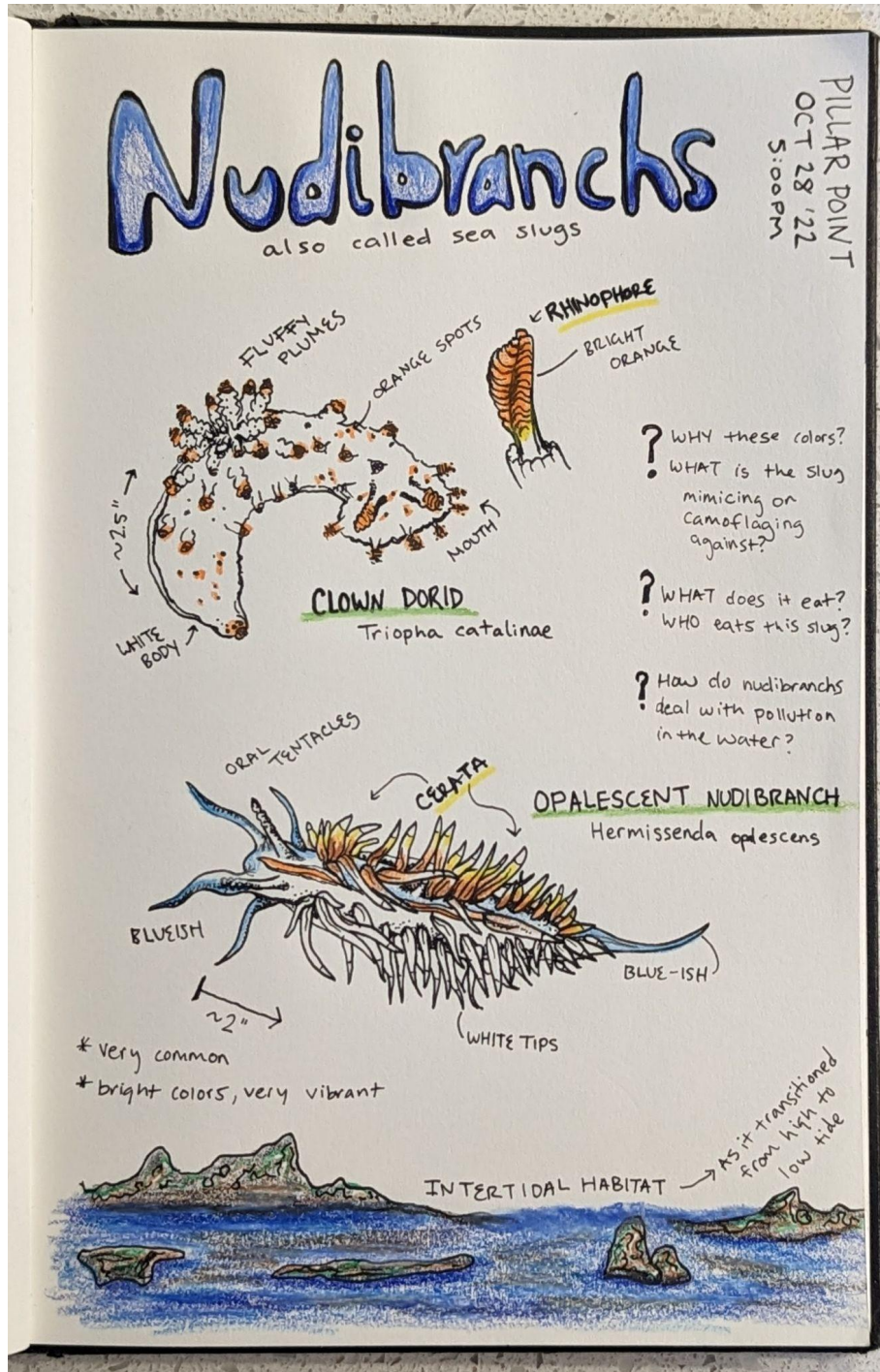


NATURE JOURNALING BASICS



Example of what a nudibranch nature journal at the intertidal zone entry could look like. Endless possibilities! -Chloe Van Loon

Introduction

Nature journaling is a great way to foster a meaningful connection with nature, at the landscape level or macroscopic. Journaling could be a one time event, or a series of entries on one topic, in one location, or as seasons change. The beauty of nature journaling is there are endless possibilities, and it is adaptable to all age groups and curriculum.

Nature journaling is best done outside. If going outside is not an option, alternatives include: school grounds, backyards, or you can even look out a window, or at an image.

Materials

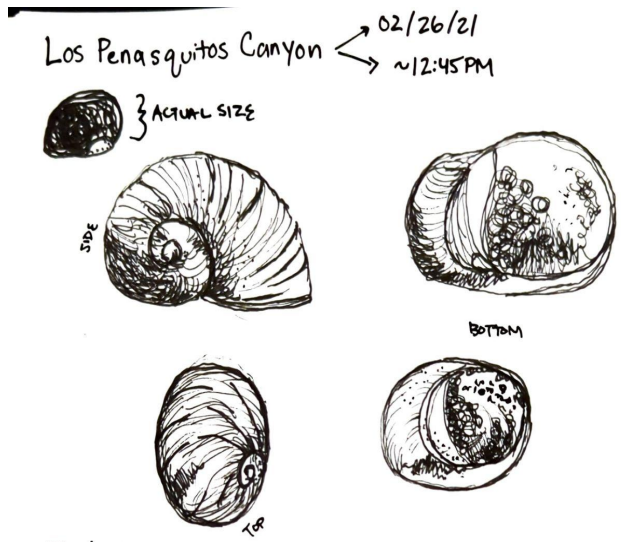
- Notebook, or loose paper
- Writing utensils: pencil, pen
 - Optional: colored pencils, watercolors, charcoal
 - Optional: additional art supplies: glue, tracing paper
- Tools for engaging closer with nature (optional)
 - Magnifying glass
 - Binoculars
 - Container to catch bugs
 - Identification Books

Getting Started

When observing a plant, flora/fauna, natural phenomena, students should be encouraged to be curious, and write down their thoughts in response to these three points:

- **I Notice:** Focus on drawing or writing about what you can observe with your senses. What sounds do you hear? What colors, shapes, and behaviors can you see? Try to describe what you observe (blue, smooth, spotted, etc.) instead of just identifying it.
- **I Wonder:** As you write or draw, note questions you have about what you are observing. Did you observe an interesting pattern or behavior that you wonder about?

- **It Reminds Me Of:** Does what you are observing remind you of something else you have observed? Does it remind you of an event in your life when you observed something similar or felt the same way? A nature journal is a great place to record memories, feelings, and connections.
- For example:



I NOTICE:

Colors: • Mostly brown
• Light cream/grey inside
• Dirt inside opening

Texture: • Quite smooth, some scratches
• no recent signs of snail presence
• found next to small trail, very open area

Much cleaner and "fresher" than other snail shells I've found

I WONDER:

- Did the snail abandon this shell?
- Did a predator leave this shell behind?
- Is this area good habitat for this species of snail?
- Is it an invasive Garden snail? I don't see a band like shoulderband snails have, which are native here.

It REMINDS Me Of

This is larger than some snails, but smaller than others I've seen.

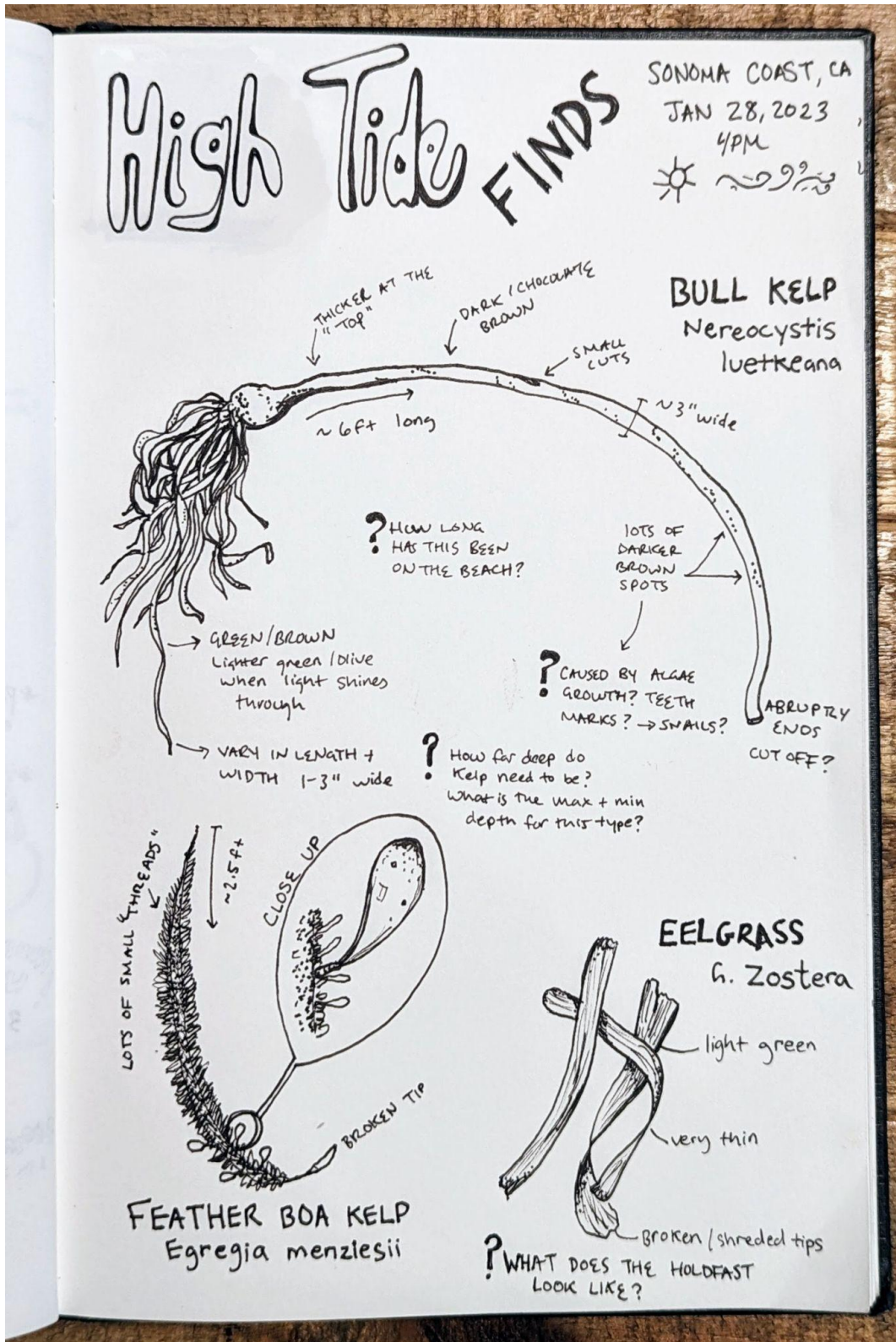
Reminds me how you can find interesting nature finds anywhere, and when you least expect it!

Prompts:

- Imagine if plants, insects, and animals were able to talk. What would you ask them?
- You wake up one day as a [insert animal or plant name] – where would you go and what would you see?
- Use your senses – what do you see, what can you smell, what can you touch or hear?
- Pick an individual animal or plant to study, draw it.
- Describe the lifecycle, or what a day in the life of a [insert animal or plant name] would look like.

Examples

Below are two examples of nature journal entries from Naturalist, Chloe Van Loon. Hopefully, these help to inspire your students.



Western Carpenter Bee

XYLOCOPA CALIFORNICA

CASTLE CRAGS VISTA
05/13/21
1000, Sunny ☺

Bee



SHINY ABDOMEN

BUZZ

BUZZ

BUZZ

★ Nearly all sp burrow into hard plant material, such as dead wood

★ most C. bees are hard to tell apart but have shiny abdomen,umble bees don't also characteristic wing venation

MOSTLY DARK BLUE/BLACK BUT abdomen + thorax is metallic green in some light

Legs long low

ANSWER:

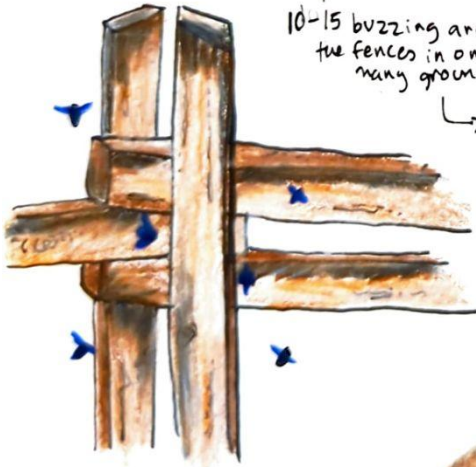
Males: typically have a few light hairs on the pronotum (dorsal prothorax) + abdominal segments
★ often hover near heats (single entrance)

All same SEX?

Some are solitary, others have social nests

AT one point there were ~30

10-15 buzzing around the fences in one area, but many groups.



But not on the benches. Why?



They seem to attack each other mid flight or when one is near a hole in the wood. and fall to the ground

CONNECTION W/ WOOD

- ★ females live w/ own daughters/sisters
- ★ Use wood bits to form partitions btw cells in the nest
- ★ some bone holes in wood dwellings
- ★ attracted ^{ive} to woodpeckers who eat the bees + larvae
- ★ nectar robber! Don't eat the wood

> sawdust one one beam under a nest?



Some holes are small, seemingly too small to fit a whole bee

other holes are oval, and crawled into it

References

- For all things Nature Journaling: <https://johnmuirlaws.com/>
- Sketching for Observation, [California Academy of Sciences](#)
- Pollinator Journaling: [Kids Gardening.org](#)
- Thimble and Twig: [Nature Journal Prompts for Kids](#)
- Oregon State University Extension Service Outdoor School: [Nature Journaling](#)