

CITIZEN SCIENCE: PROJECTS AS PART OF A BIGGER PICTURE

Steve Allen

Kalamazoo Nature Center

Citizen Science, the contributions of amateur and non-professional to the advancement of scientific knowledge in a particular field, has been part of the scientific legacy from the earliest days of this country. Contributions by physician / naturalists documented many of the plants and animals across North America. And even after 200 years, there are still opportunities for the citizen scientist to contribute.

Motivation, interest and time are the key factors that allow anyone interested in science to become involved. Field observations within all areas of nature history still provide the greatest areas of opportunities for the motivated amateur. Turf managers and golf course superintendents have a unique opportunity to add to the body of knowledge through their most intimate understanding of their own property. Observations of wetlands, woodlands, and native grassland areas can and should become part of a regional or national monitoring database. Frog dispersal, bird breeding and range dispersal, and butterfly distribution all are part of unique national monitoring programs.

Numerous organizations offer opportunities for individuals and groups to participate and contribute to a wide variety of scientific fields. Included are a number of web-based programs that provide instruction, guidance, directions and a location to contribute observations and/or field data.

Take the time to get involved.

Citizen Science Projects and Opportunities

BIRDS

Project Feeder Watch
Cornell Univ.

www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw

Mich. Audubon Society /
Kalamazoo Nature Center

www.michiganaudubon.org
www.naturecenter.org

Christmas Bird Counts
National Audubon Society

www.audubon.org/bird/cbc

National Nestbox Network / The Birdhouse Network
Cornell University

www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse

Misc. programs at Cornell Univ.
Finch Irruptions
Urban Birds

www.birds.cornell.edu

Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas – II Kalamazoo Nature Center Res. Dept. 269-381-1574
6-year Breeding bird state-wide study Kalamazoo Nature Center, MAS, DEQ

LoonRanger Program Michigan Audubon Society
Michigan Loon Protection Association www.michiganloons.org

Great Backyard Bird Count www.birdsource.org/gbbc
Nation-wide volunteer bird-feeder count on Feb. 13 –16, 2004

General Bird Watching
American Birding Association www.americanbirding.org

BATS

North American Bat House Research Project www.Batcon.org
Bat Conservation International Austin TX World-wide bat education

Organization for Bat Conservation www.batconservation.org
Bat group for State of Michigan, Cranbrook, Bloomfield Hills

BUTTERFLIES & DRAGONFLIES

Journey North www.learner.org
Web-based participatory learning, variety of bird & non-bird species

North American Butterfly Association www.naba.org
Web-based life histories, 4th of July Butterfly Count

Monarch Larva Monitoring Project www.mlmp.org
Life history of Monarch Butterfly / Milkweed patch study

Xerces Society www.xerces.org
All insects and invertebrates, great links

AMPHIBIANS

Frog Watch USA www.nwf.org/frogwatchusa
National Wildlife Federation & UGGS

Michigan Frog and Toad Survey www.michigan.gov/dnr
Michigan DNR state-wide spring frog and toad monitoring program

Frog and Toad Deformities <http://frogweb.nbii.gov>
Tracking site for frogs and toad found with deformities

N. American Amphibian Monitoring Program www.mp2-pwrc.usgs.gov/naamp
Nation-wide amphib. Monitoring program. Great links page

Misc.

EarthDial planetary.org/mars/earthdial
A planet-wide sundial network with coordination and tie to Mars probe.
The Planetary Society

Lichen Mapping www.Pathfinderscience.net
Example photos, maps and tracking site for lichens (Univ. of Kansas)

Habitat Preservation The Nature Conservancy www.nature.org/michigan
Or a local conservancy (like SW Michigan Land Conser.) www.swmlc.org

Green Building technology and certification
United States Green Building Council www.usgbc.org

Great Lakes Research and Education Center www.nature.nps.gov/learningcenters