



# Ecological Biogeography

## Conducting Field Studies

Name:

Section:

1. Objective – Have a clear purpose and understanding of what you are doing, what information you would like to do, and what you are hoping to accomplish
2. Do your homework – Find out what similar studies have been done, and have a clear idea of what you are looking for. Also learn as much about where you are going so you can plan out which locations you want to go to and how long you plan on staying there
  - a. **Field study success is directly connected to amount of preparation beforehand**
3. Keep Records – Develop a method for collecting the type of data you are hoping to be able to observe
  - a. Data you may not see as important at first may prove to be crucial later
4. Plan for Weather – Even if it is a nice sunny day at the beginning, prepare for the weather to turn. Always keep clothing around to keep yourself and your equipment from getting ruined by the weather
  - a. This also means dressing appropriately – Plan on dressing in layers to account for long hikes, or periods of sitting and making record. Nothing will end an observation quicker than a researcher getting cold/wet/miserable
  - b. Have an out plan – know what you will do if the weather turns and you need to quickly leave
5. Maintain Equipment – Keep any equipment you are using in top order to ensure it is always capable of recording the information you are looking to get
6. Test your equipment – Make sure you are fully capable with something before going on with a new piece of equipment into the field
  - a. Suggestion – Go into a darkened room and see if you are still able to operate the equipment, if you anticipate it being cold also try operating the equipment with gloves on
7. Camera Specific Suggestions
  - a. Always have extra memory cards and a battery
  - b. Invest in a good cover or method to protect your camera and lens from getting wet
  - c. Shoot in the largest possible file format – It is always possible to reduce picture quality, but not increase
  - d. Have a good strategy for post-processing and file storage
8. Flexibility – The more open you are to changing and adapting your plan the less frustrated you will be
  - a. Build in fair and reasonable expectations!
  - b. This may also involve having a backup plan
  - c. Don't rush anything, take your time, take a second to enjoy
9. Be respectful – Make sure you are not disturbing others or the environment
10. Be Safe and Have Fun!