

Thought Lab 3.1 Planning for Your Field Study

Purpose: Begin your preparations by considering individuals, populations, and communities within two ecosystems.

Procedure

1. Read Investigation 3.D on page 106 so you can see what you will be doing in your field study.
2. As a group, brainstorm a list of possible local ecosystems that you could use as the focus for your field study. Recall that ecosystems can vary in size. Choose two ecosystems from your list. They should be similar types of ecosystems but in different locations. For example, one ecosystem could be a small pond in a forested area, and the other ecosystem could be a nearby water-filled ditch. Or one ecosystem could be a regularly mowed field, and the other ecosystem could be a nearby area that is not regularly mowed.
3. Decide on a method you will use to store and organize the information you gather during your field study. For example, you might use an electronic filing system.
4. Individually, choose one species that lives in both ecosystems you plan to study. From your experiences and observations, or after completing research, write a paragraph that explains how this species interacts with the abiotic and biotic components of its environment. For example, what eats this species, and what does it eat? What are its nutrient requirements?

Analysis

Describe the typical (a) population, (b) community, and (c) ecosystem of the species you chose in step 4.