Forget the Field Trip
Have a Field Experience!

The new year is here and in a few short months the northern parts of our nation will be experiencing a rebirth of nature. In every part of our country young wildlife will begin to appear. Once again, the sounds and sights of animals will be all around us.

Now is the time to begin planning your outdoor experiences. And by all means - have them. Don’t stay glued to the classroom, school building, and grounds. Get out and help your children’s senses make sense in the outdoors.

You can begin now. Take your class to a nature center, wildlife preserve or other outdoor study area. Conduct a sense census. Start with noses. Have the children make note of the things that they smell now. Naturally, differing conditions in different parts of the nation will affect your census. If you’re in the deep south, perhaps you’ll be able to smell rotting vegetation. In the far north, you may find traces of skunk musk lingering in the air. At the seashore, the smell of low tide is still there but not as strong as it is during the warm days of spring.

The sights will be different. Fewer animals will be observed. There is less activity in the animal world. Animals are not seeking mates. Many of the farm animals may be indoors. The northern flora is not in bloom. Nature has used the winter season to shed dead branches from the limbs of trees. Bird nests left over from the previous spring are obvious in the naked branches of northern trees.

The sounds of nature are muted too. There are no fervent mating calls of birds in search of companionship. In the north, sounds carry a great deal farther because nature’s sound mufflers, the leaves, are gone. The competition in the animal world still exists but animals don’t make so much noise about it during the cold season.

Even the feel of nature is different. Young tree limbs don’t have the flexibility and spring that they do when the sap is running. Pet dogs have grown heavier coats. The horse that has wintered out in the field may have a thick coat of hair. The moss doesn’t feel mossy. The water feels cold.

Nature’s taste has changed too. A blade of grass doesn’t taste the same when it’s brown. There are no wild raspberries to give young people stomach aches.

Have each of your students keep a log of their January sense census. Some students may even want to make notes on a map so that they might return to the same spot during the spring.

Discuss your winter sense census and find answers to every question. Of course, you know what comes next. You should go back to your outdoor study area in the spring and conduct a new sense census. This should create a lot of whys. Why does it smell different now? Why are there so many more animal sounds now? Why does the blade of grass taste different? Why do we see more flying birds now? And on and on.

You may want to supply your students with the following equipment:
- a baby food jar for examining water samples,
- a small hand held magnifying glass to examine leaf buds and insects,
- a cloth measuring tape for measuring things such as tree trunks and animal tracks,
- a cigar box or small shoe box for leaf collections or insect specimens.

By comparing what they sense now and what they sense in the spring, your children will create a natural science curriculum that will really respond to the things they want to know and need to know. And, by meeting the real needs of the children you will nurture a respect and appreciation for nature’s wonders.
The Beauty of Birth

The Nyala mother's baby was born,
On a humid and steamy August morn.

At first it seemed like a lifeless toy,
But its matted hair was its mother's joy.

She washed it, she poked, she pushed with her head.
It stumbled, it fell — its body like lead.

Then as by magic, it suddenly rose.
It stood on all fours — a staggering pose.

The beauty of birth is beyond compare,
It's magic, it's mystery — music so rare.
Humane Society Gives First Youth Award, Page 1

SKILLS: Before reading the front page story, elicit, through discussion, the concepts related to the following terms: award, humane society, and unwanted. Have the students look up the words in their dictionaries. You can also use this story to improve the skill of reading between the lines for inferences. Ask: Could Lynn Wigley be described as happy? Why? (The story said she was smiling from ear to ear.) Why do you think the dog warden was replaced? (Because the Charleston Raccoons made the adult leaders of the community aware of his poor performance through the radio talk show and their newspaper articles.) Do you think that other groups of young people will be encouraged to do good deeds because of this story? (Probably, because they have a fine example in the Charleston Raccoons.)

ATTITUDES: Ask: What do you think the attitudes in Charleston were toward unwanted animals before the Raccoons came on the scene? (Not knowing the existing problem at the pound would suggest that perhaps the people assumed everything at the pound was OK. Their attitude was probably indifference.) How does your town treat the unwanted animals that it catches and places in the shelter or pound? Is there a planned campaign in the newspapers and on radio to try and place unwanted animals in homes where they will be well cared for?

FOLLOW-UP: Perhaps some of your students may wish to visit your local animal shelter to check on conditions there. Others may wish to take photos of orphaned or unwanted animals to be placed in the local newspapers. Still others may want to make posters to be placed in public places in their town or city on a map. Then have them locate your town or city on a map. Have the students use the scale on the map to determine the distance between the two points. Then have the students determine the distance to Oak Book, Illinois from Charleston, Illinois. This is the distance that the members of the Raccoons Club traveled to receive their award. Have your students write thank you letters to the Charleston Raccoons Club for their efforts. If you wish, you can send representative letters to KIND. We will forward them to the Raccoons. This seemingly light lesson will give your students the opportunity to practice letter writing, letter style, and allow them to express their feelings toward other youth that have made good.

If your students have a flair for creative writing, you may want to suggest that they imagine that they are some of the dogs that were in the Charleston animal shelter. They could write their impressions of how it was and how it is, now that the Raccoons have come on the scene.

ATTITUDES: Discuss how public attitudes can be changed through the use of various media. Note the attitudinal change of the American public to the Vietnam Conflict and the Watergate break-in once the popular media began to serve as a communication device in focussing attention on these issues. Compare these major events with the local changes that the Raccoons encouraged through the use of the popular media. Discuss the pros and cons of the freedom of speech concept built into our ATTITUDES: Ask: Would you have done what the Charleston Raccoons did? Why or why not? (The community has many pressures that may serve to dissuade people from public action.) Ask the students what community pressures may serve to dampen the fires of outraged citizens who discover immoral, unethical, or illegal activities. (Outspoken folks may get labeled as troublemakers; youngsters are often given a deaf ear because it is felt that they do not have the wisdom that comes with age and experience; and the pressure to not get involved is often a compelling reason to stay away from controversy.) Ask: Do you think it is wise to keep silent when you learn about illegal, immoral, or unethical acts? Why or why not?

FOLLOW-UP: Have your students choose a news item in your community that illustrates a
prominent places. These posters could detail the responsibilities of pet ownership. They may dissuade some people from attempting to keep pets. This could help the unwanted pet problem by preventing a case where one of these people might abandon an animal.

Woody Woodchuck, Page 2

SKILLS: Obtain The World Almanac and a collection of annotated calendars. Have the students check to see if there are other “special days” that are “animal days.” Bird Day is often observed with Arbor Day at the end of April, and Be Kind to Animals Week and National Wildlife Week are observed in May and March respectively. There’s also Earth Day in April, The return of the swallows to Capistrano in March, National Dog Week in September, St. Francis Assisi Blessing of the Animals in October, and June is often referred to as Cat and Kitten Month. Some of the students may wish to report to the class on the origins of these special “animal days.”

FOLLOW-UP: You may want to make a listing of these special animal days and have the students make posters or other graphic representations to announce the coming of these “animal days.”

Fun, Page 3

SKILLS: This puzzle was designed to reinforce the concepts and some of the hard words in the page 2, story about Woody the Woodchuck. You may want to add the words from this puzzle to your weekly spelling list.

Additional Ways to Use This Issue

Cut out Woody’s photo on page 2 and make a transparency master with it. Using your overhead projector, project Woody’s enlarged image onto a large piece of mural paper. Have some of the students trace the basic outline of the woodchuck with felt tip markers. Then, some of the others could take turns painting in the appropriate colors. Check an animal reference book for the correct coloring of a groundhog.

Constitution. Ask: Do you think that the Raccoons could have accomplished their goals without the use of the local newspapers and radio? Discuss other ways that the Raccoons could have accomplished their goals. (Letter writing, speaking to town officials, petitions, and door to door campaigning are some other ways that the Raccoons could have used.) Attempt to note local examples whenever possible.

FOLLOW-UP: As a continuing survey of the “freedom of speech” concept, have the students check your local newspapers and radio stations for stories of successes and failures by special interest groups and discuss these stories on a regular basis.

Dog Fights, Page 3

SKILLS: Have the students discuss other so-called sports that involve the use of animals. (Rodeo, hunting, cock fighting, bull fighting, horse racing, greyhound racing, snake wrestling, and alligator wrestling are some they will point out.) Have the students divide into small research teams and research these topics for the origins of the events, methods used in training the animals, the actual disposition of the animal during the event, the conditions of the animals after the events, and the legality of such events. Have the students decide for themselves which events they think are humane and which are inhumane.

ATTITUDES: Using the information gained from the previous research, have the students put themselves in the place of some of these animals used by man for “sports.” Discuss how they would feel or react to the events or the training process, or the after effects of such events.

Here it is, Page 5

FOLLOW-UP: Encourage your students to seek out individuals or groups that are deserving of a KIND Award. Help them prepare their submission to KIND. Perhaps you can help bring back Gabriel Heater’s “Th” good news tonight!”

Help Your Neighbors Turn Over a New Leaf, Page 4

FOLLOW-UP: If your school has a camera club, you may want to ask the members of the club to help your students with their photography. When you are having your photos developed for use on the posters, ask the developer to give you a contact sheet first. This is one sheet of photo paper with all of the photos on one roll printed on it in the size of the negatives. Then, you can choose the one or two photos each student wants to use and have them blown up to 8 x 10s. This method is less expensive than having all of the photos developed to the regular size. Your camera club may have the facilities for developing pictures. If this is the case, try to enlist their aid in the poster project. The alphabet letters supplied in the newsletter can be enlarged or reduced for your purposes by using the overhead projector after making a transparency master. The students can then trace whatever size letter they would like by simply placing their tracing paper at different distances from the projector.

Additional Ways to Use This Issue

With this second installment of Who Really Needs Alligators?, Robert Bendiner has left us with much food for thought. Perhaps your students would like to explore their own thoughts with an essay of their own dealing with the who really needs theme. You may want to start your students off with Mr. Bendiner’s words, “Try to imagine a future w...”
New Full Color Posters

KIND has just published six new large full color posters that would brighten up any room. We’re not showing them to you because black and white photos would not do them justice. We will be running full color pictures of them in a future issue.

We think that they’re just beautiful.

#1 — Lion Cub with the slogan “Wild and Free.” #2 — Basset and Butterfly with the slogan “Nothing Bugs Me!” #3 — A cat and a dog with the slogan “Let’s Be Friends.” #4 — Two bulldogs with the slogan “A Friend is Someone to Lean On.” #5 — A mare and her colt with the slogan “A New Day.” #6 — A newborn fawn with the slogan “Hidden Beauty.” Order by number from KIND. They’re $1.00 each or six for $5.00.

-TALK IT OVER-

As the new year is being born, nature is repeating its never-ending cycle of life in many parts of the world. These photos depict the birth of a nyala antelope.

We’ve chosen to print the photos in this teacher’s guide so that you have the option of using them or not using them. If you do use the photos, they can provide an interesting vehicle for a discussion and examination of the birth process.

The nyala occur in northeastern Natal, Rhodesia, southern Malawi, and eastern Transvaal. You might find it interesting to locate these places on a map of Africa. The nyala (ni-ALA) usually live in lush river country where they feed on grass, leaves, and fruit. The nyala stand about 42 inches high and will weigh between 250-275 pounds.

Since the nyala are shy creatures, little is known about their breeding habits. Gestation is thought to be about six months, and only one young is born usually in September or October. This nyala was born at The Bronx Zoo in New York City during August.

There are three species of nyala. The one we have described, the mountain nyala, and the sitatunga. The latter has an interesting way of eluding predators. The sitatunga will wade out into a lake or river and hide in the water with only its nose breaking the surface. The mountain nyala lives in the high mountains of Ethiopia. They are the rarest of the species.