

“17 for the 17th” Nature Walk Guide

Are you a scientist, ecologist, or naturalist? Are you an outdoors person, a nature enthusiast, or a science teacher? Consider leading a “17 for the 17th” Nature Walk in honor of the 17th anniversary of Endangered Species Day!

What: Lead a guided walk in your local area where you teach other people how to identify 17 local plant or animal species.

When: Lead your walk on or around Endangered Species Day, which takes place on Friday, May 20th, 2022. Consider leading your walk on May 20th or in the week before or after.

Why: Leading a “17 for the 17th” nature walk is a great way to help people in your community learn more about local species, emphasize the importance of biodiversity, and give people a chance to spend time outdoors and experience nature.

How: Use this guide to learn more about how to plan and lead your “17 for the 17th” Nature Walk. This guide includes step-by-step instructions and sample materials for promoting your walk.

How to Lead a Walk

STEP 1: CHOOSE A LOCATION

There are many locations that could work for your walk. Some options include:

- A national park, national forest, wildlife refuge, or state park
- A local park or natural area open to the public
- Your neighborhood or a nearby neighborhood
- A local university campus or school grounds open to the public
- Private property such as a backyard, a farm, or a garden, with permission of the owner. You will want to reach out to the owner at least one month in advance – preferably more – to secure their permission to hold a nature walk on their land. Be sure to let them know the date, time, and duration of the walk, and approximately how many people you expect.

STEP 2: PLAN AND PREPARE

Once you have chosen a location, we recommend that you make a plan to visit it two to three weeks in advance of your actual 17 for the 17th Nature Walk. You can use this planning visit to prepare two things: the route you will take and the 17 species you want to highlight.

THE ROUTE

Walk around the location you have chosen and figure out what route you will take on your walk. Consider how long you want your walk to be – half an hour? An hour? – and aim to find a route that will work in that time period. Additionally, make notes about the terrain. Is your route hilly? Is the ground uneven? Is it muddy? These are things you may want to let people know so they can be prepared for the walk by wearing the right shoes or clothes.

THE SPECIES

Once you have a route, work on picking seventeen species you will teach people to identify. You may want to bring an identification guidebook or use a phone app like Seek or iNaturalist to help with this part of the planning. We recommend making notes about specific trees and other plants along the route, so you can refer back to these notes during your walk. You may also want to make notes about specific birds, mammals, insects, and other animals that you expect to see. Though it can be difficult to predict which animals you will actually see on your walk, you can be prepared to identify some common ones that might appear.

STEP 3: SPREAD THE WORD

Starting a few months or a few weeks before your walk, spread the word so that others can join! However you share the event, make sure to let people know the meeting place, meeting time, the length of the walk, and anything they should know about the terrain. Here are some ways you might spread the word:

- Register your walk on the Endangered Species Day event map, which you can find by [clicking here](#). Include “17 for the 17th Nature Walk” in the title of the event!
- Reach out to friends, family, coworkers, or other people in your network to invite them.
- Consider posting an announcement of your walk on social media – for example, on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or NextDoor.
- Ask other organizations to share the event. For example, you could ask local nonprofits, your local recreation department, or volunteer organizations.
- Invite teachers and students from local schools or universities to join your walk.

Materials for Promoting Your Walk

SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT OF YOUR WALK

Fill in the blanks of the paragraph below to create an announcement that you can use to promote your 17 for the 17th nature walk!

You are invited to join (Name of Walk Leader) for a “17 for the 17th” Nature Walk on (Date). In honor of the 17th anniversary of Endangered Species Day, (Name of Walk Leader) will be leading a guided nature walk at (Name of Location). Those who participate in the walk will learn how to identify 17 local plant and animal species and have the opportunity to learn more about those species. This is a great way to get outdoors and connect with local biodiversity for Endangered Species Day 2022! Those who want to participate can meet (Name of Walk Leader) at (Time) on (Date) at (Specific Meeting Place). The walk will last about (Length of walk in time and/or miles). The walk will be (describe the terrain and how difficult it will be). Don't forget to (add anything they should remember to wear or bring). This walk will be a great way for people of all ages to celebrate the 17th annual Endangered Species Day, so please feel free to spread the word and invite others! You can contact (consider adding your email or phone) with questions.

REMARKS ON ENDANGERED SPECIES DAY

If you would like to, you can share a little information about Endangered Species Day at the beginning of your walk. Here is a short description of Endangered Species Day that you can share:

“Endangered Species Day was first started in 2006, making this year the 17th annual Endangered Species Day. It is always celebrated on the third Friday in May and is an opportunity for people around the world to learn about, celebrate, and advocate for threatened and endangered species. Hundreds of organizations and thousands of individuals organize or participate in Endangered Species Day events every year. This year, dozens of “17 for the 17th” nature walks, like this one, are being held across the United States to help people learn more about species in their local area.”

If you need any help or support planning your walk, reach out to Sarah at sstarman@endangered.org.

