

HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTION

Investigation 2: Ecosystems

Aquatic environments are homes to fascinating and diverse organisms. Aquatic systems can be as grand as a lake or ocean, or as ordinary as a mud puddle or neglected bucket of water. If you have the opportunity, visit an aquatic environment, like a beach, pond, stream, or canal. Use a collecting net and temporary observation container to see what plants and animals are living in, on, and near the water. Draw pictures to share with the rest of your class. Release the organisms back into the environment and make sure no harm comes to them.

If visiting an aquatic environment is not possible, search around your home and neighborhood for miniaquatic systems (puddles, gutters with standing water, or buckets left out to fill with water). Get down close and look carefully. Maybe scoop some water into a white-bottomed container, such as a half of a milk carton or a plastic bowl.

Describe how one plant or animal is influenced by a **nonliving** factor in the aquatic environment.

Describe how one plant or animal is influenced by a **living** factor in the aquatic environment.

Describe an example of environmental preferences that you observed in the aquatic environment.

If no natural aquatic environments are easy to get to, get a map of the area in which you live. Locate the aquatic environments nearby. List them in groups based on the kind of aquatic environments you locate: stream environments, lake environments, and so forth. Use the reverse side of this paper to make your lists.