

Welcome to the WORLD OF WATER!



Water is the source of life as we know it. Nearly 80% of the earth's surface is covered with water. Your own body is mostly water. We use water in so many ways, yet it's also terribly easy to take water for granted. You drink it daily, yet chances are you don't lose much sleep worrying where your next glass of water is coming from! Nevertheless, as our population *and* our demand for water both continue to grow, conflicts over how we use this limited resource are likely to grow as well.

Not only is water important to our lifestyle, it's also critical to wildlife. One area where the needs of people and wildlife are often at odds is in the places we call wetlands. Wetlands are environments where the land is often wet or even submerged. Until recently we looked at wetlands as wastelands, and around the country many wetlands have been filled in or drained for other land uses. Now we are discovering the importance of wetlands to wildlife -- and to the natural cycles of water on our planet.

This World of Water Kit will guide you through some activities which explore water's important role on planet earth. It will also introduce you to the wetland environment. You will choose a local wetland to visit. There you will conduct a field study of its soils, water, plants and animals. You may also be able to collect a few aquatic animals and plants to keep for a short period in your house or school for further studies. Finally, this guide suggests a variety of projects you can conduct in your home or community to explore the world of water and wetland environments in other ways.

The World of Water Kit contains most, but not all of what you will need to do all the activities in this guide. Whenever you need to provide something of your own, we have tried to list it in the materials needed list at the beginning of each lesson. Two items you will need to provide throughout the project are your own pencil and paper for answers to questions in the guide. *Please do not write your answers in the guide itself!*

The resources in the kit are only a beginning. We hope you will contribute information, drawings, samples, new experiment ideas and other products from your own investigations to the kit materials as well. Some of the ways you can do this are suggested in this guide, but we welcome your creative ideas too!

Keep in mind that this kit will be used by many other students after you. When you finish an activity, do try to return the materials you have used to the kit clean, dry, and packaged as you received them.

We hope you will find the activities in The World of Water Kit interesting and fun. Good luck!

