



Beluga whales in the Churchill River estuary, Manitoba

Summary

In order to protect, care for, and study the natural spaces and species on the planet we can use everyone's help! **Citizen science** projects allow members of the public to participate in the scientific process, offering valuable resources to researchers but also offering participants a unique glimpse into the natural and scientific world. Citizen science projects can be great opportunities for you to learn new skills, build your résumé, contribute to real-world research, help inform decision-making, and have fun.

You can even be a citizen scientist from the comfort of your own home! Websites like **Zooniverse** host citizen science projects on everything from wildlife in the savanna to clusters of stars in other solar systems. If you want to participate in research occurring right here in Manitoba, you can participate in Assiniboine Park Zoo's **Beluga Bits** project all year long. During the summer, you can help researchers by watching underwater videos of beluga on **Explore** and collecting snapshots. Year-round, you can log on to Beluga Bits on Zooniverse and help Assiniboine Park Zoo researchers answer questions about beluga health and social structure.

KEY TERMS

- **Scientific Research** - The systematic and rigorous investigation of theories and questions to help us better understand the world around us.
- **Citizen Science** - Public participation in scientific research, sometimes called community or participatory science.
- **Conservation** - The preservation and protection of wildlife and natural resources now and into the future.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Why do you think it is important to have the public participate in citizen science projects?**
2. **How do you think citizen science can be used to engage members of the public in conservation and environmental issues?**
3. **If you have participated on a citizen science project, what have you taken away from the experience?**

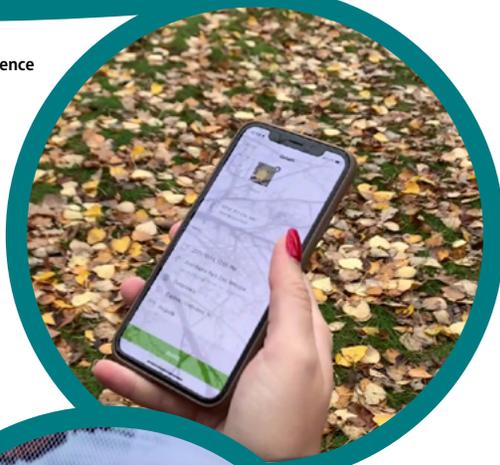
SUGGESTED RESEARCH PROJECT

Find a citizen science project that you are interested in and consider ways that participating or examining the data collected in that project could be of benefit. Could the project help engage your community, or could the information gathered help inform local initiatives? If so, how?

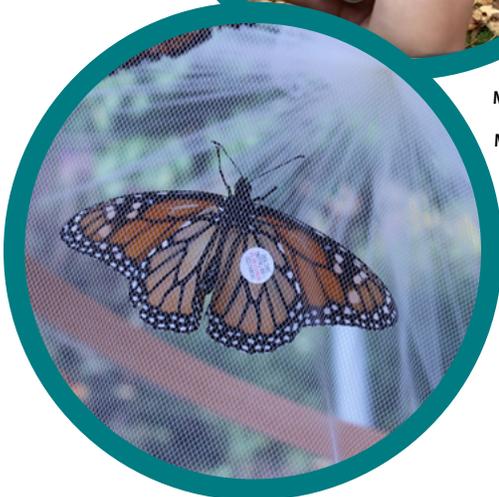




Using citizen science applications to collect data on iNaturalist at Assiniboine Park, Manitoba



Monarch butterfly tagged through Monarch Watch at Assiniboine Park Zoo, Manitoba



ACTION STEP

Find a citizen science project studying something that you are interested in and contribute three hours of your time to the project.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Assiniboine Park Conservancy | What Can You Do](#) - Ideas for steps you can take to protect the world around you

[Zooniverse | Beluga Bits](#) - Beluga Bits citizen science project

[Zooniverse | Beluga Bits in the Classroom](#) - Classroom-friendly Beluga Bits project

[Explore | Underwater Beluga Whale Cam](#) - Underwater beluga whale camera livestream

[iNaturalist | A Community for Naturalists](#) - A citizen science project documenting biodiversity around the world

[eBird](#) - A citizen science project documenting bird diversity around the world

[Government of Canada | Citizen Science Portal](#) - Database of citizen science projects