

Biodiversity is the incredible variety of life on Earth, including the number of species, their genetic diversity, and the ecosystems they live in. But biodiversity is currently being lost at a greater and greater rate due to many factors including climate change. Currently 16% of all species in Great Britain (where sufficient data is available) are threatened with extinction. But you – and everyone you know of all ages - can help address this by becoming a **Citizen Scientist**.

Citizen Science, also known as Community Science, is a way anyone can help gather scientific information in their local surroundings or the comfort of their own home.

Citizen Science initiatives focusing on the environment are becoming more common – such as the loved **Big Garden Birdwatch** – and with technological innovations increasing the ways in which individuals can participate, projects can even become global in scale, long-term, and engage hundreds of thousands of volunteers.

The information Citizen Scientists gather is hugely valuable for furthering our understanding of the impact of climate change on biodiversity.

People taking part as Citizen Scientists feel closer to nature and get great satisfaction of doing something valuable and purposeful.

There are different projects you can take part in throughout the year, at home in your

garden or nearby park, out in the countryside or on the coast - here are some examples:

Year round – Shoresearch

Want to start spotting wildlife right away? The Wildlife Trust's Shoresearch runs year-round. Explore your local coast and learn about the wildlife found there, as well as providing scientists with vital information about this important habitat. To find out how you can get involved in Shoresearch, visit the website <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/get-involved/other-ways-get-involved/shoresearch> or get in touch with your local Wildlife Trust.

Year round – Seagrass Spotting

Seagrasses are the only flowering plants able to live in seawater and often grow in large groups to look like a terrestrial grassland – an underwater meadow! They are essential habitats for a wide range of wildlife including our native seahorses but also they capture carbon at a rate 35 times faster than tropical rainforests and are one of our most important natural solutions to the climate change crisis. But they are in decline and it is important to have data on their whereabouts. You can download a free app to identify and record seagrass meadows which will be visible from the shore <https://seagrassspotter.org/>.

Autumn – Waxcap Watch

This autumn, help Plantlife find Britain's most colourful and important fungi – waxcaps. Britain is home to some of the most important waxcap grasslands in the world. However

many species are becoming rare and declining; they need identifying and protecting. Take part in Plantlife's Waxcap Watch this autumn and see if you can find these colourful fungi in your local area. To get involved, visit a grassy area like a field, road verge, heathland or even a cemetery between September and late November, and record any waxcaps you see. There is an app and information on this website <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/waxcapwatch/>

April-October – Sunset Survey

Enjoy the sunset and help bats by taking part in the Bat Conservation Trust Sunset Survey. No bat surveying experience needed – simply take a stroll, watch from your window or balcony, or spend an hour in your wild space at dusk (or dawn, for the early risers) and look out for bats and other nocturnal wildlife. To find out more and to take part, visit the website: <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/national-bat-monitoring-programme/surveys/sunset-sunrise-survey>

December- May – PondNet Spawn Survey

Help the Freshwater Habitats Trust map where and when amphibians are breeding across the UK. Look out for Common Frog and Common Toad spawn in ponds, puddles and ditches between December and May and log your sightings on their website <https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/advice-resources/survey-methods-hub/pondnet-spawn-survey/>

January – The Big Garden Birdwatch

Join hundreds of thousands of nature lovers across the UK and help the RSPB build a picture of how garden birds are faring. To take part, spend an hour in your garden or green space between 26 and 28 January and record the birds that land there. Sign up on their website <https://www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/big-garden-birdwatch> and download your free digital guide.

June – August – Bugs Matter

Wondering how bug splats on your car could help wildlife? Buglife are asking people to take a journey in a vehicle between 1 June and 31 August and count the number of bug splats across the number plate. Although it sounds strange, this innovative method of counting insects can help scientists see how numbers of insects are changing over time. Visit the Bugs Matter website for more information <https://www.buglife.org.uk/get-involved/surveys/bugs-matter/>

July - August – Big Butterfly Count

Everyone loves the beauty of butterflies and you can help keep them flying. The Big Butterfly Count takes place every year during July and August for the biggest citizen science survey of its kind and helps assess how well some of the UK's most common butterflies and day-flying moths are doing. All you have to do is spend 15 minutes in a sunny spot in a wild space; that could be your

garden, balcony, patio or a local community area, and count how many butterflies or day-flying moths you see. Visit the website for more information and to sign up <https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org/>

Year round – The Otter Project

Although it is very sad to see a dead otter, commonly killed at the side of our roads, there is an essential ongoing project which will collect the body and use it to investigate contaminants, disease, and population biology across the UK including the impact of climate change. If you spot a dead otter you can report it in England by calling 03708 506 506 and asking for your nearest conservation or biodiversity officer. More information about this project here <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/otter-project>

Find all the links at <https://casav.uk/citscileaf>



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How to tackle biodiversity loss by being a citizen scientist

