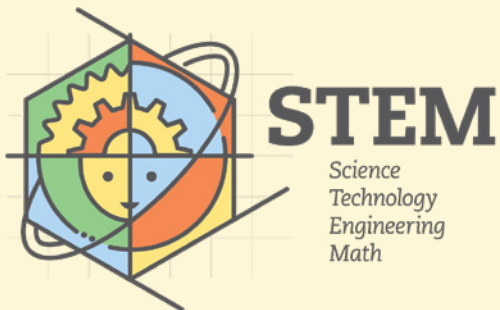
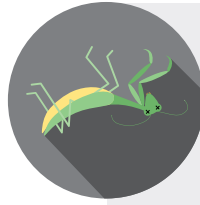


# Goodbye, Critters!

ESD 112 STEM Kits will no longer support the use of critters in the classroom. This change has been expected for the past several years. In March of 2020, our SMC Advisory Committee approved the phasing out of critters in the classroom and supported the switch to more authentic outdoor STEM. We hope this information sheet makes this transition as smooth as possible for our teachers!



## Why we are excited about this change:



### No more critter casualties

As you may know, many critter lives were lost during the process of kit packaging and delivery. We will no longer have their tiny lives on our conscience!



### Observation of animals in their natural habitats

Our students will become zoologists and field biologists, studying the living and nonliving things that exist in their very own ecosystem.



### Opportunities for outdoor field STEM

Observing animals outside in their habitats is a great way to get some outdoor field STEM time in! [STEM Teaching Tool# 20: Getting their hands dirty: Engaging learners in authentic science practices outside the classroom](#)



### Cost savings

The ever-growing cost of critters has been a difficult expenditure to keep up with. By eliminating the critter cost, we can continue to offer our STEM kits without a cost increase for our district clients.



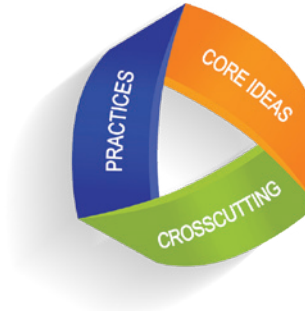
### Protection of our local ecosystems

Many popular classroom pets and critters are unlikely to survive outside captivity due to climate, predators, or the inability to find appropriate food and shelter. In some cases, however, these introduced species may survive, reproduce and become invasive, [causing impacts to native species and habitats](#).

# Supporting the shift

We would like to share some activities to replace critter investigations while maintaining coherence with the STEM Storyline and the NGSS standards being addressed by each unit.

Please see guides linked below for each grade level.



GRADE	UNIT/KIT	ADAPTATION
K	Animals 2x2	We will have a brand new STEM Storyline with lots of new and fun activities for students to do! Coming August 2020!
1st	<a href="#">Inspired by Nature/New Plants</a>	N/A
2nd	<a href="#">Why Won't Our Blueberries Grow/Insects</a>	<a href="#">Critter-free Modification</a>
3rd	<a href="#">Ecosystem Invasion!/Structures of Life</a>	<a href="#">Critter-free Modification</a>
4th	<a href="#">Saving the Pika!/Environments</a>	<a href="#">Critter-free Modification</a>
5th	<a href="#">Save Our Turtles/Living Systems</a>	We have a brand new STEM Storyline (with critters omitted) where students will help save the endangered Western Pond Turtles who live in the Pacific Northwest!

# How to order your own critters

If you are heartbroken about saying goodbye to critters in the classroom, we'd like to share some resources for ordering your own critters:

## Our Local Vendor

### MT HOME BIOLOGICAL

<https://pelletlab.com>

*Must have 2 weeks notice*

## Our California Vendor

### NILES BIOLOGICAL

<https://www.nilesbio.com>

*Low prices*

## For quick, next-day orders

### CAROLINA BIOLOGICAL

<https://www.carolina.com/living-organisms/10476.ct>



STEM

