



Spanish for Naturalists: A Vocabulary List for Volunteers

Authored by Michelle Prysby, Virginia Master Naturalist Program Director, Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation; Wendy Cohen, Virginia Master Naturalist Volunteer, Fairfax Chapter; Josefina Dombia, Virginia Master Naturalist Volunteer, Fairfax Chapter; Lesley Newman, Virginia Master Naturalist Volunteer, Headwaters Chapter; Jack Person, Virginia Master Naturalist Volunteer, Arlington Regional Chapter; Kate Pugh, Teacher, Western Albemarle High School; Ernesto Garcia-Ortega, Wildlife Biologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife

Introduction

Natural resource volunteers may have opportunities to use Spanish in the educational programs they deliver, when collaborating on stewardship or science projects, and in unexpected emergencies. This vocabulary list highlights the most common naturalist-related terminology a volunteer might need.

Directions – Direcciones

north – norte
south – sur
east – este
west – oeste
right – derecha
left – izquierda
up – arriba
down/below – abajo/debajo
behind – detrás
between – entre
middle/in the center – en el medio/en el centro
there/over there – allí/allá
here/over here – aquí/acá

Instructions – Instrucciones

These Spanish phrases are written using the plural you conjugation, which a leader would typically use with a group of participants.

“Listen.” – “Escuchen.”
“Watch it.” – “Obsérvenlo.”
“Feel it.” – “Siéntanlo.”

“Touch it.” – “Tóquenlo.”
“Look.” – “Miren.”
“Look up.” – “Miren hacia arriba.”
“Look down.” – “Miren hacia abajo.”
“Look to the side.” – “Miren a un lado.”
“Look over there.” – “Miren allí.”
“Smell it.” – “Huélanlo.”
“Follow me.” – “Siganme.”

Subject Pronouns – Pronombres Personales

I – yo
You – tú
You (plural) – ustedes
He/she – él/ella
They – ellos/ellas
We – nosotros/nosotras

Statements – Declaraciones

There is/are – Hay
I am – Yo soy
You are (formal) – Usted es
You are (informal) – Tú eres
You are (plural) – Ustedes son
We are – Nosotros(a)s somos
They are – Ellos/Ellas son
This is a – Este/Esta es un(a)
These are – Estos/Estas son
That is a – Ese/Esa es un(a)
Those are – Esos/Esas son

Emergency – Emergencia

These Spanish phrases are written using the formal you singular conjugation, which someone would typically use with a person they don't know well.

“Do you need help?” – “¿Necesita ayuda?”
“Are you OK?” – “¿Está bien?”
“Are you hurt?” – “¿Está herido/a?”
“Does something hurt?” – “¿Le duele algo?”
“Do you need an ambulance?” – “¿Necesita una ambulancia?”
“Do you need water?” – “¿Necesita agua?”
“Are you in danger?” – “¿Está en peligro?”
“I am here to help you.” – “Estoy aquí para ayudarle.”
“Everything will be OK.” – “Todo estará bien.”
“Careful!” – “¡Cuidado!”
“Stay calm.” – “Mantenga la calma.”
“Lie down.” – “Acuéstese.”
“Bend over.” – “Agáchese.”
“Sit down.” – “Siéntese.”
“Stop!” – “¡Deténgase!”
“Take it easy.” – “Tómelo con calma.”
“Calm down.” – “Tranquilícese.”

Animals/Wildlife – Animales/Fauna silvestre

carnivore – carnívoro
herbivore – herbívoro
invertebrates – invertebrados
vertebrates – vertebrados

Anatomy/Biology – Anatomía/Biología

antler(s) – asta(s)
horn(s) – cuerno(s)
head – cabeza
eye(s) – ojo(s)
mouth – boca
tooth/teeth – diente/dientes
tusk/fang/canine teeth – colmillo(s)
ear(s) – oreja(s)
hair – pelo/cabello
feather(s) – pluma(s)
back – espalda/lomo
rump – ancas/trasero/cuarto trasero
tail – cola/rabo
leg(s) – pierna(s)/pata(s)
toe – dedos del pie/pata

hoof/hooves – pezuña/pezuñas
carcass – cadáver/cuerpo
fossil – fósil
shell (as in a turtle's shell) – caparazón
shell (as in a seashell) – caracol/concha
mating/rut – apareamiento
gestation – gestación
birth – nacimiento
offspring/brood – cría(s)
finger(s) – dedo(s)
wing(s) – ala(s)
arm(s) – brazo(s)
claw(s) – garra(s)
tongue – lengua
thorax – tórax
abdomen – abdomen
chest/breast – pecho
neck – cuello
bill – pico
muzzle – hocico
intestines – intestinos
heart – corazón
feces – heces fecales/excretas
nose – nariz
lungs – pulmones
gills – branquias
tongs – tenazas
jaw(s) – mandíbula(s)
fin(s) – aleta(s)
burrow – madriguera
den – guarida
song – canto
call – llamada
egg – huevo
larva/larvae – larva/larvas
juvenile – juvenil
chicks – polluelos/pollitos
flock – parvada

Mammals – Mamíferos

deer (buck)/deer (doe) – venado/venada
white-tailed deer – venado(s) cola blanca
fawn – cervatillo
elk – wapití
bobcat – gato montés
fox/red fox/gray fox – zorra/zorro rojo/zorra gris
raccoon – mapache
skunk – zorrillo
squirrel – ardilla
rabbit – conejo
opossum – tlacuache
beaver – castor

River Otter – Nutria de Río
Nutria – Coipú
bat - murciélago
bear/Black Bear - oso/Oso Negro
mouse – ratón
Woodchuck/Groundhog – Marmota Americana
human/people – humano/gente

Birds – Pájaros/Aves

Mourning Dove – Huilota Común
woodpecker – carpintero
duck – pato
Mallard – Pato de Collar
Great Horned Owl – Búho Cornudo
Barred Owl - Búho Barrado
Barn Owl – Lechuza de Campanario
Cooper’s hawk – Gavilán de Cooper
raptor/raptors – rapaz/aves rapaces
American Kestrel – Cernícalo Americano
pelican – pelicano
gull - gaviota
waterfowl – aves acuáticas
Wild Turkey – Guajolote Norteño
Northern Bobwhite – Codorniz Cotuí
Cardinal – Cardenal Rojo
Northern Mockingbird – Centzontle Norteño (from
nahuatl “centzontotl: bird of 400 voices)
sparrow – gorrión
Loggerhead Shrike – Verdugo Americano
Black Vulture – Zopilote Común
Turkey Vulture – Zopilote Aura
Hummingbird – Colibrí
heron – garza
warbler – chipe
Eastern Bluebird – Azulejo Garganta Canela

Reptiles – Reptiles

lizard - lagarto
skink - escíncido
snake – culebra, serpiente
turtle – tortuga
Timber Rattlesnake – Cascabel de Bandas
Eastern Copperhead – Cabeza de Cobre
Northern Cottonmouth/Water Moccasin – Boca de
Algodón/Mocasin de Agua
Eastern Garter Snake – Culebra Listonada Común
Eastern Woodland Box Turtle – Tortuga de caja
Common Snapping Turtle – Tortuga Lagarto
Norteña

Amphibians - Anfibios

frog – rana
toad – sapo
salamander – salamandra
tadpole – renacuajo
American Bullfrog – Rana Toro
Wood Frog – Rana del Bosque
Spring Peeper – Rana Mirona Primavera
Hellbender – Salamandra Gigante Norteamericana
Spotted Salamander – Moteada
Red-spotted Newt – Tritón Oriental

Fish – Peces

freshwater fish – peces de agua dulce
saltwater fish – peces de agua salada
minnow – piscardio
bass – lubina, cherna
trout/Brook Trout – trucha/Trucha de Arroyo
American Shad – Sábalo Americano
Bluegill – Mojarra Oreja Azul

Invertebrates

insect – insecto
spider – araña
ant – hormiga
bee – abeja
beetle – escarabajo
bumblebee - abejorro
wasp – avispa
caterpillar – oruga
butterfly/Monarch Butterfly – mariposa/Mariposa
Monarca
moth – palomilla
dragonfly – caballito de diablo/libélula
ladybug – catarina
tick – garapata
cicada – chicharra
grasshopper – saltamontes/grillo
snail – caracol
crab – cangrejo
freshwater mussel – mejillón de agua dulce
Spotted Lanternfly – Chinche Linterna Manchada
worm – gusano

Plants/Plant Parts – Plantas/Piezas de Plantas

tree – árbol
pine – pino
oak – encino, roble
hardwood – madera noble
Red Maple – Arce Rojo
White Oak – Encino Blanco
American Chestnut – Castaño Americano
Pawpaw – Chirimoyo de la Florida
Flowering Dogwood – Cornejo de San Pedro
milkweed – algodoncillo
Poison-ivy – Hiedra Venenosa
shrub/bush – arbusto/monte
vine – vin, parra, enredadera
forb – herbácea, hierba
grass – pasto grama
flower – flor
petal – pétalo
stem – tallo
branch - rama
leaf – hoja
trunk - tronco
tree canopy – copa del árbol
bark – corteza

Other Organisms – Otros Organismos

fungus/mushroom - hongo
lichen – liquen
bacteria – bacteria
microbe – microbio
virus – virus

Adjectives – Adjetivos

These adjectives are written in the singular form with masculine and feminine conjugations shown. Each adjective gets conjugated according to the noun it is modifying. For example, the red leaf would be “la hoja roja”, but the red worm would be “el gusano rojo”, and the red birds would be “los pájaros rojos.”

venomous – venenoso/a
poisonous – venenoso/a, tóxico/a
harmless – inocuo/a, inofensivo/a
edible – comestible
red – rojo/a

orange – anaranjado/a
yellow – amarillo/a
green – verde
blue – azul
purple – morado/a
black – negro/a
white – blanco/a
brown – marrón
striped – de rayas
spotted – con motas
common – común
rare – raro/a
native/indigenous – autóctono/a, indigeno/a
invasive – invasor
large – grande
small – pequeño/a
wet – mojado/a
dry – seco/a
sunny – soleada
shady – sombreado
aquatic – acuático/a
terrestrial – terrestre

Places/Habitats – Lugares/Hábitats

park/state park/national park – parque/parque
estatal/parque nacional
trail – sendero
nature preserve – reserva natural
forest – bosque
meadow – prado
field – campo
urban area – zona urbana
mountains - montañas
wetland – humedal
coast – costa
road – calle
vernal pool – charco primaveral, charco temporal
river – río
stream, creek – arroyo
pond – estanque
lake – lago
impoundment – embalse
shelter – refugio
riparian area – zona ribereña
dirt – tierra
soil – suelo
marsh/swamp – pantano/cienega
edge – borde

Other Useful Words/Descriptions – Otras Palabras Útiles/Descripciones

“I’m your interpreter.” – “Soy su intérprete.”
“It’s x wide/long/tall.” – “Mide x de ancho/largo/alto
“It weighs x.” – “Pesa x.”
“It’s running.” – “Está corriendo.”
“It’s jumping.” – “Está brincando.”
“It’s crawling.” – “Se está arrastrando.”
“It’s chasing.” – “Está persiguiendo.”
“It’s lying down.” – “Está acostado/a.”
“It’s standing up.” – “Se está poniendo de pie.”
“It’s hiding.” – “Se está escondiendo.”
“It’s not moving.” – “No se está moviendo.”
“It’s leaving.” – “Se está marchando/yendo.”
“It’s back.” – “Está de regreso.”
“It’s sleeping.” – “Está durmiendo.”
“It’s resting.” – “Está descansando.”
“It’s perching.” – “Está perchando.”
“It’s flying.” – “Está volando.”
“It’s swimming.” – “Está nadando.”
“It’s walking.” – “Está caminando.”
“It’s drinking.” – “Está bebiendo.”
“It’s eating.” – “Está comiendo.”
12 o’clock – doce en punto
binoculars – binoculares
feeder – comedero
waterer – bebedero
information kiosk – kiosko/puesto de información
meeting point - punto de reunión
evacuation route – ruta de evacuación
first aid kit – kit de primeros auxilios
telescope – telescopio
pamphlet, brochure – folleto
magnifying glass, loupe – lupa
book – libro
field guide – guía de campo
shoe(s) – zapato(s)
pocket – bolsillo
glasses – lentes
backpack – mochila
net – red
computer – computadora
cell phone - celular
point/tip – punto(a)
track, print – huella

Additional Resources

Audubon Guide to Birds Spanish-language website,
<https://www.audubon.org/es/guia-de-aves>

Standard Spanish, English, and Scientific Names of
the Amphibians and Reptiles of Mexico,
<https://ssarherps.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/HC-38-Spanish-English-Name-List.pdf>

Spanish and English Vernacular Names of Mammals
of North America,
<https://cibnor.repositorioinstitucional.mx/jspui/bitstream/1001/1599/1/PUB-ARTICULO-4041.PDF>

Acknowledgements

This publication was adapted with the author’s
permission from *Spanish for Naturalists*, created for
the Texas Master Naturalist Program by Ernesto
Garcia-Ortega, Texas Parks and Wildlife
Department, 2024.



**Virginia Master
Naturalists**

[Visit Virginia Cooperative Extension](https://ext.vt.edu): ext.vt.edu

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and local governments, and is an equal opportunity employer. For the full non-discrimination statement, please visit ext.vt.edu/accessibility.

2025

CNRE-212NP