

Chapter 23

Use with Section 1

ENRICHMENT**● Fossils****Collecting Fossils**

Many people throughout the world have a fascinating hobby. They collect fossils. Some of these collectors want only to find good specimens. Others, taking it more seriously, make an effort to find a wide variety of specimens. They display them with information about the fossils and where they were found.

Collections can be organized into three categories: invertebrates, vertebrates, and plants. Invertebrates are animals that have no backbones. Examples of these are clams, snails, and lobsters. Vertebrates are animals with backbones. Fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals have backbones. Plants, the third category, are a common type of fossil.

Invertebrate fossils often found include snails, clams, corals, and impressions of sponges.

Vertebrate fossils that amateur collectors commonly find include reptiles and fish.

Birds are the rarest of the vertebrate fossils. And plant fossils are more common than vertebrates. Collectors often find cone-bearing plants, leaves, and seeds.

A serious fossil collector needs only simple equipment: a small pick to get the rock that contains the fossil, a hand lens, a compass, newspaper to wrap specimens, a pencil, and note-sized paper or cards to record data about each fossil.

A responsible collector will want to take some precautions. First, remember that if you are planning to look for fossils on private land, you must have permission. If you are collecting fossils on public land, you must check to see what laws apply.

1. Why do you think fossils of corals, bryozoans, and other sea creatures are more common than fossils of birds? _____

2. How can you combine the types of fossils listed in your text (petrified, mold, etc.) and the three classes listed in the article? _____

3. Plan a chart for a collector to use to record fossil finds.