

With Sissi on the Herp Trail

Helsinki

Printable location cards
(alternative to using the QR codes)



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With Sissi on the Herp Trail

Welcome to Uutela, a place of frogs and snakes!

” Hello! I’m Sissi the Viviparous Lizard. I’m glad you’ve decided to join me on this adventure and meet my herp friends. Do you know what a herp is? The word herp means all lizards, snakes and frogs.

We herps are timid creatures. You might see us if you walk quietly on the nature trail and don’t make a lot of noise. You won’t see us in winter. That’s when we’re hibernating to survive the cold.

Task: The silent magic word

I have a magic word that allows me to move silently:

Shh-Shh-Shh-Sissi-sisilisko

Your job is to keep quiet when I say the magic word *Shh-Shh-Shh-Sissi-sisilisko*. Shall we see how it works?

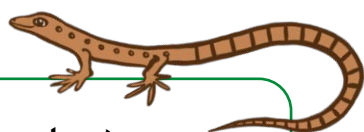
2

With Sissi on the Herp Trail

Common adder

” Do you know what the adder’s most distinguishing characteristic is? That’s right, the zigzag pattern on its back. However, there are also adders that do not have a zigzag pattern and that are completely black.

The adder is a timid animal. If you run into one, give it plenty of space and move calmly. Did you know that adders have poor eyesight and smell with their tongues?



Task: Smell with your tongue

I have a fun task for you. Now you get to show your tongue and see if you can smell with it like an adder. Can you sense smells on your tongue? What kind of smells can you sense?

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Adders will defend themselves

” When you walk, the ground shakes and timid adders will quickly slither away. There is no need to fear adders. An adder will only bite if it feels threatened.

Dogs, especially puppies, are curious and like to sniff the ground with their snouts. Sometimes, on rare occasions, an adder may defend itself against a dog that gets too close by biting the dog on the snout. A dog that gets bitten on its snout needs to be taken to a vet.

Task: The ground shakes

Split into two groups: the walkers and the adders. The walkers stamp their feet on the ground, while the adders feel the ground with their hands. Can you feel the ground shake? Switch so that everyone gets to stamp and feel.

Frogs

” Have you ever seen a jelly-like substance in a pond? If you look closely, you may see tiny little dots inside the jelly, or spawn. The spots develop into nimble little tadpoles, which grow into tiny frogs. In the autumn when the temperature drops, frogs go into hibernation. They stay almost motionless until the spring, when the sunshine starts to warm them up again.

Task: The Pienet sammakot song

Next you get to sing!
Does anyone know this Finnish song about little frogs?

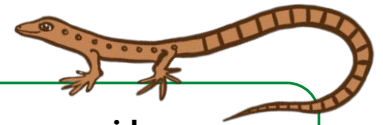
Pienet sammakot, pienet sammakot,
ne lystikkäitä on,
pienet sammakot, pienet sammakot,
ne lystikkäitä on.
Ei korvia, ei korvia, ei häntää laisinkaan,
ei korvia, ei korvia, ei häntää laisinkaan.

The Pienet sammakot song, Finnish folk song

Viviparous lizard

” Have you ever seen a lizard that is missing its tail? We viviparous lizards have a unique ability to confuse predators: we can drop our tails when threatened.

We like to eat insects, worms and spiders. Our favourite spots here in Uutela are the rocks on the shore and tree trunks, especially when the sun is shining warmly! I know we're cute, but please leave us alone in our own home environment.



Task: Let's eat some spiders

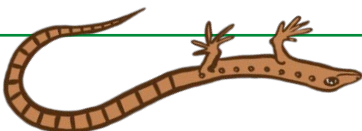
Viviparous lizards like to eat insects and spiders. Imagine what spiders would taste like. Delicious, aren't they? Yum!

Common toad

” Have you ever seen a creature that looks like a frog, but waddles instead of hopping? If so, you may have met a common toad. Did you know that toads move at night when the air is more humid? Toads love to eat worms, snails and insects.

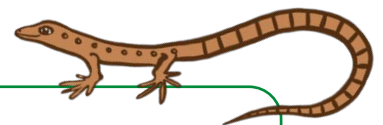
Task: The common toad's evening walk

Your task is to waddle to the next information board like a toad: slowly, crouching, taking big steps, 'scooping' with your front flippers by your side.



Grass snake

” Now let me tell you a little bit about the grass snake. The grass snake is the largest snake in Finland. The easiest way to identify the grass snake is by its yellow or pale neck spots and black colour. Did you know that the grass snake has excellent fishing skills?



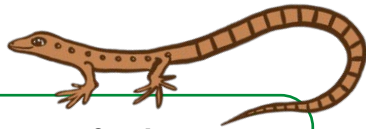
Task: Giant snake

The next task is all about cooperation! Form a line and place your hands on the shoulders of the person in front of you. Then walk slowly together in line while winding, like a giant grass snake.



Smooth newt

” Have you ever heard of smooth newts? Well, let me tell you about them! Smooth newts have spotted skin. Baby smooth newts develop from tiny eggs in the water. When the newts grow up, they crawl onto dry land. If you’re hoping to meet a smooth newt, it’s best to be out and about at dusk!



Task: The smooth newt’s food poem

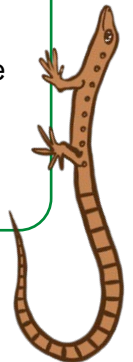
A newt in the pond is thinking away,
How should I proceed today?
Should I have salad for lunchtime fare,
Or a waffle with cream to spare?
But a newt would rather munch on flies,
Than enjoy a cream waffle surprise.
What about you, what would you choose?
Oat milk and a bun you wouldn’t refuse?

Molting

” Have you noticed that sometimes your clothes are suddenly too small and don’t fit anymore? That’s when you get bigger clothes. We herps don’t wear clothes. But our skin also gets too small and tight as time goes by. Fortunately, we know how to replace it with a new skin. Convenient, isn’t it!

Task: Small clothes

Imagine wearing clothes that are too small. How does it feel? How do your toes feel if your shoes are too small?



Slow worm

” Although the slow worm looks like a snake, it’s actually a legless lizard. Slow worms move slowly and are skilled at hiding. Slow worms can live up to several decades!

Task: The slow worm’s poetry game

I’m beautiful and copper-bright,
I never wish anyone spite.
(stroke your skin)
I move slowly and hide in the brush,
I’m not a snake, so no need to rush!
(squirm and shake your head)
I’ve lived for ten or twenty years,
(count with your fingers)
A legless lizard, would you believe your ears?
(stamp the ground)
I love to snack on grubs small,
Picking them at dusk from the soil’s soft fall.
(pick up a grub from the ground and eat it, smacking your lips)

The herps of Uutela

” Does anyone remember who else lives here in Uutela besides me? That’s right; grass snakes, adders, slow worms, frogs, common toads and water newts. Well remembered!

Task: The herp quiz

Now it’s time for a little herp quiz!

Who has a yellow neck spot?

- The grass snake

Who can drop their tail?

- The viviparous lizard

Which lizard has no legs?

- The slow worm

Which herp moves by waddling?

- The common toad

Who has a zigzag pattern on their back?

- The common adder

Who has a spotted stomach?

- The smooth newt

Who is called a tadpole when they are small?

- The frog

