

## Run your own animal behaviour study!

At ZSL it's not just our [scientists](#) who are regularly doing science. The keepers at our zoos routinely run behaviour studies of the animals in their care to ensure that they're exhibiting the expected behaviour. This helps them to know if the animals' welfare needs are being met, but also if their behaviour changes, it tells keepers that something might be up—they might be ill, or even pregnant!

Use this booklet to plan and run your own behaviour study on an animal of your choice.

You could study:

- Your pet
- An animal in your garden (like birds on a bird feeder)
- One of our videos from ZSL London or Whipsnade Zoo

[www.zsl.org/london-zoo-webcam](http://www.zsl.org/london-zoo-webcam)

[www.zsl.org/whipsnade-zoo-webcam](http://www.zsl.org/whipsnade-zoo-webcam)

- An animal in your own home (maybe another human!)

Follow the steps overleaf to research your species, decide what behaviour you want to investigate, run your behaviour study, display your results and discuss your findings.

**Study Species:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. *Research your chosen species and make notes about its habitat and ecological niche in the wild*

**Habitat:** \_\_\_\_\_**Diet:** \_\_\_\_\_**Predators:** \_\_\_\_\_**Other notes:**

2. *Note down its adaptations, both anatomical (physical) and behavioural (what it does):*

<b>Anatomical</b>	<b>Behavioural</b>

3. *How could you find out more about the behaviour of your research animal? Fill out the boxes below to design a study to help you find out why it behaves the way it does.*

**I want to find out:**

**I would measure:**

**I would do this by:**

**I expect to find:**

# Ethogram Template

Use your research to fill in expected behaviours in the empty boxes..

Use a stopwatch and tick the behaviours observed at 30s intervals.

<b>Name of observers:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Study Species:</b>
<b>Weather:</b>	<b>Time:</b>	<b>Study animal (identifying features):</b>
<b>Other relevant information (e.g. number of visitors, feeding time, keeper presence):</b>		

Time (mins)	Behaviours						Notes (record anything affecting behaviour)
	Standing	Sitting				Other (describe)	
0:30							
1:00							
1:30							
2:00							
2:30							
3:00							
3:30							
4:00							
4:30							
5:00							
5:30							
6:00							
6:30							
7:00							
7:30							
8:00							
8:30							
9:00							
9:30							
10:00							
<b>Totals:</b>							

## Discussion

1. What were the most frequent behaviours you observed for this animal?
2. Why you think the animal behaved in this way? Was there a change in behaviour over time?
3. How do you think this behaviour would help the animal to survive in the wild?
4. How reliable do you think your results are? Was the method used appropriate for this study?
5. If you could repeat the observation again, how would you do it differently?
6. If you wanted to extend the study to find out more about the behaviour of this animal, how could you do this? How could this help with the care of animals in Zoos or their conservation in the wild?

***Extension:** Use your results to create a time budget pie chart for the individual animal you observed. Repeat the study for a different individual of the same species and compare, or compare across your classmates.*