

## 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](mailto:education@tcwr.org) with questions or concerns.



## Procedure 2nd grade:

### 2-LS4-1

- 1) 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 to identify the **diversity** of life in **different habitats** where predators live.
  - a. What is a predator?
  - b. Where do they live?
  - c. What do they eat?
    - i. They are called carnivores because they eat only meat.
    - ii. Predators can also be omnivores, eating meat and plants.
- 2) What is a domestic animal? Have students brainstorm a list of characteristics of a domesticated animal using the same questions. **Worksheets 4 & 5**
  - a. Can domestic animals live without people? What about wild animals?
- 3) Ask students to compare a predator and a pet. How are they the same? How are they different? **Worksheets 6-8**
- 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. **Worksheets 9-11**
- 5) Explain the problems with having wild animals as pets: examples;
  - a. They are dangerous
  - b. Not friendly or tame because you raised them, they still have wild instincts
  - c. They can hurt you or kill you
  - d. Owning them takes them away from a life in the wild
  - e. They can never be released or let go back into the wild
  - f. People cannot give wild animals everything they need to be happy
- 6) Compare the differences between wild and domestic animals on **worksheets 12 & 13**
- 7) What happens when wild animals are taken from their natural habitat? How can we help?
  - a. All wildlife depends on each other/diversity for survival, when they are taken from the wild, the ecosystem becomes imbalanced and other wildlife cannot survive.

### Discussion:

- 7) What is something new that you learned about animals?
- 8) Should wild animals be kept as pets? Why?
- 9) How can we help save wild animals?
- 10) Where should wild animals be kept in captivity?
  - a. A zoo or sanctuary
- 11) 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.
- 3) Domesticated animals are okay to keep as pets, and need to be cared for just like we care for ourselves.
- 4) Sanctuaries 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

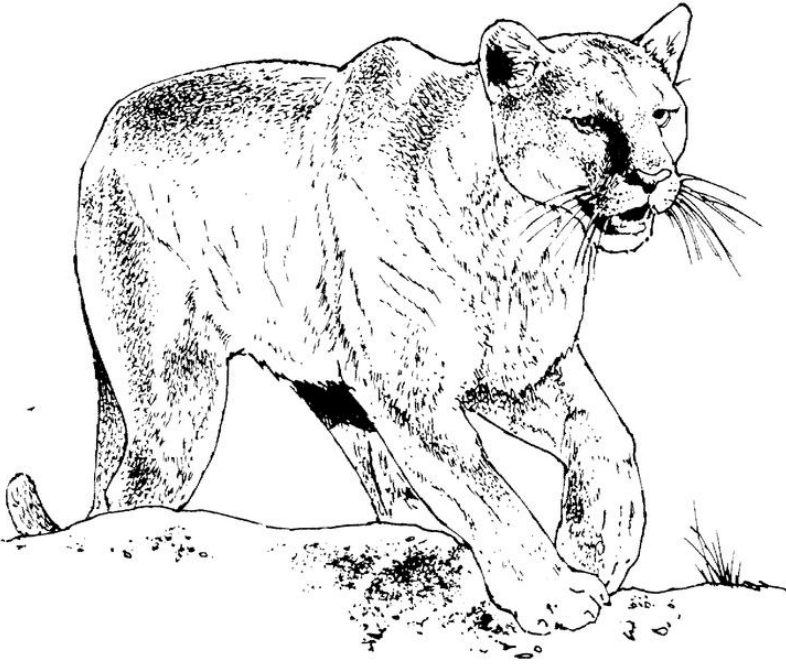
Welfare: health, **happiness**, and well-being

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**

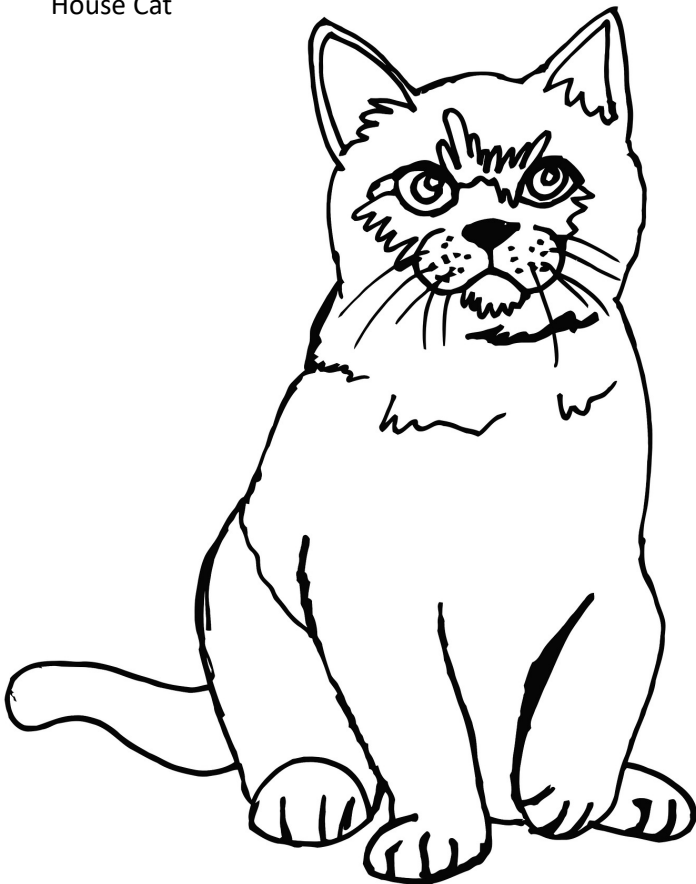
Is it a predator? **YES** or **NO**

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**

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

Is this a **CARNIVORE** or  
**OMNIVORE**

Fun Fact: Both house cats  
and cougars can purr.

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



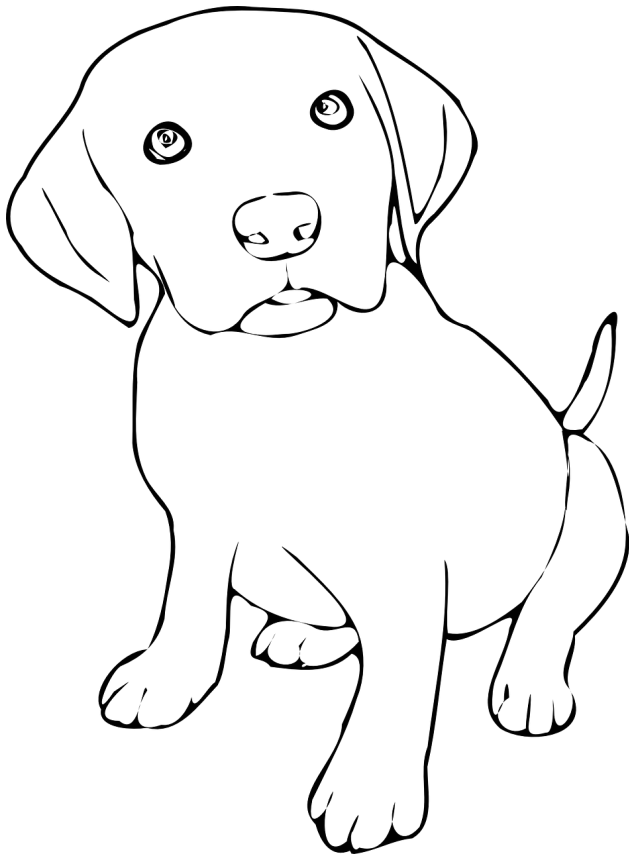
Is this animal: **WILD** or **TAME**

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. Include all the plants and animals you think live together (diversity of life), and what the predator needs to survive.



A large empty rectangular box for drawing a predator in its natural habitat.

Now draw your favorite domesticated animal and where it lives. Include what it needs to survive.

A large empty rectangular box for drawing a domesticated animal and its habitat.

Natural Habitat Discussion:

Predator Picture:

- 1) What is the name of your favorite predator? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Where does it live? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What other animals live there? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) What do you think it eats? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) What would happen if it lost its home? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Why is it not a good pet? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7) How can you help protect your favorite wild animal? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Pet Picture:

- 1) What is the name of your favorite pet? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Where does it live? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What does it eat? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Why is it different from a wild animal? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5) How is it a good pet? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6) How can you help make sure it is happy and healthy? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Once you are finished, you will discuss your picture with the class.





Predator

Both

Pet



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

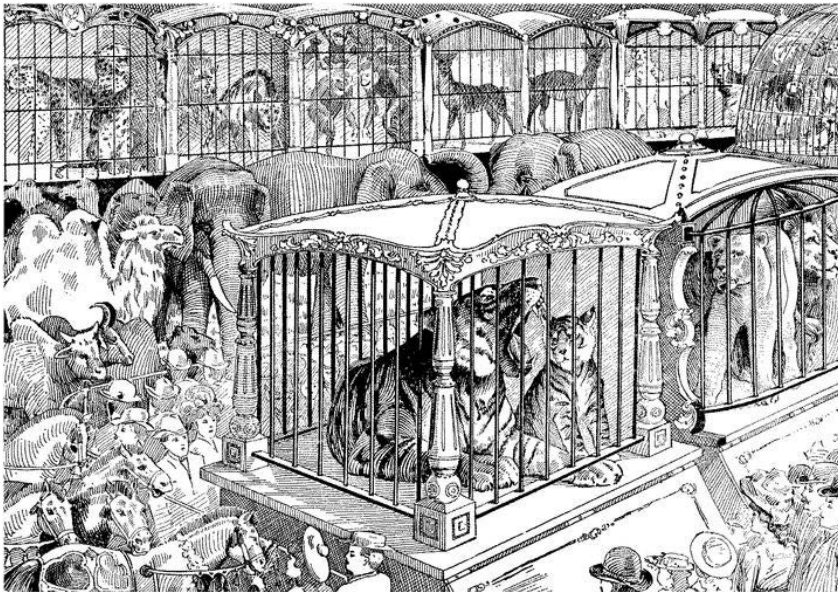


Image 2) Tiger in a Circus

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

## Wild vs. Captivity

In the 4 environments below, describe the diversity of plants and animals that can also live in the same habitat, helping tigers survive. If they cannot survive in the habitat, provide answers why it is not where tigers should live.



### 1) Tiger in the Wild

---

---

---

---

---

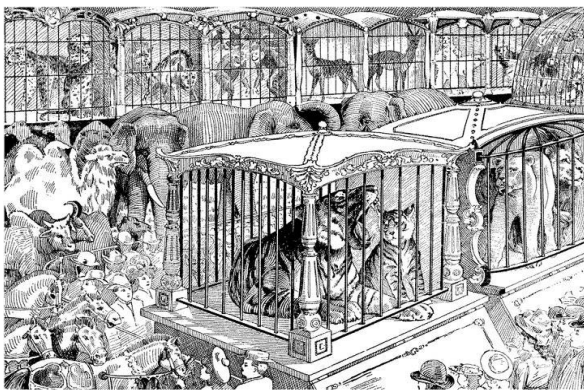
---

---

---

---

---



### 2) Tiger in a Circus

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### 3) Tiger in a Sanctuary or Zoo

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### 4) Tiger cub without mother

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

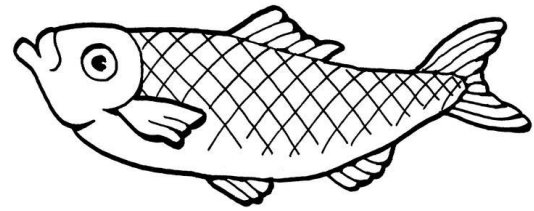
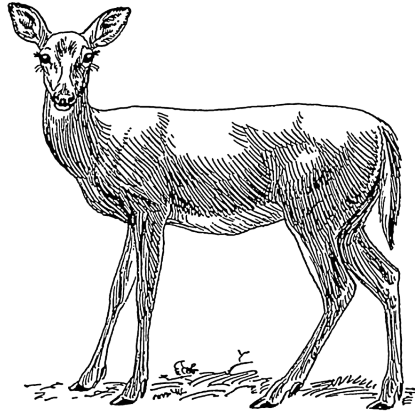
---

---



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.



---

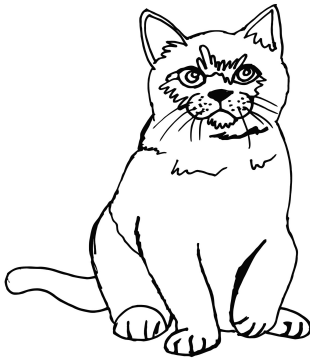
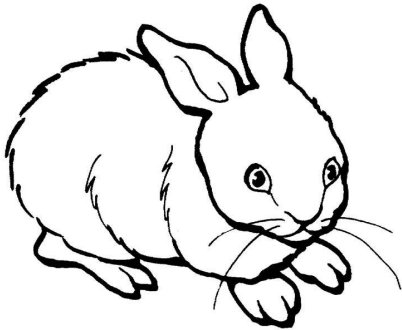
---

---

---

---

---



---

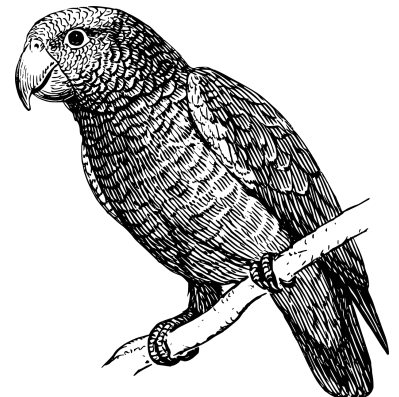
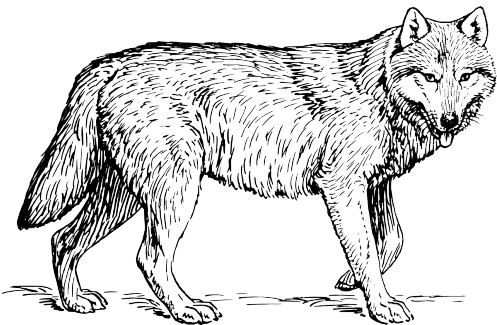
---

---

---

---

---



---

---

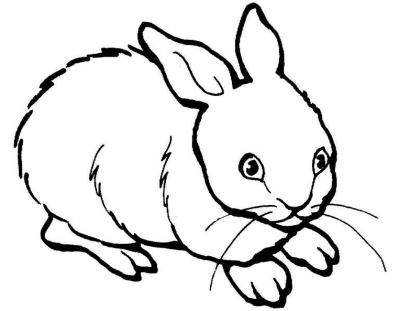
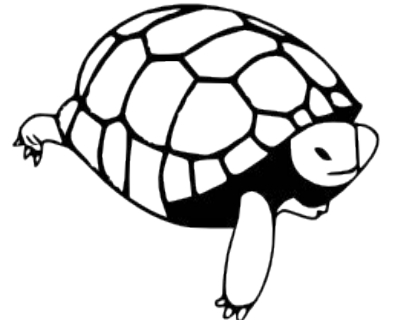
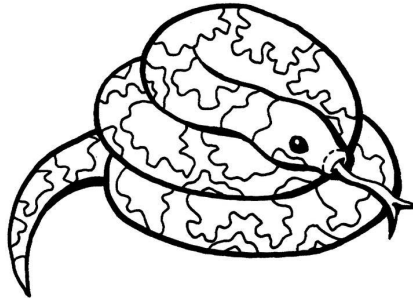
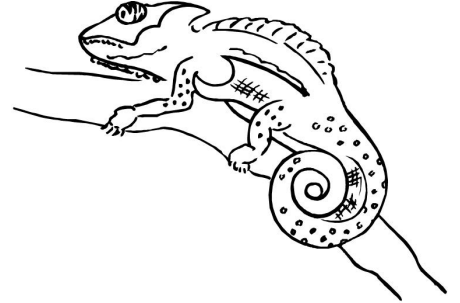
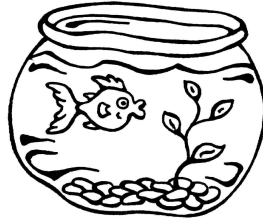
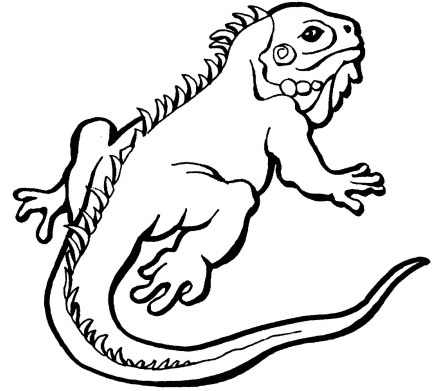
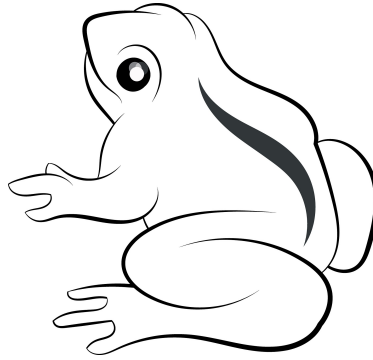
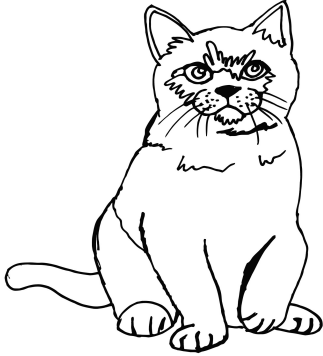
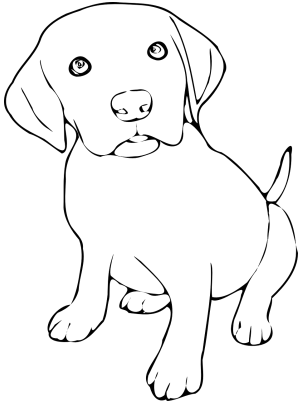
---

---

---

---

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.

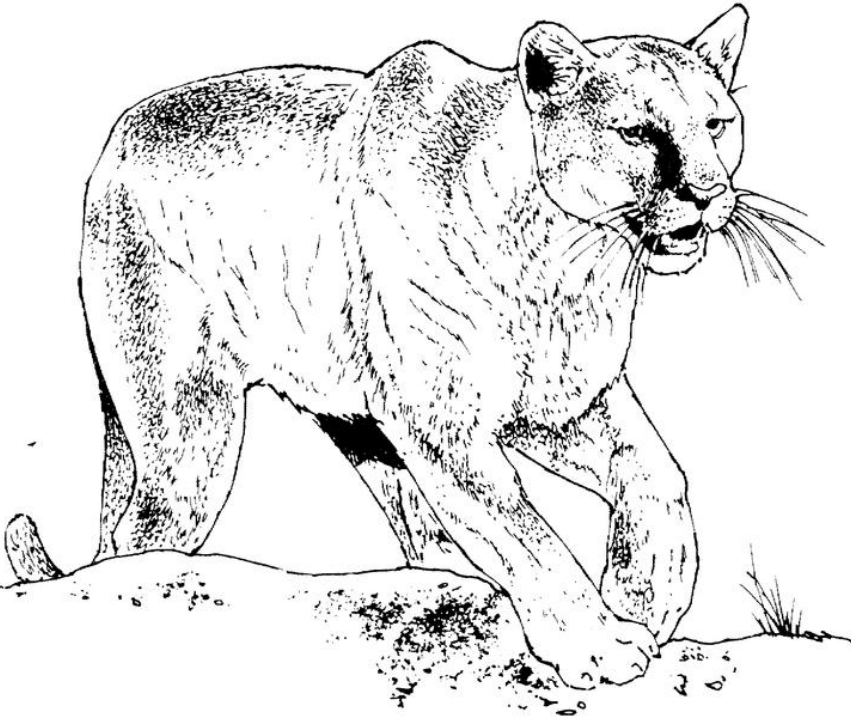


When buying a pet, it is important to make sure you know where it comes from. Many exotic animals are sadly stolen from the wild to be sold, and are not supposed to be pets. Do not keep wild animals as pets and you will be a responsible pet owner!



Teacher Key

Cougar



Is this cat: **WILD** or TAME

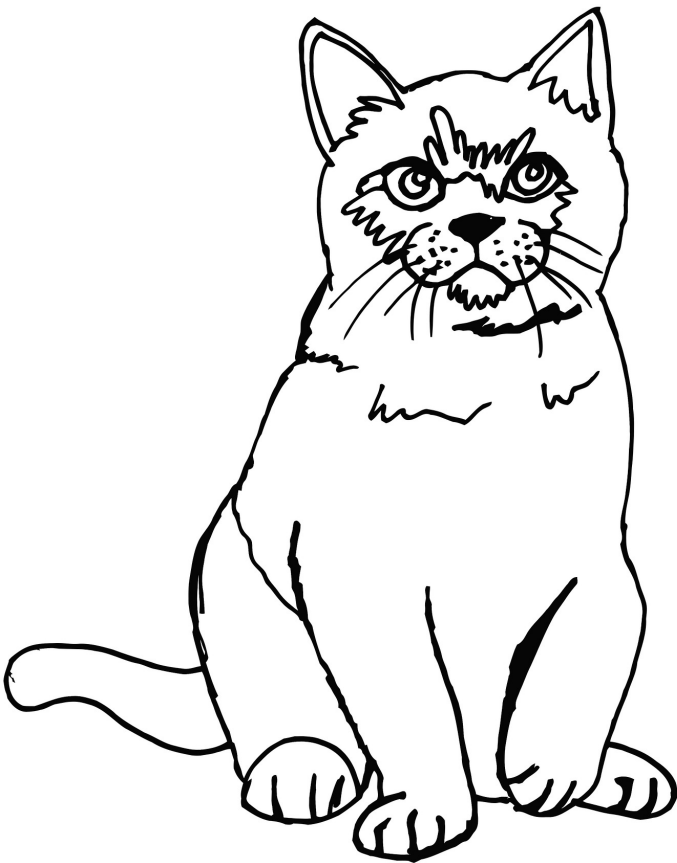
Is it a predator? **YES** or NO

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



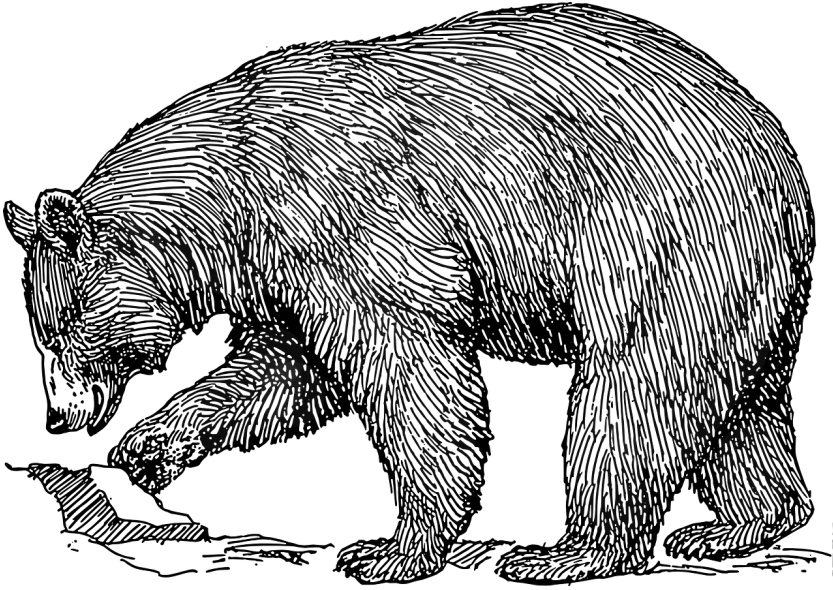
Is this cat: WILD or **TAME**

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

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

Is this a **CARNIVORE** or  
OMNIVORE

Fun Fact: both cougars and house cats can purr.



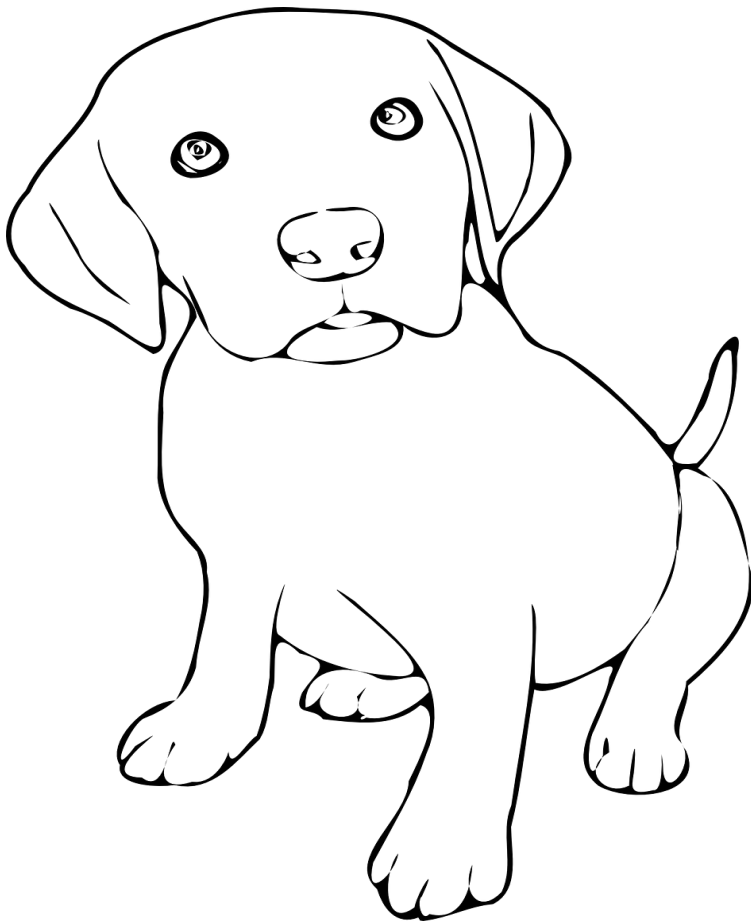
Is this animal: **WILD** or TAME

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 can smell 2,000 times better than a human!



Is this animal: WILD or **TAME**

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

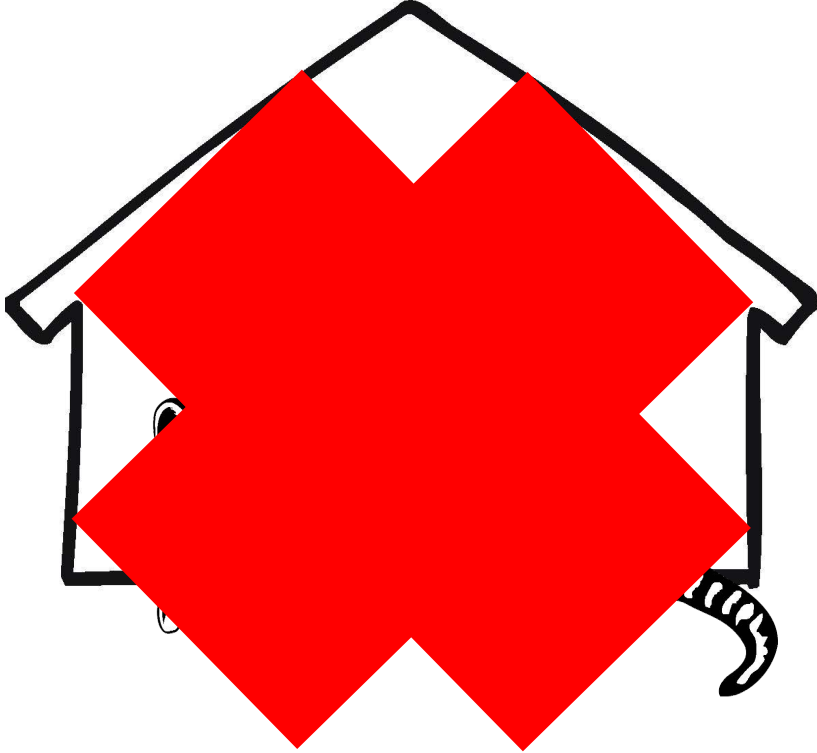
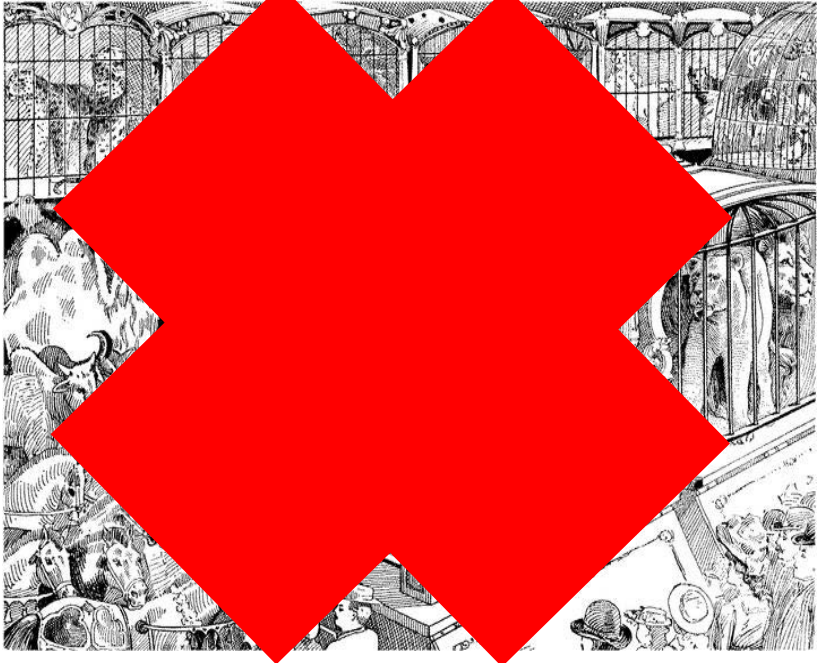
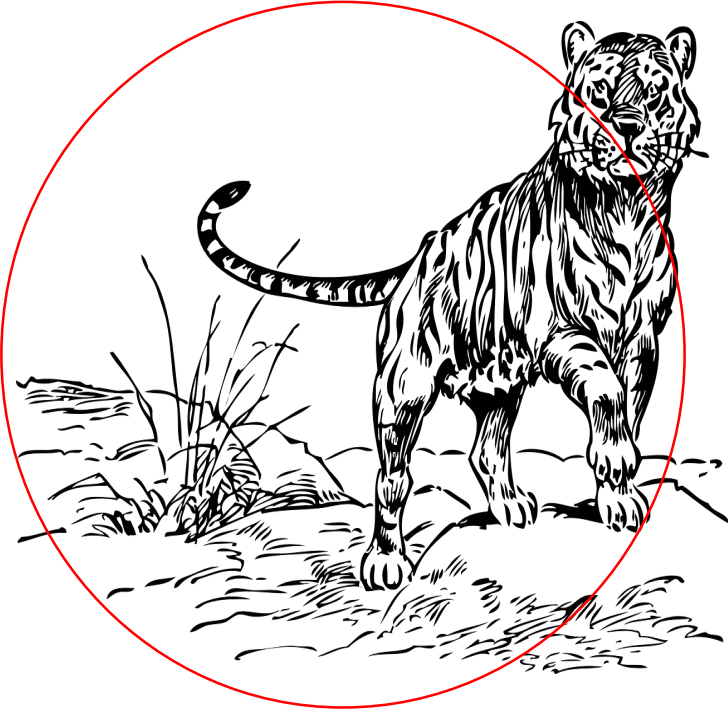
Is it a good pet? **YES** or NO

Is this a CARNIVORE or **OMNIVORE**

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



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.

**Teacher Key**



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

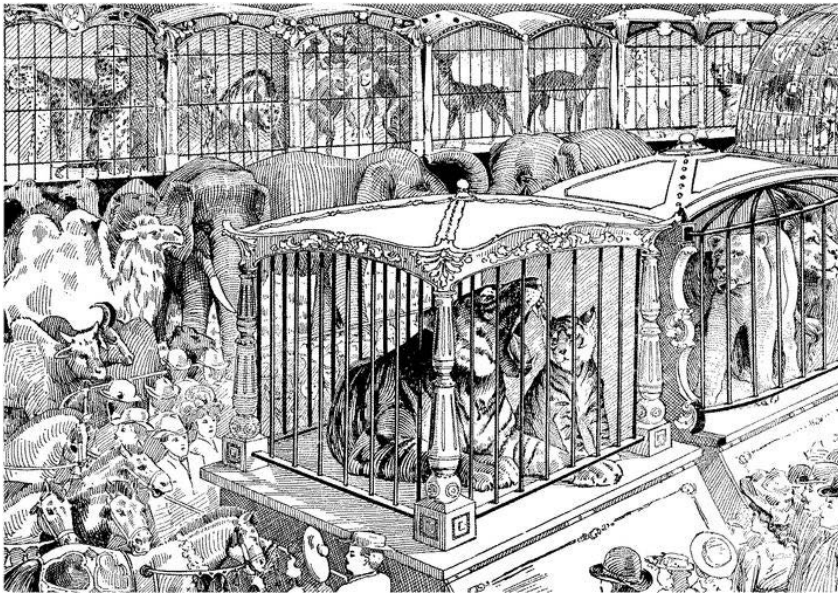


Image 2) Tiger in a Circus

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

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.

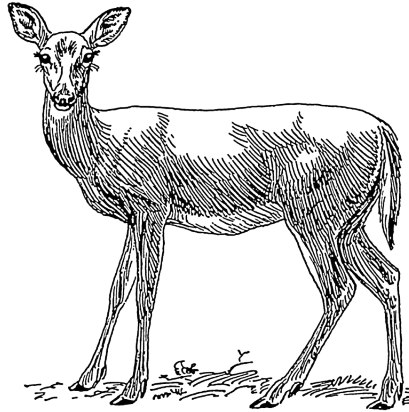


Wild animal

---

Predator

---

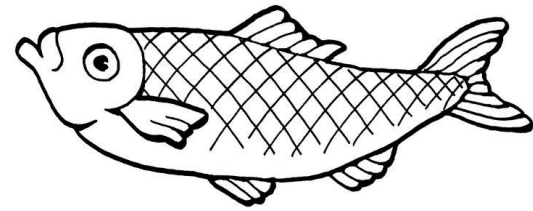


Wild animal

---

Prey

---

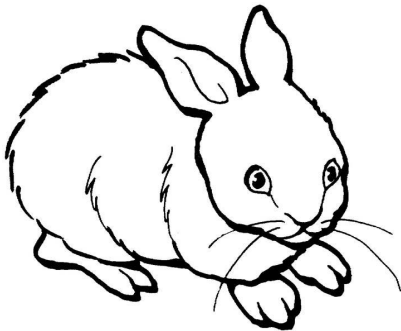


Wild animal    tame

---

Predator and prey

---

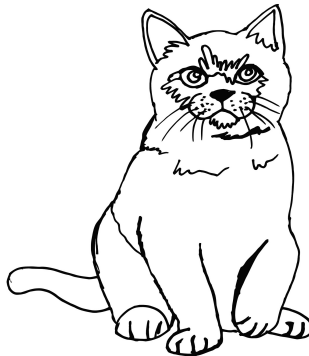


Wild animal    Tame

---

Prey

---



Tame

---

Predator

---

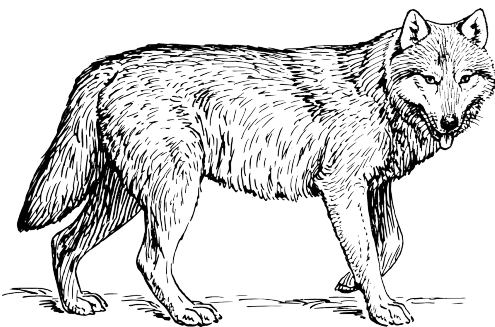


Tame

---

Neither

---



Wild animal

---

Predator

---

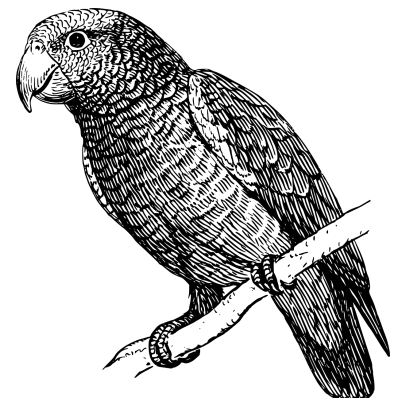


Wild animal

---

Prey

---



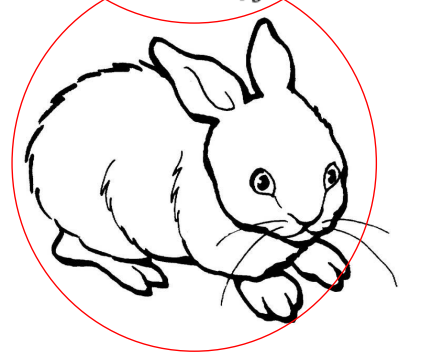
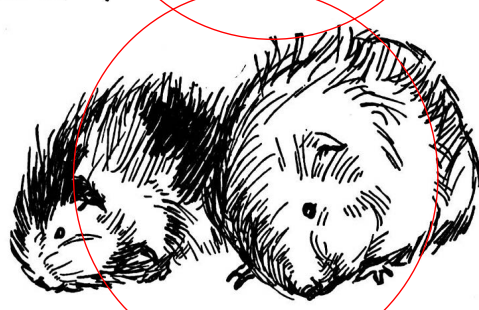
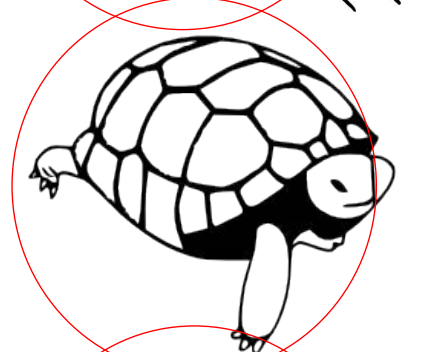
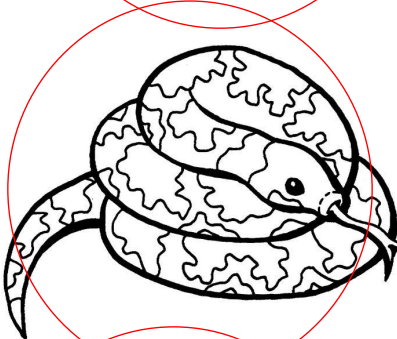
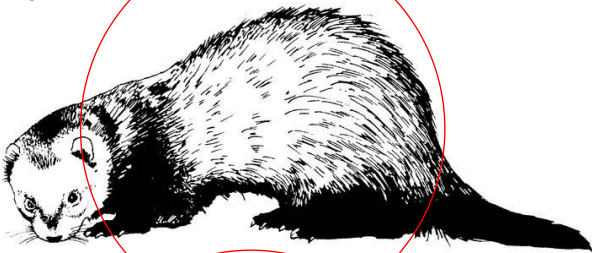
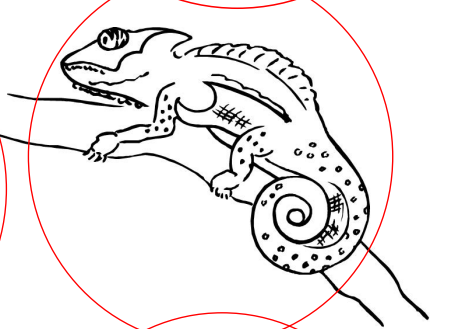
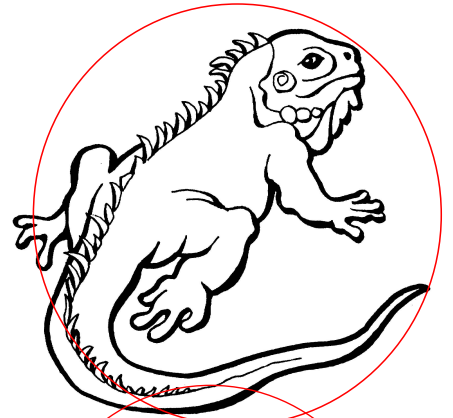
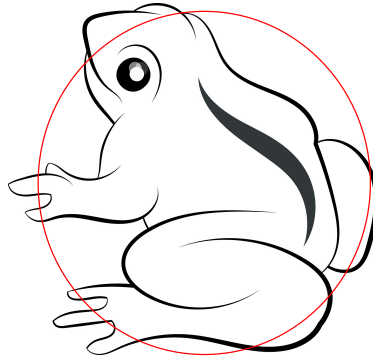
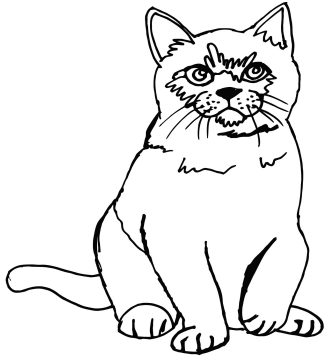
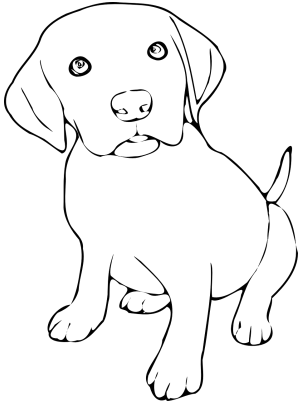
Wild animal    Tame

---

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.



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!

