

Bird of Prey (93 minutes; Cornell Lab of Ornithology, <http://birdofpreymovie.com/>)

Normally, showing a full-length film is no substitute for instruction, but the new film *Bird of Prey* showcases so many environmental science themes within an interesting and captivating context that it can be highly recommended for upper-level high school biology or environmental science classes as a case study of concepts. It covers such themes as conservation, evolution, extinction, and environmental justice. These ideas are somewhat complex, so younger students might not understand their importance.

Showcasing footage from award-winning cinematographer Neil Rettig (best known for his work on *Nature*, *The Living Planet*, and *National Geographic Explorer*), “Bird of Prey” promotes the plight of the Philippine Eagle – the most highly endangered eagle species in the world. Impacted by habitat loss and increased human interactions, the Philippine

Eagle is so adorable that students can’t help but be captivated by its comical expressions. In addition, footage of cityscapes, classrooms, and village life provide an interesting glimpse into the Philippine culture.

Furthermore, because the film was produced by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, it aligns with the lab’s long-standing devotion to protection and conservation of bird species. *Bird of Prey* chronicles conservation efforts, such as the successful hatching of an eaglet in a captive breeding program, and also attempts to locate and document a hatchling in the wild. This could serve as a great starting point for discussions related to habitat vs. species-centric conservation, benefits and drawbacks of captive breeding programs, or conservation of *K*- versus *r*-selected species.

Using *Bird of Prey* as a case study of environmental justice was overlooked in the film’s promotional materials and is never overtly mentioned in the film. Nevertheless,

it is a perfect kickstarter for a discussion about demographic transition, stewardship, and sustainability. Sharing the historical context of slash-and-burn farming and the impact of innovation on commercial forestry, the film does an excellent job of describing the interplay between society, policy, and the environment.

Bird of Prey is available to rent (\$4.99) or buy (\$12.99) on Amazon, iTunes, and Vimeo. All proceeds will be used by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to support continued avian conservation efforts. Teachers will be happy to know that a few educator resources can be found in the lab’s K–12 Education library at <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/k12/an-eagles-feather/>.

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