



What if your class “pets” were real, living fossils, older than dinosaurs? Follow Mr. Jayne’s students (AKA horseshoe crab scientists) as they help their tiny baby horseshoe crabs grow, while collecting important data from these ancient creatures as part of a shared project with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). With real photos and the kids’ narrative, this exciting informational text is ideal for curious young minds who love animals, science, and hands-on learning.

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- JNF003330 Animals / Baby Animals
- JNF037020 Environmental Conservation & Protection

The For Creative Minds interactive, educational section includes:

- How to Help Horseshoe Crabs
- Horseshoe Crab Blood

About The Authors

Jennifer Keats Curtis is an award-winning author that regularly, and delightedly, works with biologists, environmental specialists, and science experts to research and write her books. Some of her books include Children’s Book Council 2026 Favorites for Kids, Teachers & Librarians *Return of the Terns*; Children’s Choice Book Award Winner *Kali’s Story: An Orphaned Polar Bear Rescue*; NSTA Outstanding Science Trade Books for Children: *Pooper Snooper* (also 2023 Children’s Book Councils Favorites), *After A While Crocodile: Alexa’s Diary*, *Moonlight Crab Count*, and *Maggie: Alaska’s Last Elephant*. The realistic fiction, *Creek Critters*, co-authored with scientists at Stroud Water Research Center, was a finalist for the AAAS/Subaru SB&F Prize for Excellence in Hands-on Science Books. Follow her on Twitter and Facebook.

Eric Jayne is an award-winning elementary educator. He has raised horseshoe crabs with his student horseshoe crab scientists since 2009, releasing over 160 horseshoe crabs into the Chesapeake Bay. *Our Class Pet is a Living Fossil* is his debut book. Eric lives in Maryland with two additional furry pets, his loving wife, and his most experienced and devoted horseshoe crab scientists, his two children.

Stephanie Tuckfield transforms scientific inquiry into hands-on discovery as coordinator of the Horseshoe Crab in the Classroom program for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Merging a decade of teaching experience with her background in aquaculture and fisheries research, she bridges the gap between the field and the classroom. Today, Stephanie leverages this expertise to expand access to environmental literacy, ensuring the next generation has the opportunity to foster their own meaningful connection to the natural world.

NGSS Standard Alignments:

3-ESS3.B	A variety of natural hazards result from natural processes. Humans cannot eliminate natural hazards but can take steps to reduce their impacts. (3-ESS3-1)
3-LS1.B	Reproduction is essential to the continued existence of every kind of organism. Plants and animals have unique and diverse life cycles. (3-LS1-1)
3-LS2.C	When the environment changes in ways that affect a place's physical characteristics, temperature, or availability of resources, some organisms survive and reproduce, others move to new locations, yet others move into the transformed environment, and some die. (secondary to 3-LS4-4)
3-LS3.A	Many characteristics of organisms are inherited from their parents. (3-LS3-1) Other characteristics result from individuals' interactions with the environment, which can range from diet to learning. Many characteristics involve both inheritance and environment. (3-LS3-2)
3-LS3.B-1	Different organisms vary in how they look and function because they have different inherited information. (3-LS3-1)
3-LS3.B-2	The environment also affects the traits that an organism develops. (3-LS3-2)
3-LS4.A-2	Fossils provide evidence about the types of organisms that lived long ago and also about the nature of their environments. (3-LS4-1)
3-LS4.C	For any particular environment, some kinds of organisms survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all. (3-LS4-3)
3-LS4.D	Populations live in a variety of habitats, and change in those habitats affects the organisms living there. (3-LS4-4)
4-LS1.D	Different sense receptors are specialized for particular kinds of information, which may be then processed by the animal's brain. Animals are able to use their perceptions and memories to guide their actions. (4-LS1-2)
5-ESS2.A	The ocean supports a variety of ecosystems and organisms, shapes landforms, and influences climate.
5-ESS3.C	Human activities in agriculture, industry, and everyday life have had major effects on the land, vegetation, streams, ocean, air, and even outer space. But individuals and communities are doing things to help protect Earth's resources and environments. (5-ESS3-1)
5-LS1.C-1	Food provides animals with the materials they need for body repair and growth and the energy they need to maintain body warmth and for motion. (secondary to 5-PS3-1)
5-LS2.A	Organisms are related in food webs in which some animals eat plants for food and other animals eat the animals that eat plants. Some organisms, such as fungi and bacteria, break down dead organisms (both plants or plants parts and animals) and therefore operate as –decomposers.” Decomposition eventually restores (recycles) some materials back to the soil. Organisms can survive only in environments in which their particular needs are met. A healthy ecosystem is one in which multiple species of different types are each able to meet their needs in a relatively stable web of life. Newly introduced species can damage the balance of an ecosystem. (5-LS2-1)

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