

HOW TO MAKE FIELD NOTES

Your objective is to create an accurate written record of your field activities, investigations, observations and thoughts. You should record date and location information in a very detailed manner so that others can know exactly when, where, and under what conditions your work was done. This will enable you or others to return to the same areas in the future to verify findings and observe changes over time.

GENERAL FORMAT

Follow this format in your field notes:

1. Field notes should be divided into two sections: Journal and Species Accounts
2. Write on one side of the paper. Leave a generous left margin as shown in the examples.
3. Write your name in the upper left-hand corner
4. Write the year in the upper right-hand corner underneath your name.
5. Write the day and month in the upper left margin.
6. Write "Journal" in the top margin of your journal pages, and the name of the species in the top margin of your species account pages.
7. Write in complete sentences and paragraphs. You can think of field notes as a letter to a friend or relative explaining what you saw. Or think of them as a letter to someone visiting the area 20 years later who is unfamiliar with the area.

FOR THE JOURNAL SECTION:

1. Put a heading on the top line of each page which identifies your location. You should include specific site, city, county and state. Underline the heading. (Joseph Grinnell underlined his location with a wavy line.)
2. Note the purpose of the trip (Why?)

3. Note who went on the trip with you (Who?).
4. Note the time of day of each important observation (When?).
5. Information about the places you visit should be written so that someone unfamiliar with the area can find your exact location using maps and your description. Tell where you started and where you went. Include what road or trail you walked on, or the general route you took if you did not follow a road. (Where?).
6. Include notes on the weather, elevation, topography, geology, soil, water, vegetation types, plant phenology (what life stage they are in), and evidence of disturbance (fire, grazing, cultivation, etc.) (What?).
7. Be accurate. If you have to guess about something, identify your guess as a guess. It is appropriate to speculate about things and to ask questions. Do include your feelings, intuitions and thoughts! Just be sure you don't mislead a reader into thinking your thoughts are facts!
8. Be detailed and quantify your data as much as possible. "Saw some ducks on the pond" is not as useful as "saw 12 pintail (7 males and 5 females) on the southeast end of Olcott Lake about 5 m from the shore."
9. Sketches and drawings can be very useful. Rough sketches and diagrams add details and depth to your notes.
10. You may take temporary notes on a smaller field notebook, then transcribe your notes into your permanent journal. You should transcribe as soon as possible after you leave the field, and always the same day as your trip.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

1. Create a page for each species you observe. This is the place for more detailed descriptions and observations of an individual or group of one particular species. Include sights, sounds, smells, textures, patterns, sizes, shapes, colors, and movements. Include numbers of individuals, sizes, frequencies and behaviors.

GRADING

Your field notes will be graded according to a 4-point rubric.

Jim Johnson
2000

Journal

Jepson Prairie Preserve, Dixon, Solano Co., Calif.

11 July

I Arrived a bit before 8:30 and parked in the only parking lot. There was one other car there. I was going to (finally!) meet Dan Tolson, the Reserve steward. We were going to burn some star thistle patches that were missed during the early June burn here.

The weather is clear and windy. The wind is 10-15 mph from the WSW - I found out later this is normal for Jepson Prairie and picks up to typically 15-20 by mid to late morning.

I walked over across Cook Lane to meet the owner of the Honda Civic, who appeared to be gardening in a recently burned area. His name is Jim Steinert, and he is a docent at JPP. He was cutting off curly dock (Rumex) plants just below the seed head, and piling them up for burning. Rumex is an introduced species that folks are trying to remove from the reserve. It has dark rusty-red stalks and seeds, and now is brittle enough ^{that} ^{can} snap off the stalk with your bare hands. So I did so until Dan Tolson arrived about 8:50 or so.

After a few more volunteers showed up, and Ken Poerner, the land steward of Solano County Farmlands and Open Space Foundation, we drove S. on Cook Ln. to the S. end of the preserve to the sheep barns. There we put our rumex jumpsuits on, our fire shelters, gloves + helmets +

Journal

11

Oil oil POINT RESERVE, S.B., S.B. Co., CA

Mike Collins

2000

Biggest Threat to Dune Beetles is our interaction with plants.

3 plant species in embryo dunes:

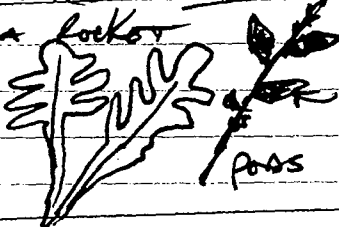
SEA ROCKET - Cakile maritima

SALT BUSH -

Beach Bur. - AMBROSIA CHAMISSONIS

~~Plumrose~~ CAMISSONIA sp. (Plumrose)

Sea Rocket



poss look like

Rockets

poss flower

green

SALT Bush



poss flower



light blue-green

most common plant in #2

ALBA-UNSTABLE DUNES

Beachbur

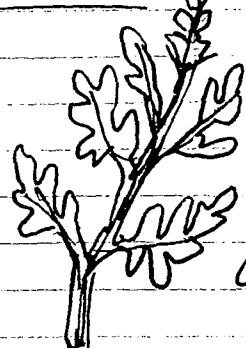
1 INDIVIDUAL

long branches

so IF BURNED

part will

SURVIVE



light green

Long TAP

Root

G. Pepin

2000

MACROINVERTEBRATES

Landel Hills-Big Creek Reserve, Monterey Co., Ca.

20 July

MACROINVERTEBRATE survey of Robertson Creek (Hastings Reserve)

* 2 people collecting for 1 hr.

** # based on pollution tolerance, ↑# means less tolerant - cleaner H₂O

# species	morpho-species	rating **	WQI
5	Caddis Fly	6	30
6	May Flies (true bugs)	7	42
2	Hemipteran	4	8
1	Water Penny	4	4
2	Beetles	3	6
4	Dragonflies	6	24
2	Damselflies	6	12
1	Black Fly	2	2
1	True Midge	2	2
1	Soldier Fly	2	2
1	Pouch Snail	3	3
			<u>135</u>