

TUATARAS

(*Sphenodon punctatus*)



Basic Tuatara Anatomy

These little guys usually have green, brown and/or grey scales and, on average, weigh

in at about _____pounds (1.3kg) and are _____feet (80cm) long.

They are _____, but they can often be found _____.

While there is no _____ or ear drum, they can hear. This is possible

because of their _____ organs.

On average, they live to be about _____years old, however, they have been known to

grow to be over a _____years old.

It's a Lizard, it's a Komodo Dragon , it's a Tuatara !

Tuataras are NOT lizards, but they are _____.

Tuataras have a _____ "eye". It can only be seen on _____, for after a few

months, it is covered

by tissue and scales. This is used as a _____ and can help to

determine _____. This

is called a _____ eye.

While they do have _____ along their back, they seem to be more

_____ than _____.

For the most part they are pretty laid back but they don't hesitate to _____ (not poisonous, but

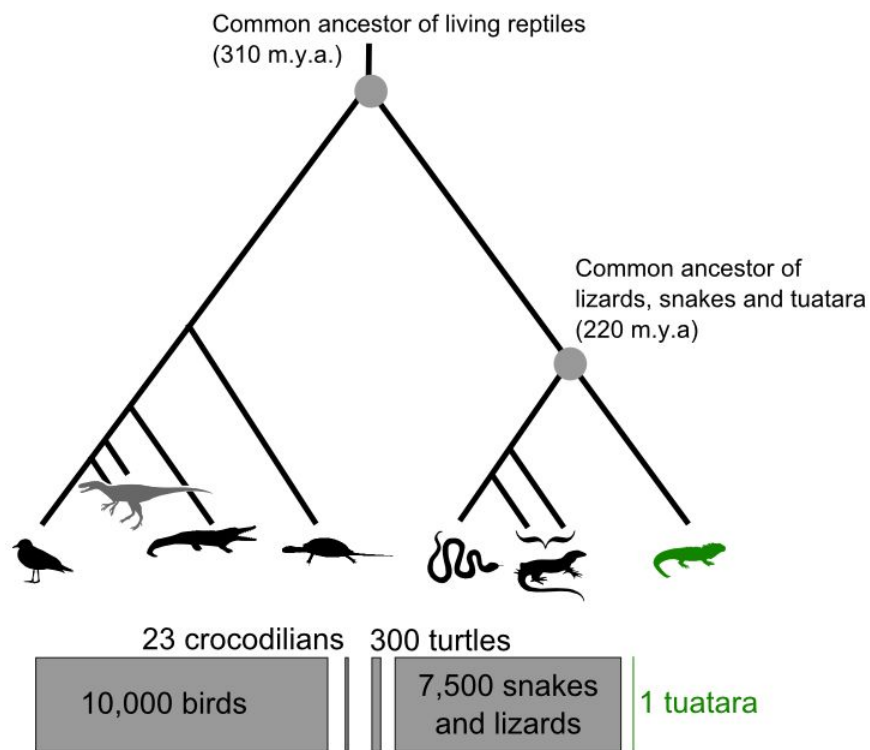
reluctant to let go), _____, or _____ you with their tail when feeling threatened.

Evolution of a Tuatara

Tuataras are the last survivors of a reptilian _____, which had flourished in the age of

_____. Their most common ancestor, with any other living group, are the

_____ (snakes and lizards).



Where Do They Live?

As previously mentioned, they are native to _____ and are on the

_____ list. Their name derives from the

_____ language and means _____. These scaly

little reptiles like to hole in shady, cool areas, such as under a _____ or _____.

Tuatara: Predator or Prey?

Actually, they are both. They aren't the top of the _____, but they aren't the

_____ either. Their main source of prey is _____, however, they will also eat

_____ and _____. But they have threats as well. These

include _____, _____, and _____.

Tuatara Mating

The actual mating happens in late _____, while they eggs are layer early next

_____. They mate sexually. Males have _____ spikes than females

They usually lay between _____ eggs. While the male reproduces _____,

the female reproduces every 2-7 years. This is directly dependant on _____.

There is no mating call, ritual or even dance. The closest thing to this is when the male proudly walks up to the female and mounts her. Males have been known to fight over available females.

Juvenile Tuatara



The mother lays the eggs in a nest _____ from her own. She may guard it for a few nights,

but after that, the babies _____ and must fend for themselves. They grow

until about _____ years, and maturity is reached between 13 and 20. This is when they

start mating. Tuataras molt _____ times a year as juveniles but only once a year as

adults.

Vocabulary Word Match

1. related to or attached to.
2. a reptile of the
order Squamata, i.e. snakes,
Lizards, worm lizards.
3. still in existence,
surviving.
4. to shed skin.
5. The eardrum.

____ A. Extant

____ B. Squamates

____ C. Tympanum

____ D. Molt

____ E. Parietal

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