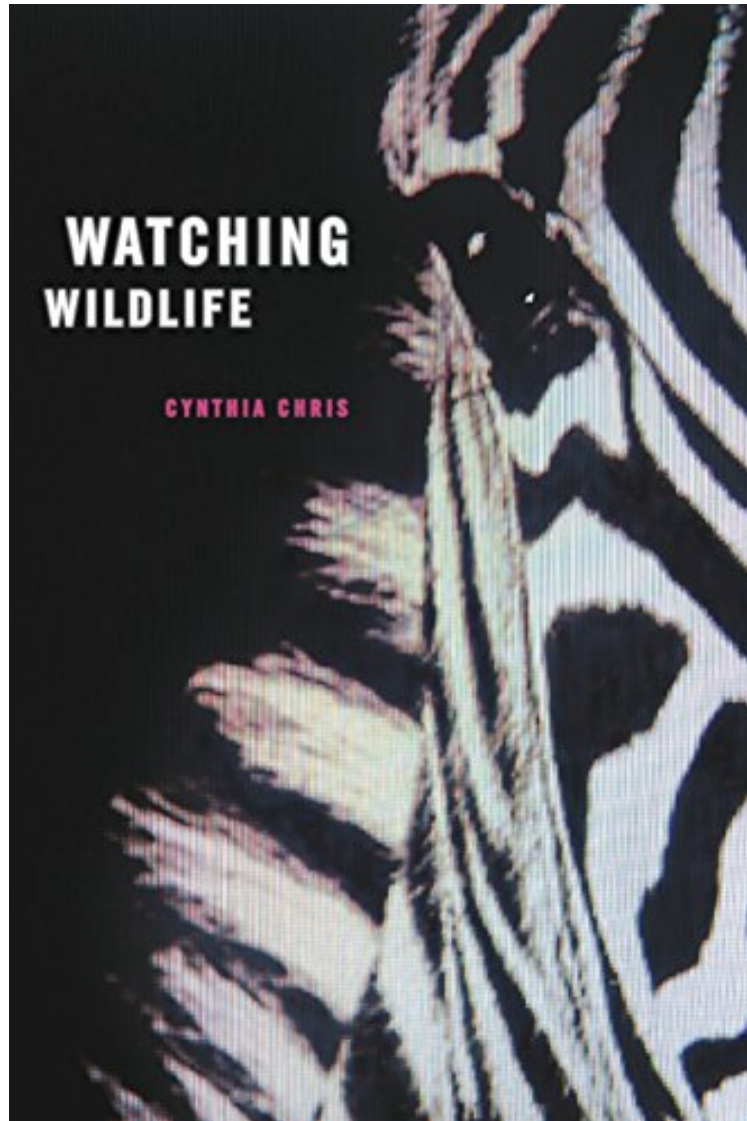


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Watching Wildlife

Cynthia Chris

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Cynthia Chris : Watching Wildlife before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Watching Wildlife:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A pick for either nature or film studies collections.By Midwest Book ReviewThere's been a nearly overwhelming amount of televised wildlife programming which has captured the hearts of American viewers, resulting in an equal number of wildlife and science titles for general interest readers - but it's important to note that until WATCHING WILDLIFE, little has been written about the connection between reality-

based animal wildlife programming and viewer interests. In reality the images are selected, edited, and revised according to underlying social and cultural concepts: WATCHING WILDLIFE identifies these interpretations and traces the history of wildlife genre programming. A pick for either nature or film studies collections. Diane C. Donovan
California Bookwatch

You and me baby ain't nothin' but mammals So let's do it like they do on the Discovery Channel. Bloodhound Gang It has never been easier for Americans to observe wild and exotic animals from the comfort and safety of their couches. Several cable channels Animal Planet, the Discovery Channel, the National Geographic Channel provide around-the-clock wildlife programming while the traditional networks regularly broadcast animal documentaries, late-night appearances by zoologists and their animal charges, and sensationalistic specials about animals attacking hapless humans. Though the ubiquity of animals on television is new, the genre of the wildlife documentary is as old as cinema itself. In *Watching Wildlife*, Cynthia Chris traces the history of the wildlife genre from its origins in precinematic, colonial visual culture to its contemporary status as flagship programming on global television and explores evolving beliefs about, and attitudes toward, animal subjects. Nature programming and films are consistently presented as real and unmediated reflections of nature. But in Chris's analysis of specific shows (Mutual of Omaha's *Wild Kingdom* and cable television's *Crocodile Hunter*) and film and television history (the colonial cinema, the launch of Animal Planet), she points out how particularly in the genre's preoccupation with mating and the favoritism bestowed on certain species documentary images of animals are and always have been about prevailing ideologies about human gender, sexuality, and race. Ultimately, Chris's sweeping and cogent account of the wildlife documentary incorporates this frequently overlooked genre into broader debates about media globalization, human-animal relations, and popular scientific discourse. Cynthia Chris is assistant professor of media culture at the City University of New York's College of Staten Island.

From Booklist Television networks are devoted to animals (Animal Planet) or show nature documentaries on a routine basis (Discovery Channel, National Geographic Channel), and mention of knowledge gained from wildlife programming often turns up in the scripts of movies and television shows. Chris, a professor of media culture, examines how nature programming became ubiquitous, and why it is so popular, in this thorough analysis. She follows the history of wildlife documentaries, starting with the silent film era and the films of Martin and Osa Johnson. Disney followed with *True Life Adventures*, and Mutual of Omaha's *Wild Kingdom* was immensely popular during the same era. The nature documentaries sponsored by the BBC and National Geographic were mainstays of early public television, and their proliferation has given rise to the all-animal channels on today's cable TV. Along the way, Chris analyzes the content of these productions, discovering implicit nods to gender and racial stereotyping, an obsession with sexuality, and outright sensationalism. Although the writing style is academic, the subject matter will be of interest to all readers who love animals. Nancy Bent
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"You and me baby ain't nothin' but mammals So let's do it like they do on the Discovery Channel. - Bloodhound Gang" About the Author Cynthia Chris is assistant professor of media culture at the City University of New York's College of Staten Island.