

Innovative Iowans: Paul Lester Errington

Activity Overview: This month's Innovative Iowan focuses on Paul Lester Errington and his work in the study of zoology at Iowa State University. Learn about Errington's work and create your own nature journal to keep track of all the animals in your neck of the woods.

Connection to Iowa History

Paul Lester Errington was born in 1902 near Spruce, South Dakota. In 1921, he graduated from South Dakota State College and later received a PhD from the University of Wisconsin in 1932. He spent his career at the Iowa State College (now Iowa State University) where he worked as a professor of zoology and lead the first Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit in the United States. During his lifetime, he wrote more than 200 scholarly articles and multiple books including: *Muskrat Populations*, *Of Men and Marshes* and *Of Predation and Life*.

Errington received many honors throughout his lifetime including being named a Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union, selected by Life Magazine in 1961 as an outstanding naturalist and received the Aldo Leopold Medal by the Wildlife Society. Errington passed away in 1962 and a lecture series bears his name at Iowa State University.



What is Zoology?

Zoology is the study of all animals. A zoologist like Errington researches where animals live, what they eat and how they interact with where they live. Lots of zoologists study certain types of animals. For example, ornithologists study birds. Zoology is important because it helps us better understand the natural world around us.

Instructions ([Video Instructions Available](#))

- 1 Gather.** Collect all the materials required for this activity.
- 2 Design.** Two pieces of construction paper will serve as the back and front cover of the animal journal. Be creative and draw designs with crayons or colored markers to decorate the covers. You only need to draw on one side of each sheet of paper.
- 3 Base.** Let's start to build our journal. Lay the construction paper which will serve as a back cover with the design down on the table. This will ensure your design will face out when the book is put together.
- 4 Build.** On top of the back cover, place about 10 sheets of blank computer paper. These will eventually serve as the journal entry pages.
- 5 Top.** On top of the paper stack, place your journal's front cover with the design facing up. At this point, you should have created a book with two covers and pages in between.
- 6 Punch.** After making sure all the paper is lined up and even, have an adult help you punch three holes along one side. Punch one hole near the top, another in the middle, and one near the bottom.

Materials

- Paper
- Pen or Pencil
- Construction Paper
- Crayons or Markers
- Hole Punch
- Yarn

Instructions continued on next page

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Instructions continued

- 7 **Cut.** Cut three pieces of string or yarn about 6 inches in length. This will be used to bind all the paper together.
- 8 **Tie.** Tie each piece of yarn through each hole in the paper.
- 9 **Head Outdoors.** Head outside with your journal and observe the animals around you.
- 10 **Create Entries.** For each animal you see, write a new entry in the journal on a blank page. Be sure to include: the date, a drawing of the animal, where you found it, what you observe about it and its habitat.
- 11 **Share!** After you complete your experiment, share your work with the State Historical Museum of Iowa. Email a photo to museum.education@iowa.gov. We want to share your creation with others!
- 12 **Questions to Spark Learning**
 - Do you think studying animals is important? Why or why not?
 - If you could study only one type of animal, what would you study? Why?
 - What do you think are the most common animals in your neighborhood or in Iowa? Why?
- 13 **Additional Resources**

If your young historian would like to learn more about this topic, explore these additional resources.

 - [Iowa State University Biographical Dictionary](#)
 - [In Memoriam: Paul Lester Errington](#)