

# A Guide to Citizen Science

## What is citizen science?



Citizen science is when you work together with local scientists! You can document wildlife, count stars, or even search for extraterrestrial life! Citizen science is also known as “public participation in scientific research” and can range in scale from your backyard to globally and you can participate even if you have no scientific background. As long as you are willing to be a citizen volunteer, you can be a citizen scientist!

## Why is citizen science important?

Citizen science helps with many different scientific research projects. Sometimes, scientists rely on volunteers to collect data so that they can reach more areas for their research. This also helps if they have limited budgets. As a citizen scientist, you can help to improve knowledge in your community as you share information you learn. When you are more informed and more engaged, you can be empowered to act within your community.

## What is an example of a citizen science project?

eBird

One example of a citizen science project is eBird. eBird allows birdwatchers to upload their own data and observations to a website that can be accessed by everyone. This allows a birdwatcher to have an online record of their personal observations. This has helped scientists to gain a better understanding of bird distribution across the western hemisphere and beyond. In fact, in March 2012, participants reported more than 3.1 million birds across North America! To find out more, visit [ebird.org](http://ebird.org)

## How can I learn more?

There are lots of projects online and in your area!

- ✓ Scistarter. Project Finder. <http://scistarter.com/index.html>
- ✓ Citizen Science Alliance. Our Projects. [www.citizensciencealliance.org/](http://www.citizensciencealliance.org/)
- ✓ Scientific America. Citizen Science. [www.scientificamerican.com/citizen-science/](http://www.scientificamerican.com/citizen-science/)
- ✓ National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Citizen Scientists. <http://science.nasa.gov/citizen-scientists/>

