chippewa naturecenter

Venture Out!

Topic 11: Citizen Scientist

Day 1 Seek Plants

Spend the week as a citizen scientist. A citizen scientist is a member of the public that helps gather scientific research. Practice gathering scientific data using this scavenger hunt or the Seek app* by iNaturalist (a free app on IOS or Android). Start today by going outside with an adult and finding plants. Earn the bronze badge by observing 1 plant, the silver badge by observing 5 plants and the gold badge by observing 20 plants. Good luck!

Day 2 Insects or Arachnids

Gather data on insects and arachnids today. Insects have three body parts, six legs, two antennae and sometimes wings. Adult arachnids typically have eight-legs and include animals such as spiders, harvestman (daddy longlegs), mites, ticks, and solifuges (scorpions and more). Use the Seek app to help you identify your findings or keep track of how many you find on your scavenger hunt.

Day 3 Fungi

Gather data on fungi today. Fungi are organisms that are not plants or animals. They are usually seen when their fruiting bodies, often called mushrooms, stick out of the ground or tree that the fungus is growing in. Use the Seek app to help you identify your findings or keep track of how many you find on your scavenger hunt.

Day 4 Birds or Mammals

Gather data on birds and mammals today. Birds have feathers, wings, bills or beaks, special feet and lay eggs. Mammals have fur, external ears, and have live young. Use the Seek app to help you identify your findings or keep track of how many you find on your scavenger hunt. To take your bird observations to the next level ask the help of an adult to submit your findings to eBird, a citizen science tool for bird sightings.

Day 5 Amphibians or Reptiles

Gather data on reptiles and amphibians today. Reptiles have scales, claws (if they're not snakes), and lay eggs on land. Amphibians have moist skin, lay eggs in water, and experience metamorphosis, starting life as a tadpole in the water. Use the Seek app to help you identify your findings or keep track of how many you find on your scavenger hunt. To take your observations to the next level ask the help of an adult to submit your findings to Michigan Herp Atlas, a citizen science project for Michigan reptile and amphibian sightings.

*The Seek app can be connected to iNaturalist by an adult signing in with a free account. This will allow the child to submit their observations for use by scientists. If you make observations at the Chippewa Nature Center they will be added to CNC's BioBlitz 2020 project.

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Citizen Science Conversation Starters by Grade Level

Kindergarten	Being a citizen scientist and helping to gather data on plants and animals near you can help scientists better understand the plants and animals in your local area. What are some other ways you can think to help living things near you?
1st Grade	While looking for organisms this week did you notice any groups of plants or animals that looked like each other? Which of the organisms do you think was the parent? Which do you think was the offspring? What makes you think that?
2nd Grade	While gathering data, visit a pond, field and forest. Did you notice plants that the ecosystems had in common? Did you notice animals that the ecosystems had in common?
3rd Grade	As you are gathering data this week keep track of the different life stages that you are finding. Can you find an organism's entire life cycle?
4th Grade	While looking for animals this week did you notice how the animals reacted if you got too close to them? How did they react? What senses do you think they were using to notice you were there?
5th Grade	As you were collecting data this week how did you know what kind of organisms you were looking at? What did you observe about the organism to classify it as a plant or an animal? What did you notice to break animals into different groups? How do those special characteristics help them to survive?