

# Husbandry Notebook

## OBJECTIVES

The student will observe and record care of an animal and then organize a book of daily husbandry procedures.

## MATERIALS

*per student or student pair:*

- 3" x 5" index cards
- spiral notebook
- pencil
- animal to observe

## BACKGROUND

As part of the comprehensive preventive medicine program, zoological staff compile records and daily observations of an animal's husbandry, health, and behavior. Zoo and aquarium husbandry manuals include sections on housing, management, behavior, social organization, reproduction, nutrition, and health. For example, the nutrition section may include food variety, food quantity, and feeding times. The behavior section may include the animal's daily activity cycle (sleeping, resting, eating, moving). The health section may include dates of previous tests, dates for upcoming tests, and so on.



## ACTION

1. Students may work individually or in pairs. (*Suggestion: pair students so that those without pets can partner with students who have pets.*) First, they select a pet or other animal to observe. Discuss elements of a husbandry notebook.
2. If students select an animal in a zoological facility you will need to arrange for weekly or biweekly facility visits. You also will need to arrange for animal care specialists to provide students with husbandry information during these visits.
3. Use index cards to define categories or "chapters" in the husbandry notebook. Students will write data on these cards while observing (and caring for, when applicable) their selected animals. Cards may be labeled "feeding times," "exercise log," "bath schedule," etc. Class may decide on categories together or students may decide independently. (See **Background** above for ideas.)
4. Allow enough time (two or three weeks) for feeding, bathing, and exercise cycles to become routine. Students use index cards to record all available information for each category, making additional notes when necessary.
5. After observations and recording information, students organize the data into a notebook, adding a table of contents and an index. Did students identify other categories during the study that they hadn't anticipated? Have them add these categories to the notebook.
6. Have students share notebooks with classmates. How does pet husbandry compare to animal husbandry in a zoological facility?