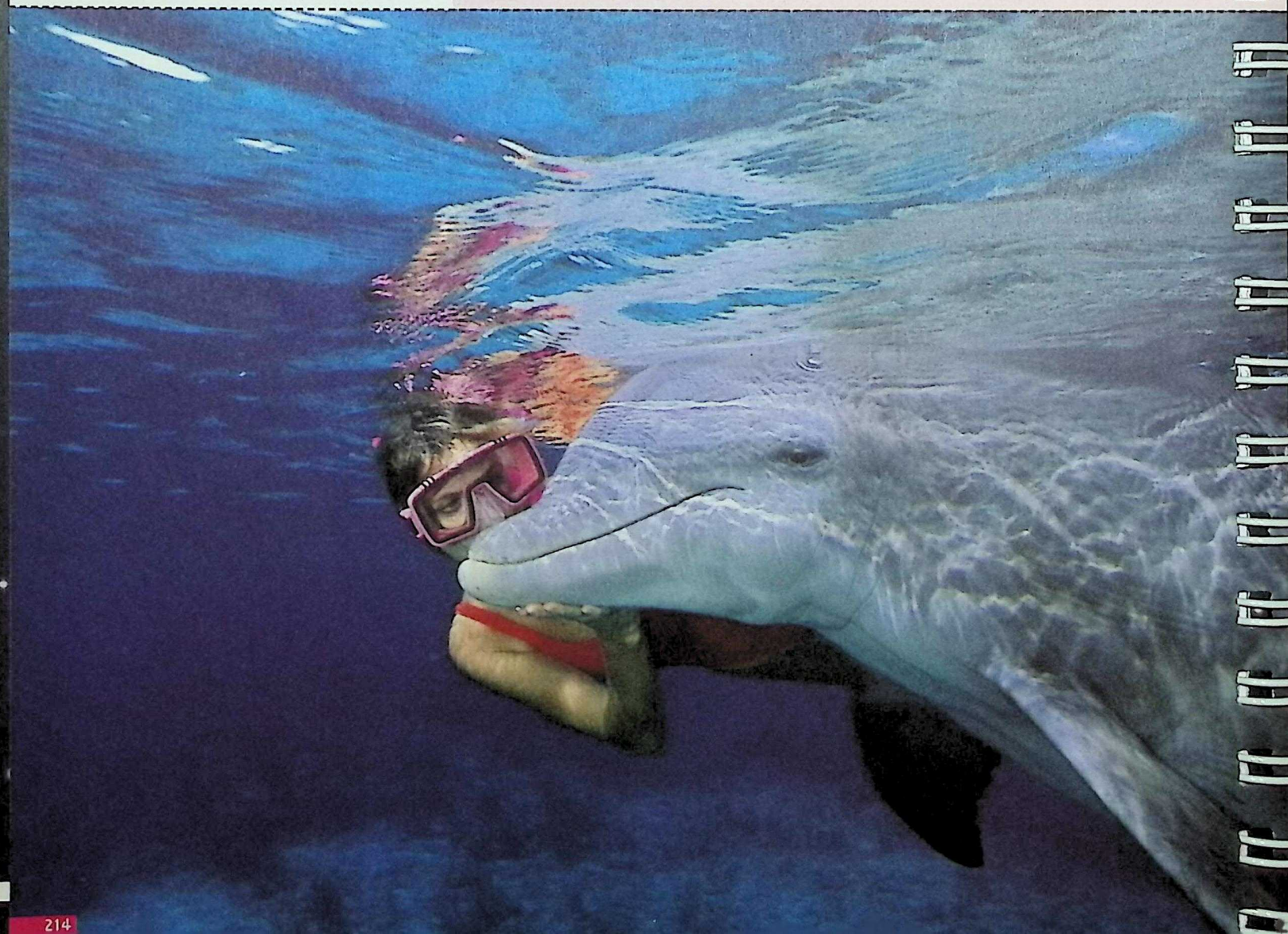
Explore and Discover

Water Wonders

When you look at a globe, you can see why Earth is called "the water planet." Water gives life, but it also carries diseases and destruction. Learn more about the world of wet and wonderful water.





1. It's in a Cycle

Water is the ultimate in recycling. Show your understanding of the water cycle. What happens at each step of the cycle—evaporation, transpiration, condensation, and precipitation? *Hint:* Don't forget the role of the sun in providing energy.

2. The Water You Drink

Find out where your drinking water comes from. Is it from an aquifer, spring, river, reservoir, or another source? What is done to the water to make it safe to drink?

3. Not Enough?

Find out about an area of the country or world that has too little water. Learn why the area is so dry, how the people who live there are affected, and what is being done about the problem?

4. Life Underwater

Visit a place like an aquarium, fish hatchery, zoo, or pet store and look closely at the aquatic animals. Find three different animals that live all or part of their lives underwater—like fish, frogs, turtles, snails, sea lions, or beavers—and learn how their adaptations allow them to live in water.

- How do they move?
- How do they breathe?
- How do they protect themselves?

5. Water Food Chain

Find out about a water ecosystem's food chain by doing one of the following in a body of fresh water or salt water.

- Drag a plankton net in the water and observe what you capture, using a magnifying glass or a microscope.
- Take a bottom sample from a marsh. Place it in a white dish or pan. Look for signs of life.
- Look under rocks, in a pool, in a stream, or in a tide pool. What do you see?

In each case, find out what would make a food chain that would include the animals you observed. Would *you* have a place in such a food chain?

6. A Balanced Life

Set up a fresh- or salt-water aquarium. Balance the numbers and kinds of living things with a healthy food and water supply.

7. Water Work

Visit a place where water has been put to work, such as a sewage- or water-treatment plant, an irrigation control center, a mining operation, a power plant, a fish hatchery, or a physical therapy center. Find out where the water comes from, how it is used, and what happens to it afterwards. What kinds of jobs can you observe at the facility? What things do the people do? How did they learn how to do them?

8. Fixing It Up

Help with a project to improve a water-related habitat. You might participate in a shoreline clean-up, do plantings to filter water, fill gabions (a wire basket that holds rocks) along banks to prevent stream erosion, or construct and put up birdhouses or nesting platforms. The water's the limit!

9. Just Add Salt

Find out how salt water and fresh water are different. Do at least two experiments to find out which:

- Boils first
- Freezes first
- Yields crystal
- Makes better soapsuds
- Makes floating easier

Recipe for Salt Water

Mix 1 cup* of water with 1 tablespoon* of salt until the salt is completely dissolved, or dip a bucket in the ocean!

10. Water Comparisons

Conduct a water taste test with others. Taste several different kinds of water (tap water and different brands of bottled spring and mineral water) and rate each on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best tasting). What did you find?



* See page 235 for the metric conversion chart.