

# National Wildlife Day



**Actual Holiday:** February 22  
(also celebrated on September 4)

**First Celebrated:** 2005

## Introduction

Founded in 2005 by animal behaviorist and philanthropist Colleen Paige, National Wildlife Day is a day to bring awareness of the plight facing animals all around the globe. National Wildlife Day honors Australian wildlife-warrior Steve Irwin's life's work with animals and wildlife by taking place on the day he was born (February 22nd) and the day he died (September 4th). Use this day as an opportunity to remind students about the importance of preserving the habitats of animals all around the globe.

## Materials

- *Wildlife Habitats* activity sheet (page 13)
- art supplies

## The Activity

- Tell students that today you will be celebrating National Wildlife Day. This is a day to honor wild animals all around the world. Remind students that animals have adapted to live in specific areas all around the world. Discuss different habitats, focusing on grasslands, forests, deserts, and oceans. Talk about the different animals that live within these habitats and how they have adapted to survive there.

### **Grasslands**

Because there is not much rain, grasslands have mostly grasses rather than trees, which is great for grazing animals, such as zebras, antelopes, giraffes, and bison. Large predators, such as lions, tigers, cheetahs, and wolves, feed on the grazing animals so that there are not too many of them and there is enough food for all.

### **Forests**

Trees in the forest provide food and shelter to animals who live there. Animals such as sloths, monkeys, and orangutans eat the leaves, nuts, and fruit that grow on the trees. They also live in the trees to stay safe from such predators as tigers and jaguars. Raccoons, porcupines, and snakes can be found living on the forest floor and eating the plants and insects that they find there.

### **Deserts**

Desert animals have adapted to dealing with extreme heat and a lack of water. Many of them get water from the food they eat. Some animals, such as Fennec foxes, badgers, and coyotes, live underground during the day so that they can stay out of the hot sun and come out to hunt at night when it is cooler. Reptiles such as tortoises, lizards, and snakes also make their homes in the desert and eat the insects and plants that live there.

### **Oceans**

The oceans are home to many different kinds of animals. Sharks, octopuses, jellyfish, and seahorses all spend their lives underwater. Mammals such as dolphins and whales live in the ocean but need to breathe air at the surface. Otters and seals live partly on land but rely on the ocean for food.

- Distribute the *Wildlife Habitats* activity sheet to students and tell them to color the habitats. Have them draw at least one animal that belongs in each habitat on the page.
- Display the activity sheets as a group or have students cut them apart and sort them into different habitat displays.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Wildlife Habitats

