

CITIZEN SCIENCE:

Animal and Nature Observations

Did you know that you and your patrons can help scientists answer questions about human and environmental health? Citizen science enables people from all walks of life to advance scientific research. If you have ever used a bird watching or nature tracking app, you might be a citizen scientist! There are many citizen science projects that are ideal for virtual library programs including animal and nature observation, pet personality surveys, and more.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Activities

Citizen Science groups might already be active in your area, find them and invite them to the library program. Girl Scouts USA are a partner of SciStarter and may be looking for partnerships around citizen science programming in your community.

Don't have the capacity to host a program now? You can promote citizen science through book displays and virtually by adding the [SciStarter widget](#) to your library website.

Host a virtual tutorial event where you guide your patrons through how to participate in a citizen science project.

Host a virtual book club with resources from the [NNLM Reading Club](#) on Citizen Science. The NNLM Reading Club is a selection of "ready-to-use" book titles along with free and downloadable materials designed to help libraries support the health information needs of their communities.

Co-host a virtual event with a researcher who can explain their project and how people can participate. During summer 2020, NNLM and SciStarter cohosted virtual citizen science events across the country. Read about it in [Discover Magazine](#). And check out the [recorded webinars](#) to see how they happened! And visit the [National Library of Medicine page on SciStarter](#) for ongoing opportunities.

Online Citizen Science Projects

Gaming to advance medical research.

- [Stall Catchers](#) - Accelerate Alzheimer's research by playing an online game.
- [Eterna](#) - Design and study complex RNA molecules to help scientists develop RNA-based medicines to combat global diseases.
- [Neureka](#) - Play games and answer questions to improve mental health and dementia research.

MATERIALS

- Tablets or personal devices: Some projects can be completed exclusively online with a computer or mobile device.
- Free account at [scistarter.org](#) to find the right project for your library.
- Virtual platform for online program.
- Tools: Some citizen science projects require specialized tools to make an observation, record data, etc. The [SciStarter Tools database](#) will help you discover and access low-cost tools.

PERSONNEL

- 1-2 library staff.
- Optional: Partner with a local citizen science group or researchers who manage citizen science projects to co-host events.

SPACE

- Online or when possible in a library meeting space.

Online animal citizen science projects.

- [Cat Tracker - Personality Study](#) - Learn about your cat's personality by taking a survey! Taking the Cat Personality Test is easy, the only things you need are an internet connection and about 25 minutes of free time.
- [Snapshot Safari](#) - Classify animals in images online. Snapshot Safari looks to citizen scientists from around the world to identify wildlife caught on camera.
- [FISHstory](#) - Count and identify fish within historic dock photos. People with South Atlantic species fish ID skills are encouraged to participate, however training materials are included in the project to allow for anyone to get involved.
- [C-BARQ and Fe-BARQ](#) - Complete a questionnaire about your dog or cat. The C-BARQ (or Canine Behavioral Assessment and Research Questionnaire) is designed to provide dog owners and professionals with standardized evaluations of canine temperament and behavior. The Fe-BARQ is a new behavioral survey instrument for cat owners.

Outdoor animal and nature observation projects.

- [Cat Tracker](#) - Learn the secret life of your outdoor cat using GPS technology!
- [SquirrelMapper](#) - Report squirrel observations, classify squirrel color, play evolution game, explore data.
- [Project Squirrel](#) - Count squirrels anytime, anywhere, report findings online.
- [QuestaGame](#) - Find plants and animals, photograph, join quests, clans, challenges with free-to-play, outdoor mobile adventure game

RESOURCES

Books

Adult nonfiction

- Cavalier, Darlene. *The Field Guide to Citizen Science — How You Can Contribute to Scientific Research and Make a Difference*. Timber Press. 2020. 978-1604698473.
- [Citizen Science Association book list](#) for citizen science enthusiasts.

Children's fiction

- Bathala, Neeti, Keats Curtis, Jennifer, and Jones, Veronica V. (Illustrator). *Moonlight Crab Count*. Arbordale Publishing, 2017. 9781628559309.
- Forrester, Anna. *Bat Count: A Citizen Science Story*. Arbordale Publishing. 2017. 9781628558944.

Web

- [Resources for Public Libraries](#) from the NNLM includes health information and programming resources, webinars, and funding opportunities.
- [Resources for Crowdsourcing and Citizen Science](#) from the NNLM.
- [SciStarter](#) is a globally acclaimed, online citizen science hub where more than 3,000 projects, searchable by location, topic, age level, etc, have been registered by individual project leaders or imported through partnerships with federal governments, NGOs, and universities.
- [Library and Community Guide to Citizen Science](#) from SciStarter includes tutorials and project examples for libraries and community-based organizations.
- [Zooniverse](#) is a searchable citizen science web portal with links to many citizen science projects.

EVALUATION

[Project Outcome](#) is a free toolkit from the Public Library Association designed to help public libraries understand and share the impact of essential library services and programs by providing simple surveys and an easy-to-use process for measuring and analyzing outcomes.