

# Citizen Science

Real Science. Your Backyard.



## What is Citizen Science?

Citizen science is the gathering of sightings and reports of the natural world by volunteers or the general public. Examples could include: animals, plants, invasive species, weather.

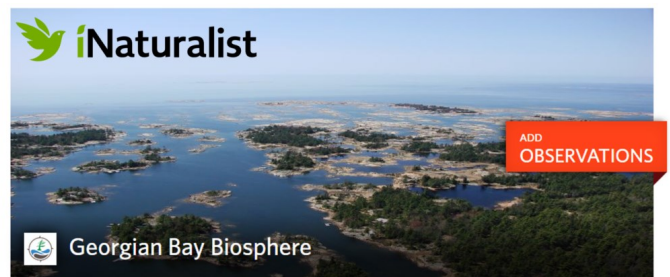
The information collected by volunteers is shared with professional scientists and environmental managers. They will use the information in a variety of ways, such as determining population trends, monitoring the migration or spread of species, and looking at weather patterns (example ice on and off dates) over many years.

The more eyes and ears recording information about the natural environment, the better our understanding will be. Citizen science would not be possible without volunteers like you!

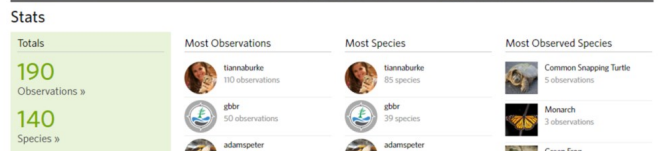


## 1. Become an iNaturalist Team Member

iNaturalist is an online community that allows people of all ages to share observations of the natural environment and contribute to citizen science. Saving observations to your own personal account allows you to 'collect' them over time. Over 1 million people use iNaturalist!



**Materials:** smartphone, tablet, or iPad, internet to download the app



1. Visit iNaturalist.ca and sign up to participate
2. Download the app to a phone or other device to take pictures with while outside
3. Search 'Projects' and join 'Georgian Bay Biosphere'
4. Make test observations in your backyard to see how it works! These can be deleted later if needed. Be sure to focus on wild species like weeds, trees, insects, and species that live naturally outdoors. Practice keeping your photos FABulous by working on the following:

**F for Focus.** Look for quality. Practice zooming in on small objects and focusing on what you want people to see. Make sure small species, like insects, are not blurry.

**A for Angles.** Take multiple photos. Take photos from more than one angle - top, bottom, side, front, back - to show more features. For plants, take a photo of flowers, fruit, and leaves, these are the most helpful.

**B for Bonus Marks.** Mark photos as captive/cultivated for pets, houseplants, or garden plants. Be sure to share your sighting with the Biosphere's project!

5. You are an iNaturalist Team Member! Give yourself a pat on the back and get ready to record your explorations and observations!

# iNaturalist Pro Tips:

## GREAT IDEAS:

- Be sure you select the share with the Biosphere's project option.
- Mark captive/cultivated organisms if you photograph pets, houseplants, etc.
- Take clear photos, if a tree or bird is in the distance, we can't see it either!
- Take multiple photos showing more than one angle - top, bottom, side, front, back.

## BAD IDEAS:

- Photograph pets or house plants routinely. These aren't what scientists are looking for.
- Upload other people's photos. Photos should be taken by the observer.
- Photograph people's faces: iNaturalist is public, ensure that you respect privacy.
- Keeping test observations. These can be deleted!

## 2. iNaturalist Scavenger Hunt

When you've completed the first activity and have started to record observations, try this iNaturalist Scavenger Hunt! Complete as much as possible in your backyard. You might want to walk to a nearby natural space to find even more items!

Remember, a single observation can count for multiple items on the list (can something soft also be pink and green?).



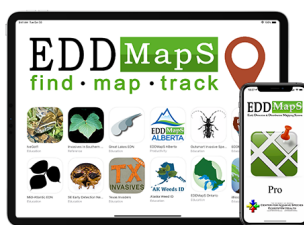
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> An animal eating something   | <input type="checkbox"/> Something growing on a man-made object                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> An example of camouflage   | <input type="checkbox"/> An animal with no legs                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A plant growing in the water   | <input type="checkbox"/> Something that lives in a shell                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A mushroom   | <input type="checkbox"/> Something yellow and black                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A fish   | <input type="checkbox"/> Something brown and black                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A pupa   | <input type="checkbox"/> Something pink and green                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A species at risk ( <a href="http://www.gbbr.ca">www.gbbr.ca</a> to see which species are at risk) | <input type="checkbox"/> Something you see all the time                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Something fuzzy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Something not native to your area (invasive species!) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Something soft   |  |

## 3. Ready for More?

Once you are an iNaturalist expert who loves citizen science as much as us, check out these other amazing programs! More information and links to each are on [www.gbbr.ca](http://www.gbbr.ca).



Lake Partner Program: water quality monitoring



EDDMaps: monitors the spread of invasives



BC: several bird monitoring programs



A Toronto Zoo program, one of many!