



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management



Campbell Creek Science Center

Guide to Nature Journaling

What is Nature Journaling?

At its simplest, nature journaling is regularly recording your observations, feelings, and perceptions of the natural world around you.

Why Nature Journal?

Nature journaling offers a way to slow down and notice more of the world around you. It gives you a chance to regularly practice and deepen your observation skills, creativity, and scientific thinking. Nature journals can also serve as long-term records of the environment. Scientists and naturalists use journals to observe and track changes in the natural world and in how their ideas have evolved over time.

Getting Started:

Select a format for your journal. For example, you may draw, write, or both. You can use a physical journal or make your observations on a digital platform. You could observe using video and/or voice recordings. Or consider using a mix of formats to capture your notes and observations over time.

Select a prompt to begin your nature journal entry about natural world. Use the simple prompt on this page or explore the resources on the next page for other ideas.

Find a spot where you can sit quietly and observe outdoors. Record the date, time, location, temperature, and weather.

Then, focus your attention on something natural that sparks your interest, like a rock, plant, log, the weather, an animal, etc. Focus all your attention on it. What do you notice about it? Record as many general and specific observations about it as you can (e.g., its size, color, shape, what makes you curious, etc.)....What do you wonder about it? What does it remind you of? Record this information as well.



Additional Resources on Nature Journaling

General Resources

- 🔍 [*Introduction to the Nature Journal*](#) (Smithsonian Institution, 2006)
- 🔍 [*The Laws Guide to Nature Drawing and Journaling*](#) by John Muir Laws (Heyday, 2016). See also johnmuirlaws.com for information and videos about nature journaling, drawing, and upcoming workshops.
- 🔍 [*Keeping a Nature Journal: Discover a Whole New Way of Seeing the World Around You*](#) by Clare Walker Leslie and Charles E. Roth (Storey Publishing, 2003). See also clarewalkerleslie.com.
- 🔍 [*Kim's Nature Drawings: Journals*](#) provides inspiration for nature journaling in Alaska.
- 🔍 [*Nature Journaling and Field Sketching*](#) course through Cornell Lab of Ornithology.
- 🔍 [*Nature Journaling for a Wild Life*](#) by Roseann Beggy Hanson (Natural Selection Press, 2020). Provides an eight-week guided course on nature journaling in a book format.

With Kids in Mind:

- 🔍 [*Drawing with Children, A Creative Method for Adult Beginners, Too*](#) by Mona Brookes (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1996). One of many resources that focuses exclusively on developing drawing skills.
- 🔍 [*The Nature Explorer's Sketchbook*](#) by Jean Mackay (Tumblehome, Inc, 2020) is designed to help kids look more closely at nature and capture what they see.
- 🔍 [*Nature Journal for Little Explorers*](#) (Monkey and Bean Company, 2018). Has designated spaces for recording daily weather/temperature, collecting samples, drawings, and writing. Includes prompts such as "What I Heard," "What I Saw," and "What I Felt and Smelled."

Using Your Observations for Science

Here are a few examples of scientific projects that you could contribute your nature observations to:

- 🔍 [*Nature's Notebook*](#) engages observers across the nation in collecting observations on seasonal changes in both plants and animals.
- 🔍 [*Journey North*](#) engages observers across the nation in collecting observations on seasonal changes in plants, animals, and natural phenomenon, such as sunlight and ice out.
- 🔍 [*GLOBE*](#) (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment) is an international science and education program that provides students the opportunity to participate in data collection and science.
- 🔍 [*iNaturalist*](#) connects naturalists, scientists, and other nature observers. Share your observations and get help identifying plants and animals from other users.