



DID YOU KNOW?

Research suggests that watching nature documentaries helps to reduce stress.

Make a nature documentary

Raise awareness of wild animals by creating your own film.

World Wildlife Day will take place on Monday, March 3. (Read about it in our story on page 3.) One way to celebrate the wild animals that live all around us—and to educate others about their importance—is to make a nature documentary. All you need to create this nonfiction film is a camera and a subject. Here's how you can get started.

Pick a theme

First, decide what you would like your nature documentary to be about. Do you want to film wildlife that lives outside your home, or would you rather ask an adult to go with you to a nearby park or nature preserve? (For ideas about what to film, see the sidebar at right.) Do some research and choose local wildlife that interests you. For example, think about the animals that live in your region and the species you are more likely to see during daylight hours.

Do your research

Once you decide what to film, do some deeper research on your subject. Take notes that can help you look for interesting facts to film. For example, what are some of the animal's feeding habits?

Research the physical differences you might spot between males and females of the same species, from size to color to behavior.

Film and edit

You don't need elaborate equipment to make a nature documentary. You can use a video camera or a phone with a camera. A tripod will help keep your camera steady but isn't necessary. When you're ready to film, stay a comfortable distance from wildlife so you don't startle or frighten away your subject. You can also film an introduction: Put your camera in selfie mode, introduce yourself, and let the audience know why you chose your subject. Finally, you can use a free app like iMovie or CapCut to edit your film and add titles.



Pick a film subject that lives nearby.

Host a screening

When you're happy with your film, invite family and friends to watch it. You can have a screening at home or check with your local library about the availability of a meeting room. After the screening, have a question and answer session so the audience can ask you about your documentary. Finally, thank everyone for coming!

Backyard wildlife



You can find the subject of your nature documentary in your neighborhood. Some examples:

Garden insects Look on or around plants for bees, caterpillars, and monarch butterflies. Try capturing their fast movements using your camera's slow-motion mode.

Small mammals Animals like cottontails or squirrels are often most active at dawn or dusk. Pick a spot to zoom in on their activity from a distance.

Birds Check shrubs and feeders for backyard birds, like robins, bluejays, and cardinals. You might also visit a local pond with an adult to find mallards.