the area that it lives in, introduced by people

Extinct: a species, family, or group of animals that **no longer exist** or are living

Freedom: not being restricted, able to **move around freely** and easily, wild

Herbivore: an animal that eats **only plants**

Omnivore: an animal that eats **both** meat and plants

Pet: a **domestic or tame** animal kept by people for companionship or pleasure

Predator: an animal that kills other animals for **food** to survive or live

Refuge: **Free** from harm, kept in captivity

Sanctuary: a place of **refuge or safety** in captivity, providing care for wild animals

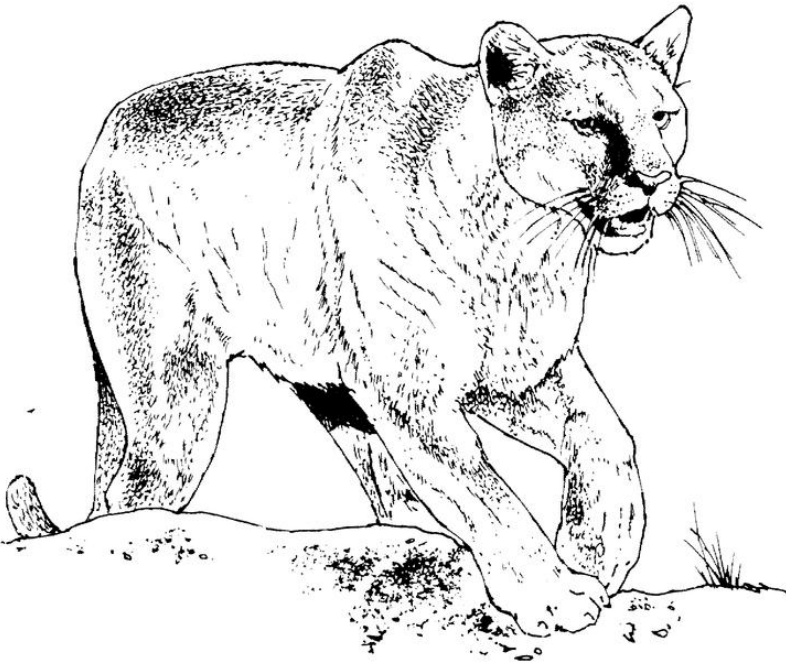
Tame: a **not dangerous** animal or frightened of people, domesticated animals

Welfare: health, **happiness**, and well-being

Wild Animal: **not domestic** or tame, lives in natural environment, not with people

Observe the two images, and circle domestic or wild, and answer questions below.

Cougar



Is this cat: WILD or TAME

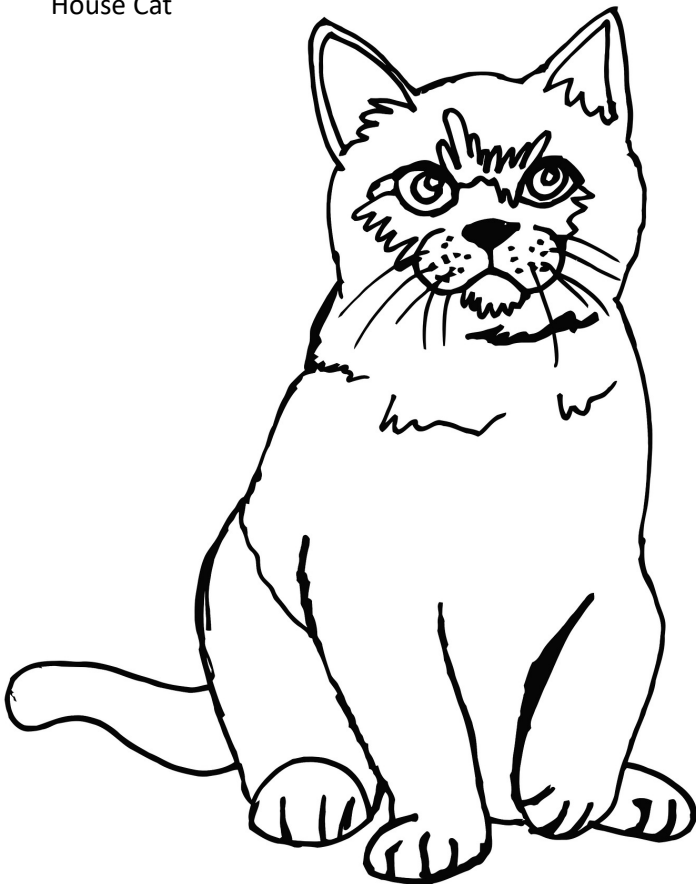
Is it a predator? YES or NO

Is it a good pet? YES or NO

Is this a CARNIVORE or
OMNIVORE

Fun Fact: Cougars have over 40 names, and are often called mountain lions, pumas, and panthers.

House Cat



Is this cat: WILD or TAME

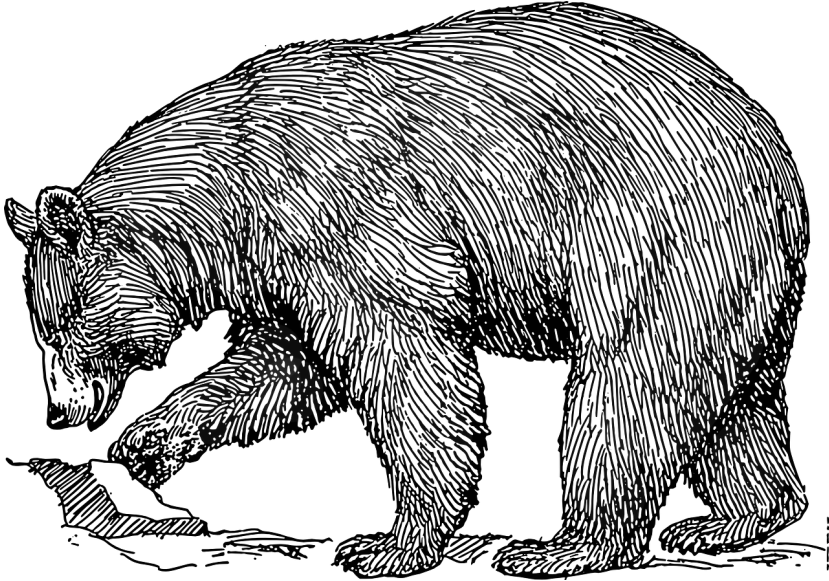
Is it a predator? YES or NO

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Fun Fact: Both house cats and cougars can purr.

Observe the two images, and circle domestic or wild, and answer questions below.



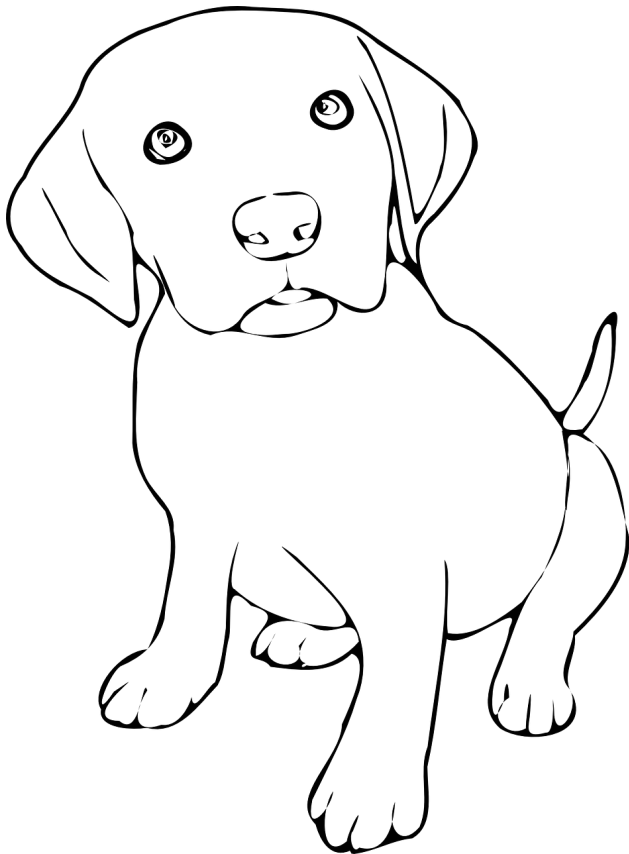
Is this animal: **WILD** or **TAME**

Is it a predator? **YES** or **NO**

Is it a good pet? **YES** or **NO**

Is this a **CARNIVORE** or
OMNIVORE

Fun Fact: Bears are 90%
vegetarian and mostly
eat plants and
scavenge for food.



Is this animal: **WILD** or **TAME**

Is it a predator? **YES** or **NO**

Is it a good pet? **YES** or **NO**

Is this a **CARNIVORE** or
OMNIVORE

Fun Fact: Dogs became
man's best friend over
9,000 years ago!



Draw your favorite predator below in its natural habitat.

Now draw your favorite domesticated animal and where it lives.

Circle where you think a Tiger should live. Put an X where they should not live.



To be happy, wild animals need: Space, food, water, shelter, and freedom.



Wild versus Captivity- How do tigers meet their needs for survival in the 3 environments below? Circle which images meet the tigers needs.



Image 1) Wild Tiger

Can it find food?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find water?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find shelter?

- a. Yes
- b. No

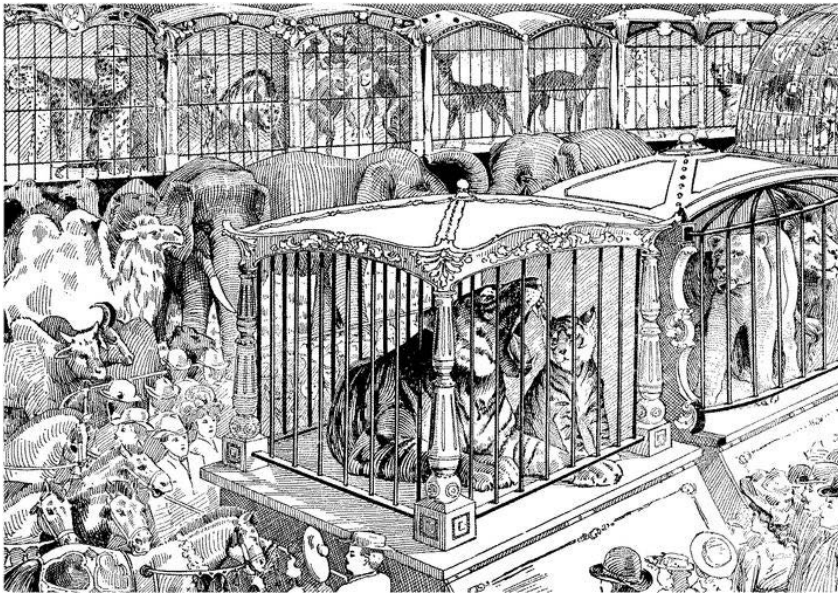


Image 2) Tiger in a Circus

Can it find food?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find water?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find shelter?

- a. Yes
- b. No



Image 3) Tiger in a Sanctuary

Can it find food?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find water?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find shelter?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Label the tigers face words below, and learn how tigers use their unique bodies to survive.



What does the tiger use each body part for to survive? Guess below, and check the answer sheet.

Eyes: _____

Ears: _____

Tongue: _____

Whiskers: _____

Nose: _____

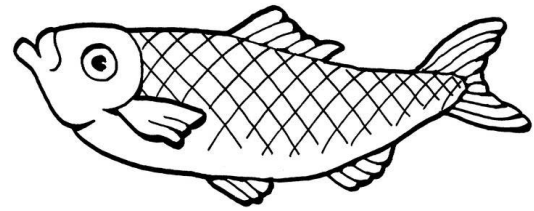
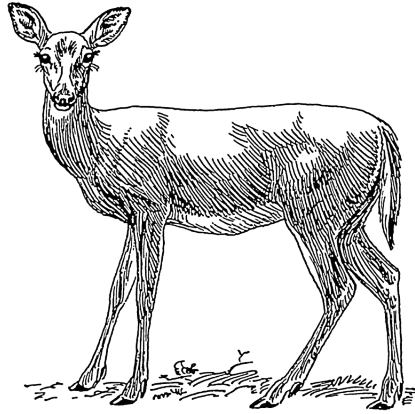
Stripes: _____

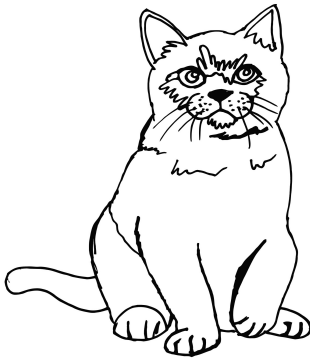
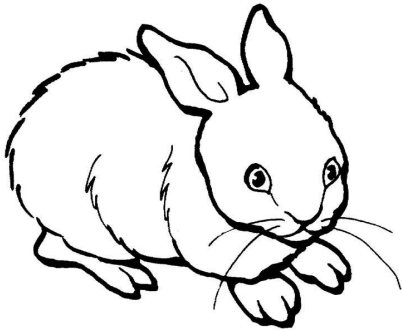
Fur: _____

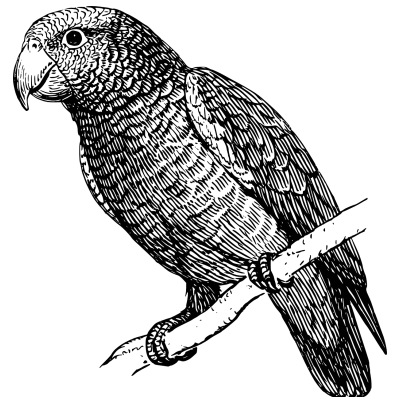
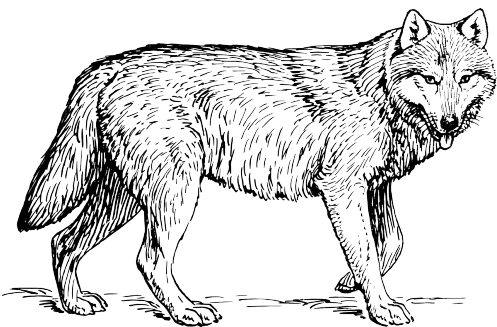
9 Teeth: _____

Underneath each animal, write whether it is a wild animal, tame, or both.

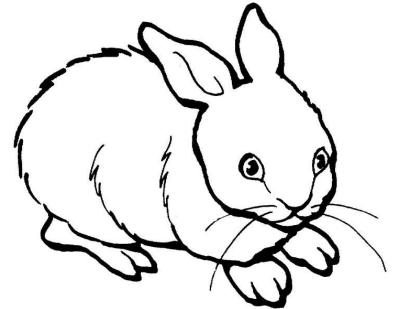
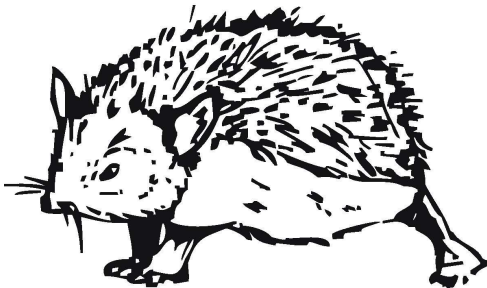
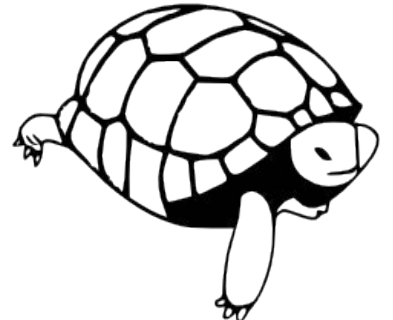
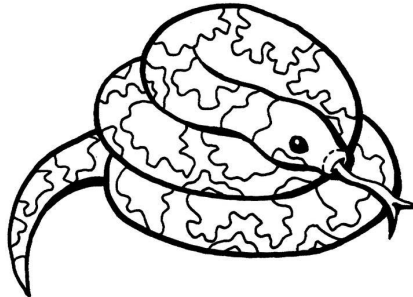
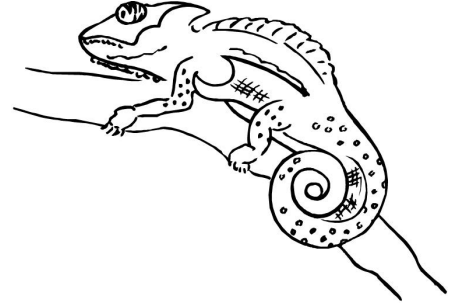
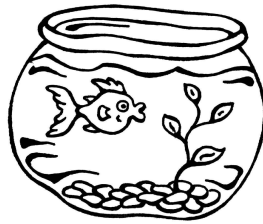
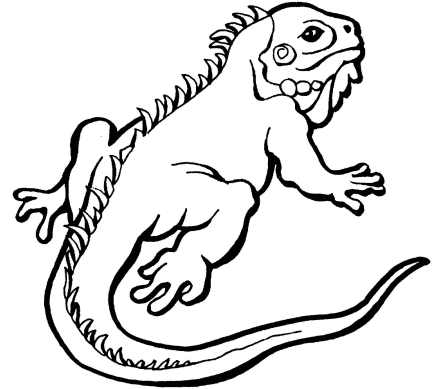
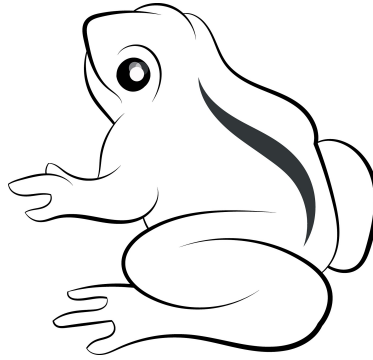
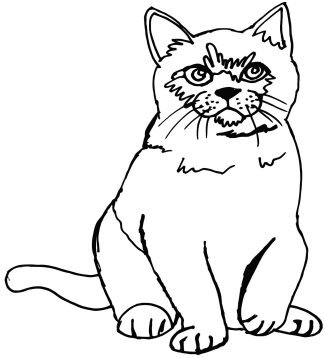
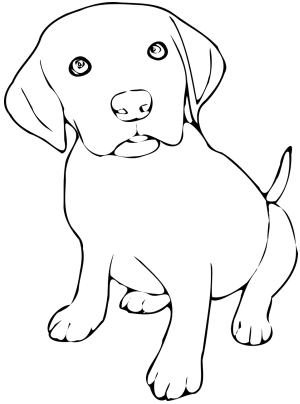
Then write if it is a predator or prey. There can be more than one answer.







Imagine you walk into a pet store, and below are the animals available for pets. Circle the animals that you can also find in the wild.

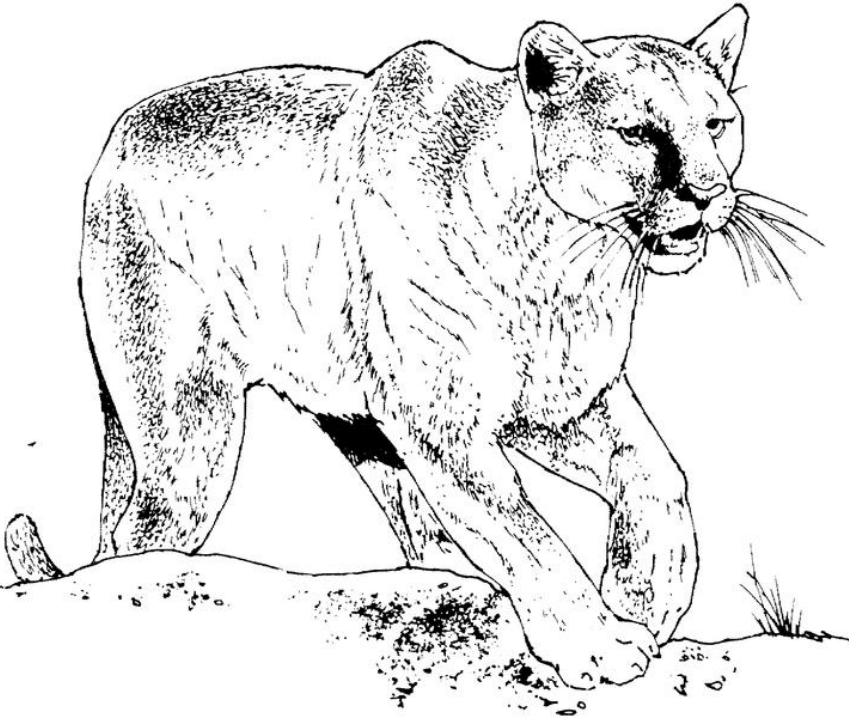


When buying a pet, it is important to make sure you know where it comes from. Many exotic animals are sadly stolen from the wild to be sold, and are not supposed to be pets. Do not keep wild animals as pets and you will be a responsible pet owner!



Teacher Key

Cougar



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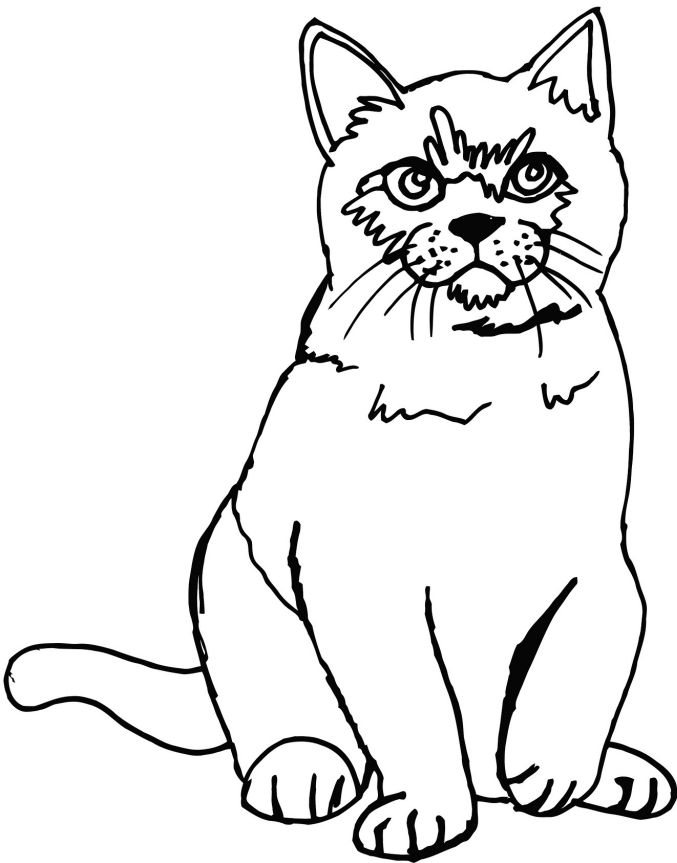
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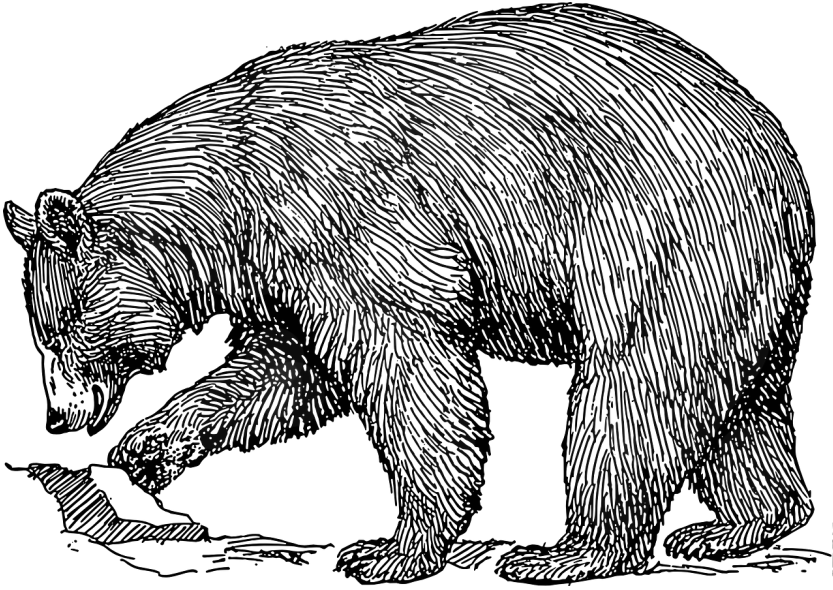
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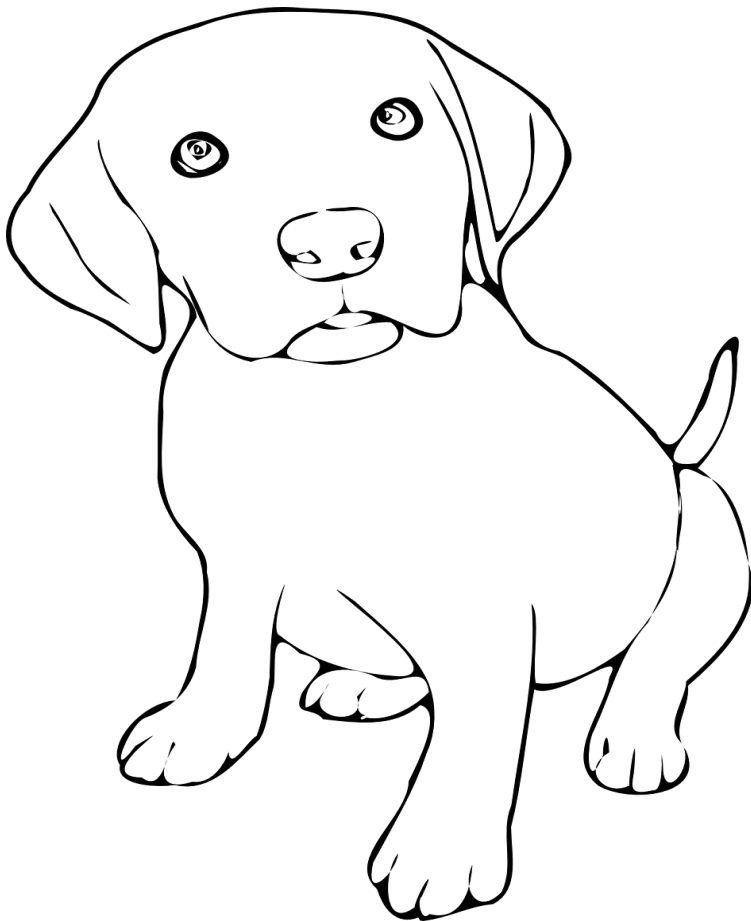
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Fun Fact: Bears are 90% vegetarian, and can smell 2,000 times better than a human!



Is this animal: WILD or **TAME**

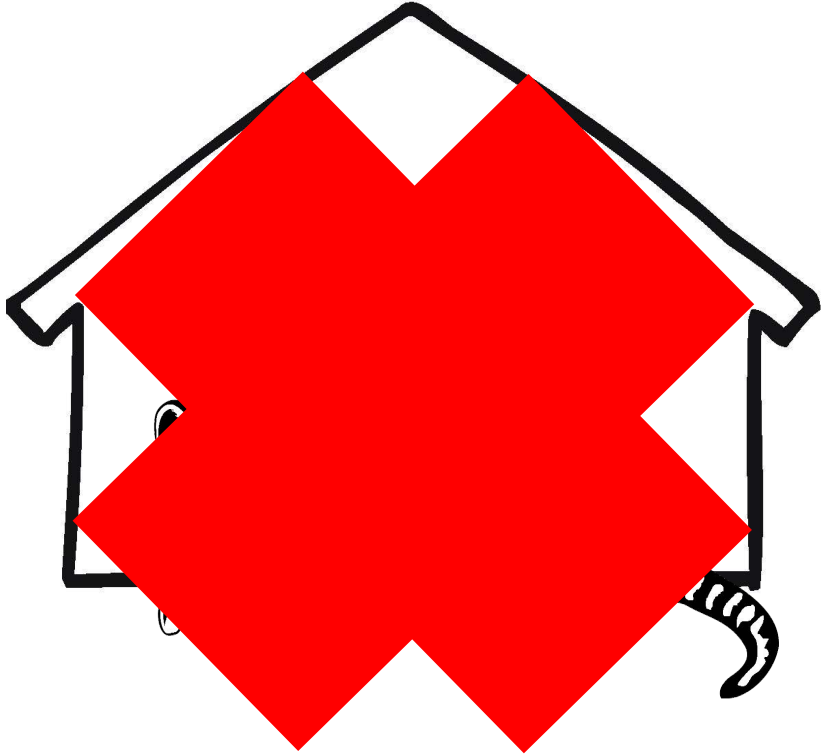
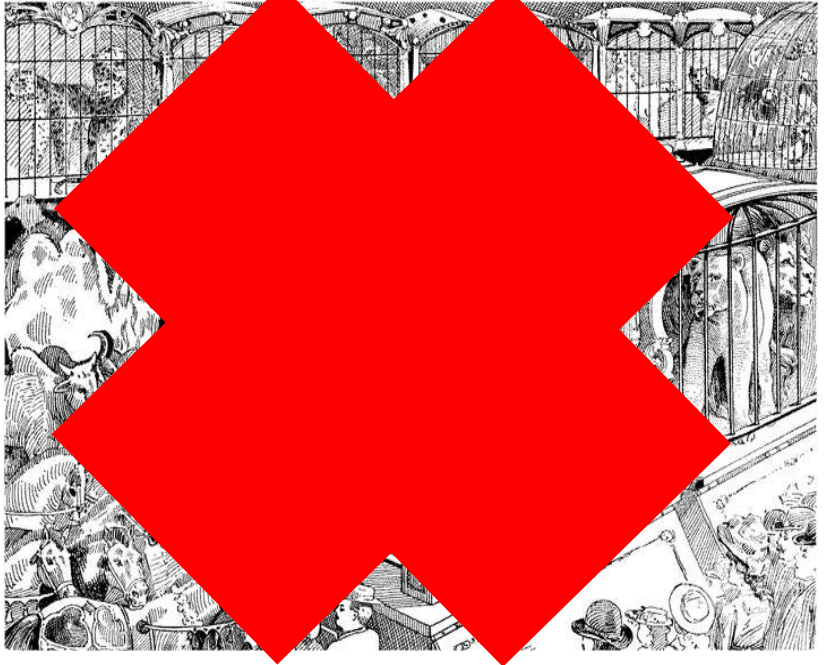
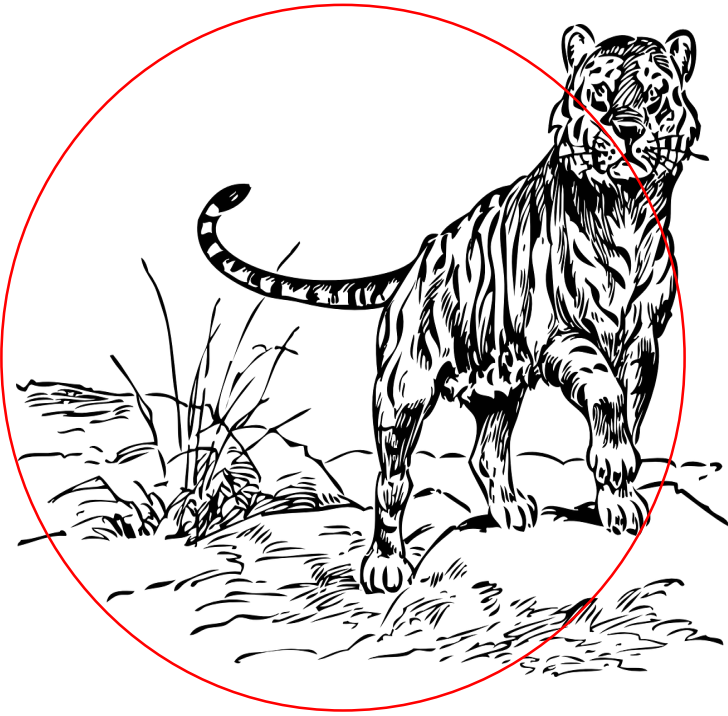
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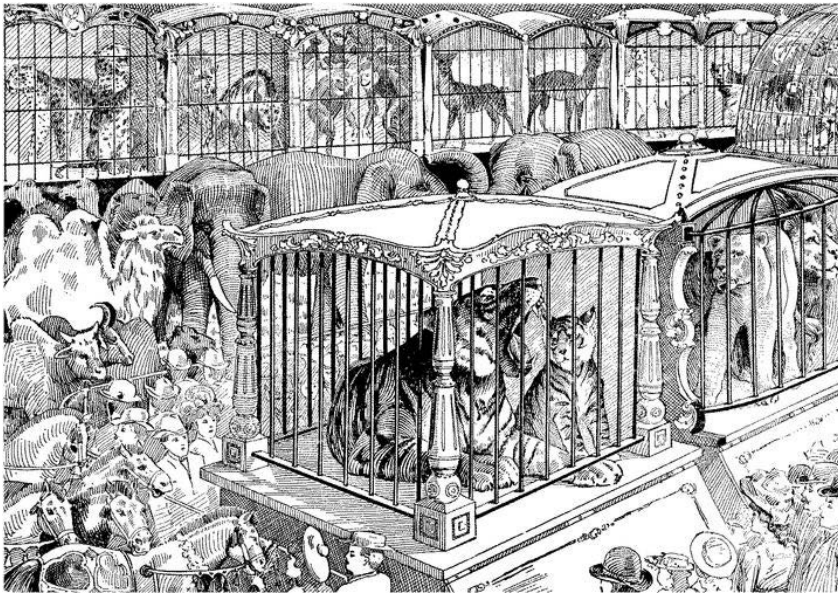


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Image 3) Tiger in a Sanctuary

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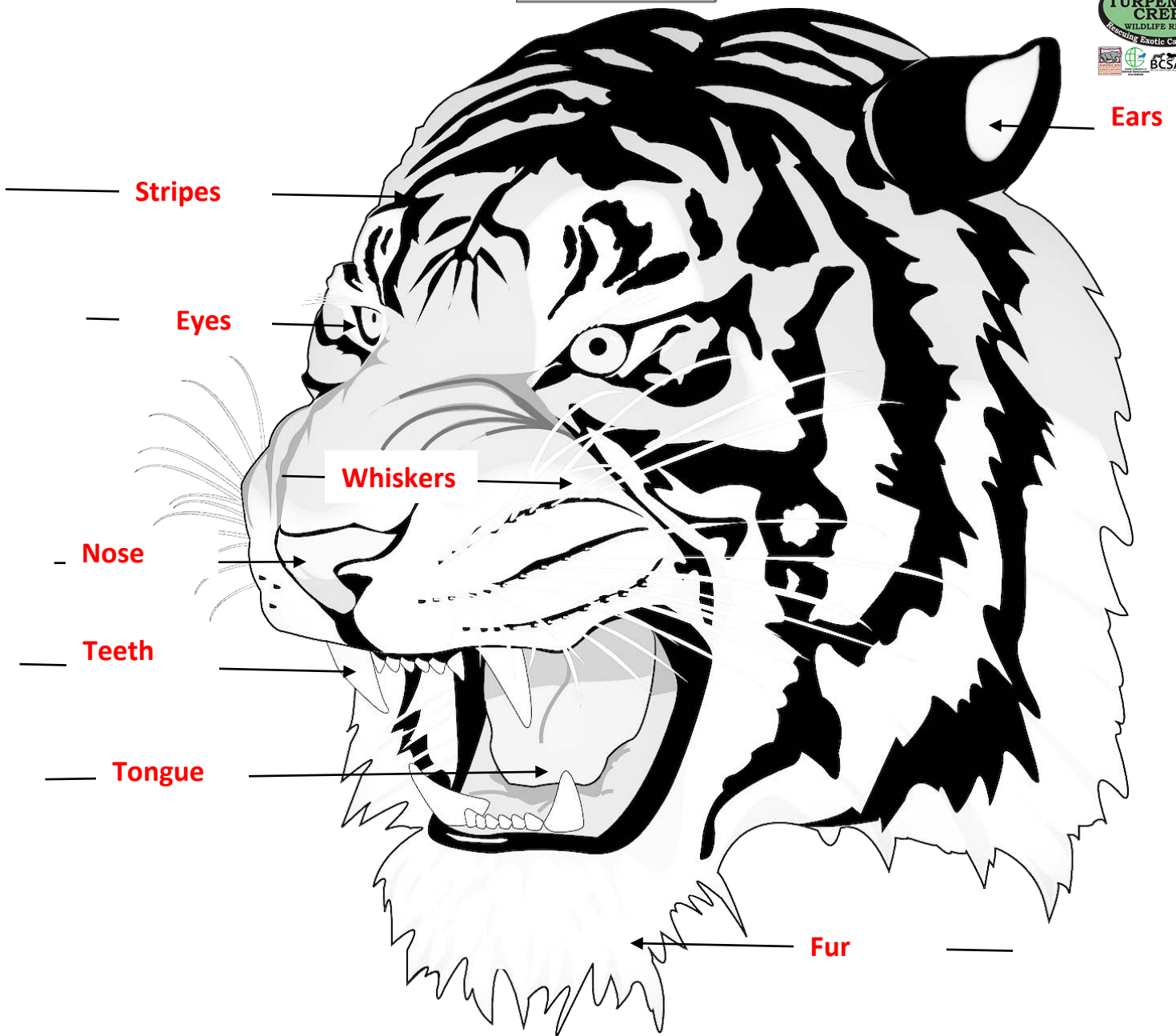
Can it find water?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Can it find shelter?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Teacher Key



Eyes: Tigers have very good eye sight, and use their eyes to hunt and find food.

Ears: The spots on the back of their ears look like eyes, so other predators do not sneak up on them.

Tongue: Their tongues feel like sand paper, and help the big cat eat its food by removing fur.

Whiskers: They are very sensitive, and allow cats to feel how big the space around them is.

Nose: Tigers do not use their nose to smell for food, but to communicate with other animals in the wild.

Stripes: Used for camouflage, or helping the tiger blend in with its surroundings, it makes them look smaller.

Fur: Mammals have fur to keep them warm, and also protect them from being hurt.

Teeth: Tigers use their teeth to kill their food, and can feel the heart stop beating through their teeth!

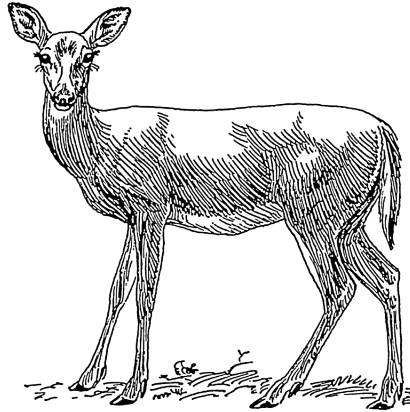
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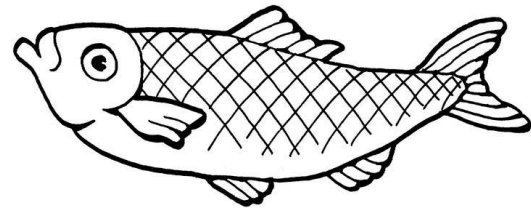
Wild animal

Predator



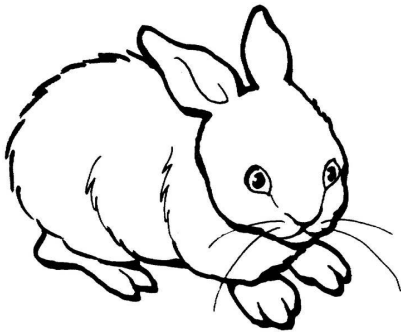
Wild animal

Prey



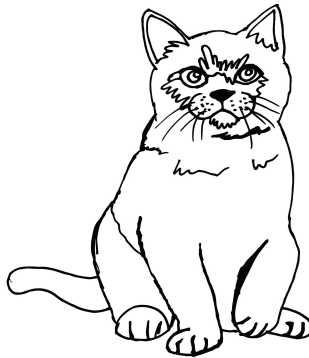
Wild animal, tame

Predator and prey



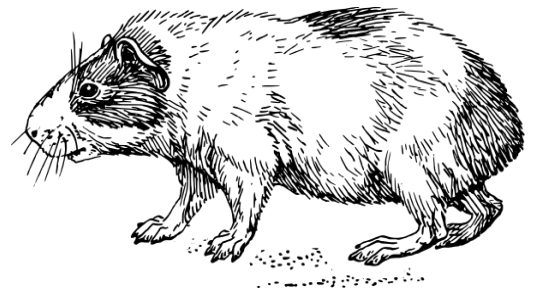
Wild animal, tame

Prey



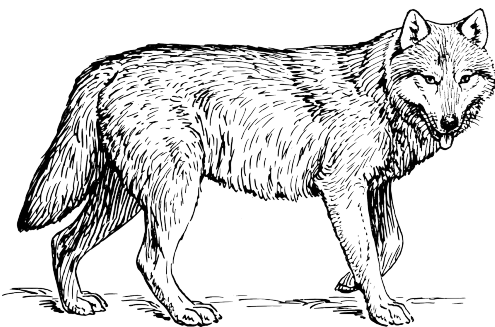
Tame

Predator



Tame

Neither



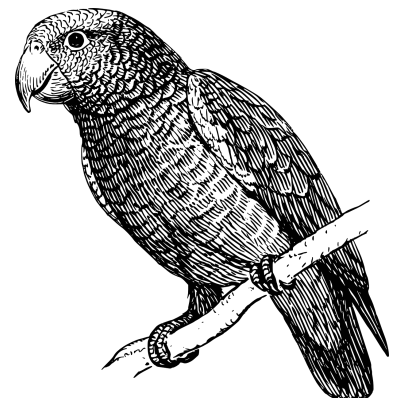
Wild animal

Predator



Wild animal

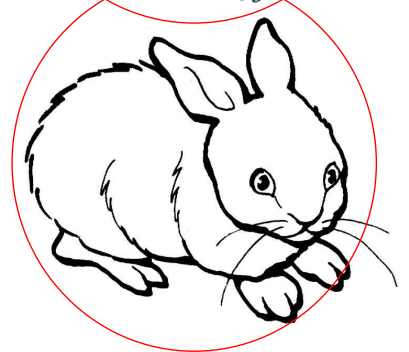
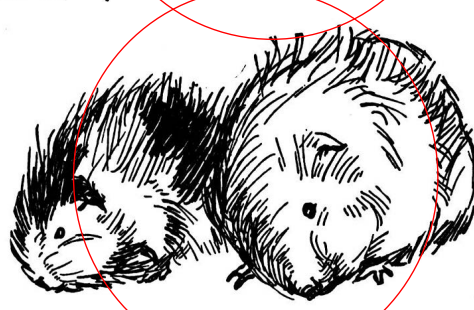
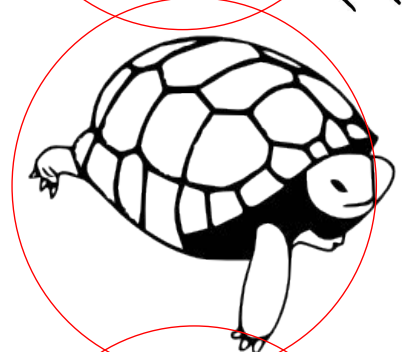
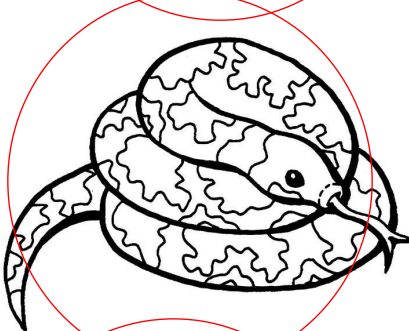
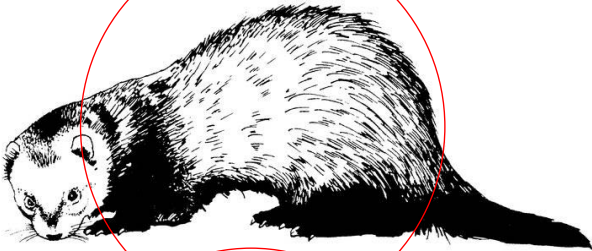
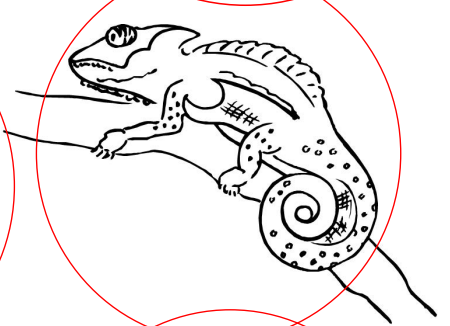
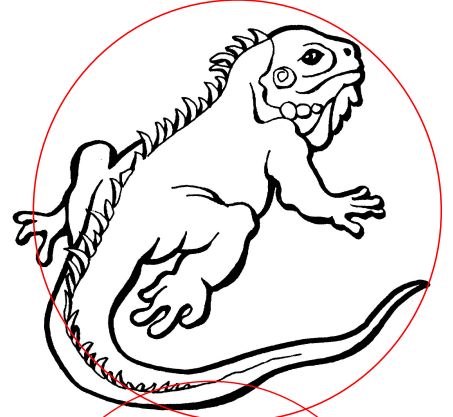
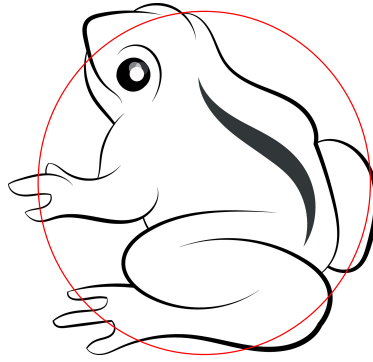
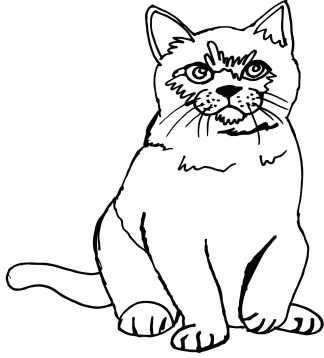
Prey



Wild animal, tame

Prey

Imagine you walk into a pet store, and below are the animals available for pets. Circle the animals that you can also find in the wild.



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