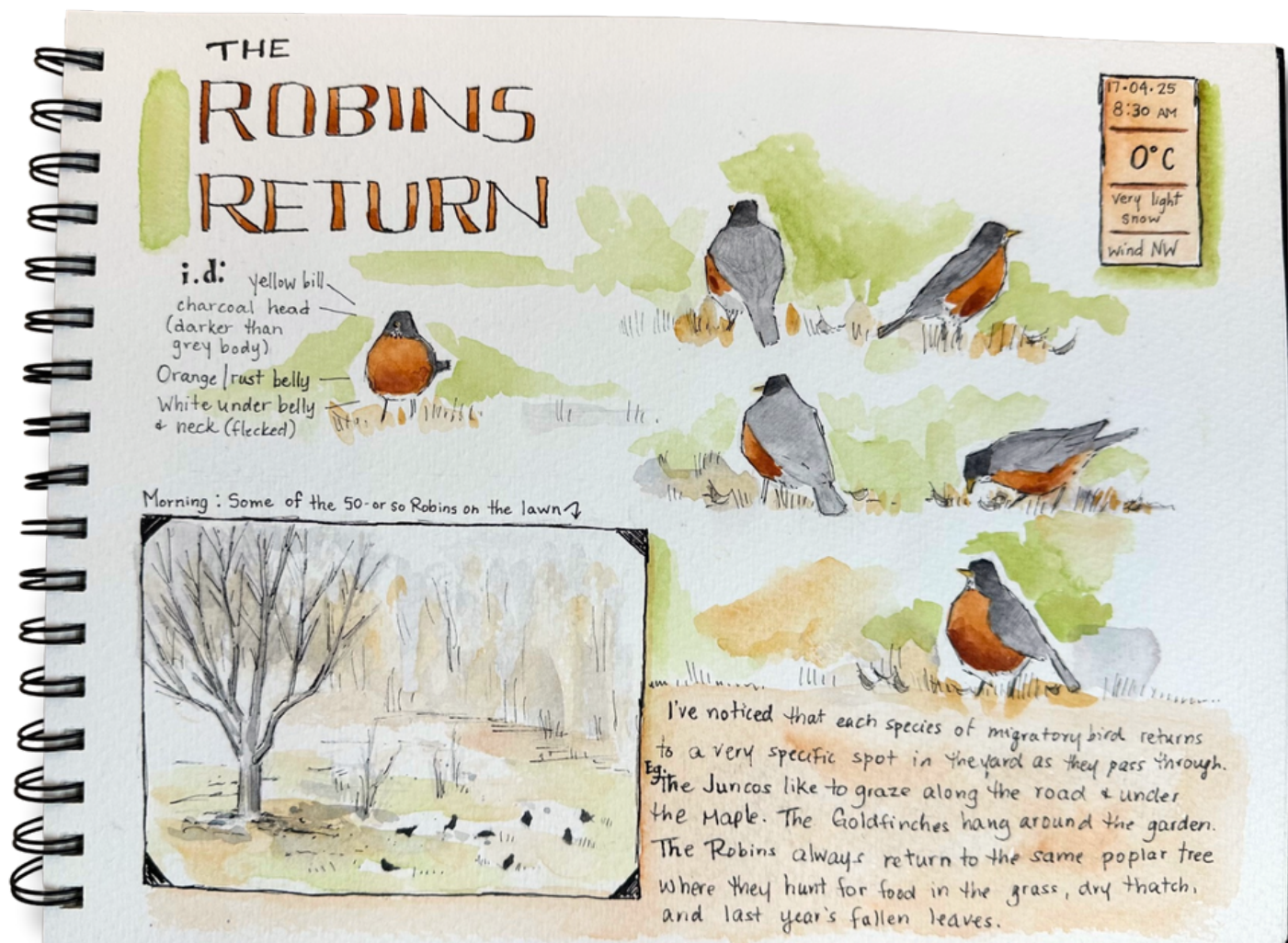




Summer

Capture the Experience

One School
One Farm



This page was done while window-watching, with the help of binoculars. Note the variety of nature journaling strategies incorporated on one page.

Your Goal: Create a page in your nature journal that reflects what you've learned. Use strategies you've already practiced in previous activities, try combining them and thinking about how you can mix and match techniques and approaches. You have so many tools in your toolkit- have fun experimenting and coming up with your own approaches too!

Overview: Building a habit of nature journaling results in having a repertoire of skills and strategies, becoming more independent in the practice. Using this tool, we develop both an intellectual and physical reference "library" in the mind and in our journals. Over time, you will see patterns in nature, and also in your own thinking and noticing.



Nature Journaling Strategy: Layering Strategies

Look back and move forward: Review/discuss different strategies you've tried so far in your nature journal: visual mapping; looking at the big picture & looking closer; using diagrams; gesture sketching; sequencing; composition; scale drawing; using representational elements. Look back on your journal pages to see what made them interesting and effective. This is subjective, and while some of your favourite pages may be eye-catching compositions or your "best" drawings, they may also be the ones where something interesting was learned, or that evoke memories of a meaningful place or special day.

It can be helpful to have tried-and-tested strategies to fall back on, but it can also keep things interesting to periodically look for creative inspiration from books or fellow nature-journallers. Try new things and practice layering strategies on the page as you move forward.

As you become more confident in this practice, you will be able to select specific strategies that make the most sense for each unique observation and experience you have. An effective composition may include a variety of strategies that fit together to tell the full story of what you are observing.

What is the value of taking the time to draw and write by hand, when most of us carry a camera in our pocket? Perhaps it is just that- the time it takes to sit and be in a place long enough to capture it on the page. While a photo may capture an ecological moment in what appears to be perfect detail, there are actually many details that are lost in the instant of an image- including details that come from within your own experience of the moment. While the photo below captures a ladybug on a mushroom, the journaled page to the right also captures the way that my thinking changed because of the extended time I allowed myself to sit in silence and to wonder about what was going on in front of me.





Nature Journal Gallery Walk

- Explore published nature journals or sketchbooks online or in print, and select a variety of pages to display and create a gallery walk. You could have an 'open sketchbook' show, selecting pages from your own journal to display alongside peers' work. What strategies do you notice being used on these pages? Look for a strategy or compositional element you haven't tried before, and try it out in your own journal. Do a group sharing of favourite pages or elements that worked well in your nature journal. .



Observation Scavenger Hunt

- Make a checklist of different journaling strategies (e.g. *use a symbol*; *add a diagram*; *look closer*; *show movement/gesture*) and challenge yourself to use as many as you can on one page while observing a single location. This 'strategy first' approach can push you out of your comfort zone a bit, and while this page may end up a little messy, it's a good way to just get going, rather than waiting for inspiration to strike.

It can be fun to sit in the same space with others while nature journaling to compare results afterwards. How are your pages similar or different? What orientation did you choose, or strategies did you use? What did you notice that was unique? Can you learn anything from what someone else saw?



First Storm of Summer

Kitchen Sink view...

Gulls playing on the wind currents



June 14, 2025 7:00 PM

Watching a summer storm roll in as I'm at the kitchen sink... Pausing to sketch fast. The clouds are rolling, greys and dark blues... It gives way to a sea-green storm front. The wind picks up, whips the flag and trees. The curtains billow. The downpour comes. Lightening. Thunder. Pebbles of hail. Sheets of rain. Then quiet. Sunlight shines through the remaining drizzle.



Extended On-Site Sit Spot

- Prepare for an extended sit spot in your chosen location. You might bring a snack, a drink, and something comfortable to sit on.
- It is always surprising the way the natural world slowly opens up, the longer you spend in one spot. Draw on the inspiration you've gathered, and think about the strategies you've learned.
- Facing the blank page can be difficult sometimes, especially when you haven't been given a specific assignment. If you're not sure where to start, begin with something simple like a title, the weather, a diagram, some scribbles of local colour, or a few words describing your location.
- As you do these things, you may discover something interesting to focus on. Getting the ink in your pen flowing can help with your creative flow too!

SNAILS

Brown snail
Similar in
colour to
tones in
the water.

Duckweed

Active
snail

This snail
goes left
as I watch
it, then
does a
180°
turn

Evening. Observing pond snails.
Redwing Blackbirds are calling.
Two ducks on the pond - Mallards
A few gulls overhead.
Many mosquitos humming + biting.

Empty shell
at the edge
of the pond:

?
Do all
snails' shells
whirl in
the same
direction?



1.5x

Browns,
Almost
transparent

Faded, washed-
out blue,
dark undertones

Topside

Thick
moss +
some
duckweed

pale colour with
greenish-ochre
markings.

This snail
is quite
still. It
appears to
be attached
to something
below it.

These snails are in the shallow
water at the pond's edge, where
cattails, horsetail, wild mint + willows grow.

June 11, 2025
7 PM
Calm
Pond @home



Wildlife sketching at a snail's pace: not all creatures move so quickly that they are difficult to sketch in real-time!



Summer

Celebrating Growth

One School
One Farm



Overview: You've spent time noticing, mapping, measuring, exploring, and observing in your land partner site or school yard. Whether you're returning to a site you've explored in the fall or winter or observing a new site, this is a chance to apply your journaling strategies and use nature journaling as a tool for paying attention to the effects of restoration work.



Your Goal: Rather than trying to track growth and change across a whole site, select a small area to return to as often as you can, and record as many details as you are able to. If you are working as part of a larger group, each paying attention to your own small focused area, your observations can come together like pieces in a puzzle that create a picture of the site as a whole.

Nature Journaling Strategy: Documenting a Measured Space

Scientists often use a strategy called a quadrats to carefully observe changes in an environment over time. Similarly, you can focus your attention on a small area of a land partner site over time. Consider strategies and representational elements (diagrams, coloured dots or letters, numbers and writing) and tools (measuring tape, ruler, stakes, string) that may be used to document a measured space. To create a diagram that represents the space, decide on the scale of your drawing compared with the actual site. When trying this exercise for the first time, use measurements that are easily converted. For example, a space that is one square meter can be represented on the page as ten square centimeters. Be sure that the map is clearly labelled with measurements, directions, scale, and a key if you are going to use any symbols.

Use the measuring tools to locate plants, insects, and other interesting features on the map. Use journaling strategies to document these things with pictures, words, and numbers.



Intro to Quadrat Mapping

- Before heading outside, look at examples of quadrat diagrams and practice setting up a simple square on paper. Try out measuring, scaling, and recording findings by creating a square meter quadrat on the floor and scattering a variety of objects in it (pencils, erasers, other small school supplies) to represent the potential species diversity you might encounter in the field. Practice mapping the objects out on paper, and explore any challenges or questions that come up in terms of accurately representing a three dimensional space in a two dimensional map.



Mapping in the Field

- Select a square meter of space. It can be helpful to work with a partner to ensure accuracy, make decisions, and notice as much as you can about the space you are focusing on. You might take turns observing and recording. Document as much information as you can about the square meter. Make observations of plants, insects, soil, etc. Notice other species in the area. If you've planted new species, be sure to include them. Try combining a variety of strategies in creating this document about the space. Remember, symbols and keys can be especially helpful.



Biodiversity Bulletin Board

- Consider sharing the story of your land partner site on a bulletin board through photos, maps, photocopied nature journaling pages, and captions. The changes in a restoration space can be surprising and unexpected, and sharing your observations with others might inspire them to begin their own restoration project.



This tiny quadrat of dense vegetation along a pond's edge is only 15 cm². It was drawn to scale. Plants were mapped and the white space used for sketches and observations of those plants. The pond, a farmyard dugout, has naturalized and hosts a variety of plant and animal aquatic life.



In this mapping, I wanted to visually map out this space because there were so many beautiful textures and colours.

Species Hunt and Naming Practice

- As you work in your quadrat, practice naming the species you see. Talk with a partner, use ID charts if available, and record both common and scientific names if you know them. It's okay to use descriptors too—like “tiny red-leafed sprout” or “long grass with purple tips.” You may also want to take a photo or video of your quadrat.

Branching Out & Personal Projects

Brainstorm ways you'd like to go forward with your nature journaling practice. What is of particular interest or importance to you? Here are just a few ideas to get you thinking:

- Make a multi-page study of a meaningful local place or species. You may even consider dedicating a full journal to your subject!
- Document a garden from planning to maturity
- Track the birds in your yard or neighbourhood through an entire season
- Try making your own paper, dip pens, pigments, or binding your own sketchbook
- Bring your journal along: see what you can learn about other places, near and far
- Join online sketchbook challenges for new ideas to practice your journaling skills





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- A detailed illustration of a yellow and black striped snake, possibly a racer or similar species, with its tongue flicking out. The snake has a yellow body with prominent black stripes running down its back and sides. Its head is yellow with black markings around the eyes, and its tongue is a vibrant red. The background is plain white.



There will be many pollinators
visiting the flowering bushes
and shrubs: Tiger Swallowtail
and Mourning Cloak
butterflies, halictid and
armored-resin bees,
plus bee flies,
beetles,
spiders
and
moths.

[illegible]

- Birds will nest in the branches. Spotted towhees, yellow warblers and other birds will eat the insects + berries. People might visit too, to watch the birds, sketch, and pick chokecherries for jelly + Saskatoons for pie.

Using a bluff planting grid to sketch an imagined future image in pictures and words.