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NATURE JOURNAL

Conservation biologists help protect plants and animals and the habitats they live in. The first step in protecting wildlife is to observe it. When was the last time you took a good look at the plants and animals where you live?

A **nature journal** is a great way to record the local wildlife in your hometown and learn more about it. Nature journals are more scientific than a traditional diary. They include sketches of landscapes and wildlife as well as other scientific observations like today's temperature, detailed sketches of a leaf, and notes.



Sam Wynns is a conservation biologist who wrangles snakes at Cabrillo National Monument in San Diego, CA.

YOU WILL NEED :

- Blank unlined journal
- Colored pencils



ALWAYS ASK AN ADULT FOR PERMISSION AND HELP!

1



Go for a walk at a local park, on a trail, or in your backyard with your nature journal in hand. Record the date, time, temperature, and location on your first page.

2



Take time to observe the trees, plants, flowers, insects, birds, and other animals. Then sit down and document what you see through sketches and descriptions.

3



Don't forget to observe and record the weather patterns, smells, sounds, and changing of seasons. Write down any questions you have that you'd like to research.

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4



Gather fallen leaves or flowers to glue into your journal. You can press them at home by placing petals or leaves between two sheets of parchment paper then setting a heavy book on top for a few days.

5



Once you've returned home, start your research. For example, can you identify the tree you sketched by researching its leaf shape and color? Label your sketches.



THINK ABOUT IT!



Nature can affect your mood and emotions. How do you feel in this moment? Record those thoughts and feelings in your journal. You may even be inspired to write a story, poem, or song based on your observations.

One goal of wildlife conservations is to teach people how to live sustainably with the nature that exists around them. Living sustainably means meeting our needs today in a way that doesn't negatively affect our future. That might involve cleaning up trash, planting bee-friendly gardens, or starting a compost pile. How do you think you can help protect the plants and animals in your neighborhood? How can you encourage others to live more sustainably, too?

LEARN MORE

National Parks of the U.S.A. by Kate Siber
Wide Eyed Editions, 2018

Nature Anatomy: The Curious Parts and Pieces of the Natural World by Julia Rothman
Storey Publishing, 2015

https://www.fws.gov/en/dangered/esa-library/pdf/what_you_can.pdf



FUN FACT!

There are 8.7 million animal species and 390,900 plant species (60,000 of which are trees) in the world. That's a lot to observe!