

Objectives

- ▶ gather data about an animal in the community through observation
- ▶ explore how living and nonliving things are interdependent
- ▶ observe how living things must adapt in order to survive

Vocabulary

habitat

organism

Background

SFS students participate in case studies that focus on rainforest issues affecting the Atherton Tablelands of far northern Queensland. One case study focuses on the conservation and management of the cassowary, an endangered species. Students conduct field surveys to get an accurate estimate of the population and the habitat quality available to these birds. Throughout their field work, the SFS

students record and reflect on how they use scientific processes to reach their conclusions.

Date	Time	Temperature
11/12	12:20	60°
11/13	11:30	60°
11/14	2:35	55°
11/15	1:30	75°
11/16	12:30	50°
11/17	12:50	50°
11/18	11:10	55°
		60°

Classroom students will have the same opportunity to use the scientific processes while they conduct their own case study of an organism in their community. These processes include observing, communicating, making comparisons, ordering data, categorizing and relating information, making inferences, and applying what they have learned.

Materials

In Your Own Backyard Worksheet

clip board

Activity

1. Have students recall that SFS students are participating in a case study on the cassowary. Ask: Why is the cassowary the focus of the case study? What kinds of information about cassowaries are SFS students collecting? (range, habitat needs, food sources, population density and distribution) How will they use the information? (plan management and conservation strategies) What scientific processes will SFS students use in conducting their research?
2. Explain that students will be collecting information about an organism in their locale. Have groups of students observe organisms in an area such as on a tree, on a rotting log, on grass, or under a rock.
3. Suggest that students record their observations on the In Your Own Backyard Worksheet. Tell them to make notes about the living and nonliving components of the community.
4. Have students use the information on the fact sheet to draw conclusions about the organism's habitat needs and food sources. Their conclusions should include answers to the following questions: How much water does the organism need? What is the availability of food sources? What temperatures does the organism need to survive? What other animals and plants does the organism need to survive?
5. Provide time for students to share their observations and conclusions with classmates.

Extend the Activity

Work with students to create a nature trail to highlight habitats, plants and animals on school grounds. Or get permission for the class to visit another site and map out possible trail stations.

Field Trip

As a class, visit a local park or nature center and walk one of their nature trails. Have each student bring a field journal. Ask them to sketch their favorite trail station and answer these questions: What plants and animals are supposed to live here? Which ones can you see? Are there any rules posted to protect animals and plants along the trail?

In Your Own Backyard Worksheet

Name: _____

Organism's name: _____

Describe the organism. _____

Draw a picture of the organism on the back of this sheet.

Describe the organism's habitat. _____

Record the air temperature on the observation days.

Date	Time	Temperature

What other animals occupy the organism's habitat? Estimate the population of each species in the habitat.

Animal	Est. population

What does the organism eat? _____

How plentiful is the food supply? _____

Observe the organism over a period of time. Describe the animal's habits. _____
