



# Create a Classroom Nature Discovery Center

A Nature Discovery Center is a place in your classroom where students can explore nature through research and observation and where they can practice what they are learning.

## You will need:

- ✓ Living organisms (NOT captured in the wild) for students to care for and study—fish, snails, worms, ants, plants. (See page 9 for care guidelines.)
- ✓ Natural materials—bones, shells, and other items from animals obtained from a science-supply catalogue; leaves, seeds, stones, soil. (See page 8 for collecting guidelines.)
- ✓ Field guides, other nonfiction and fiction books dealing with nature, nature magazines such as *Audubon*, newspaper and magazine articles, pamphlets.
- ✓ Posters and other graphic materials.
- ✓ Science equipment and tools—microscope, hand lenses, binoculars, glass jars, slides, tweezers, a scale, rulers, graph paper.
- ✓ Space for hands-on activities, experiments, and observing and recording.
- ✓ Local information—maps, news about nature and environmental issues in your community, descriptive material and announcements from local nature centers, parks, etc.

## [WHAT TO DO]

- ▶ Before you begin each Audubon Adventures unit, ask your school librarian or media specialist to help you locate additional books related to the subject, and place these in the Nature Discovery Center. (See the Resources section of this manual for suggestions, pages 44-45.) Check with your local Audubon chapter, which may be willing to provide field guides, books, and magazines; or contact an Audubon Center to plan a field trip.
- ▶ Create theme-based natural history exhibits and displays to explore conservation, habitats, endangered species, and classification, and to model the process of scientific inquiry.
- ▶ Let groups of students be responsible for creating a new display for the Nature Discovery Center each month.
- ▶ Set aside class time for students to use the equipment and other resources in the Nature Discovery Center for their own investigations as well as for assigned activities and projects.
- ▶ Set up centers for activities and short-term investigations that students can do on their own.
- ▶ Incorporate keeping a Naturalist's Journal into the activities and displays in the Nature Discovery Center.



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## Keeping a Naturalist's Journal

A journal is an essential tool for scientists and researchers in the field. They use it for recording data and observations, drawings, maps, and other types of information. It is also an excellent way for children to improve their writing and reading skills.

Make keeping a Naturalist's Journal part of every aspect of your students' study of the natural world, both in the classroom and outdoors. Included with your Audubon Adventures classroom package you will find a booklet called *Nature Journaling for Everyone*. It gives you very helpful information, advice, and techniques for guiding your students (and yourself!) through the process of starting and keeping a Naturalist's Journal.