

iNaturalist Community Project Resource Guide

This guide includes information about downloading and accessing the free civic science apps iNaturalist and Seek, as well as resources for exploring botany and bird watching.



Civic Science Apps

iNaturalist

iNaturalist is a free app that supports nature enthusiasts in recording their observations by taking photographs, sharing observations with other naturalists, and identifying local plants, animals, and insects. Documenting local flora and fauna assists in environmental research and collective understanding of local ecosystems. Explore the [iNaturalist website \(www.inaturalist.org\)](http://www.inaturalist.org) for further information and features related to exploring, observing, and studying nature worldwide.

- Access the app store on your mobile device and search for “iNaturalist.”
- Install and open the app.
- To join the Skokie Nature with Neighbors project, create a free account with an email address.
- In the app menu, select Projects and search for “[Skokie Nature with Neighbors](#).”
- Join the project and share your observations!

Seek by iNaturalist

Seek by iNaturalist is a free app that supports younger nature enthusiasts in taking photos to identify living things in local environments and learn more about species nearby. The more types of species identified, the more badges users can earn. Seek does not include the option to connect with the community or publish observations.

- Access the app store on your mobile device and search for “Seek.”
- Install and open the app.
- Create a free account with an email address, or explore the app as a guest user. If you have an iNaturalist account already, you can use the same account with Seek.

When using nature apps, always be aware of your surroundings, avoid taking photographs on private property, and consider observing from a distance to stay safe and not harm wildlife and plants.

Resources to Explore

Local Resources to Visit

Before visiting, we recommend calling ahead or checking out the accompanied websites to ensure visitation hours and any restrictions in access due to COVID-19.

- [Emily Oaks Nature Center](#) is part of the Skokie Park District and has 13 acres of savanna with wildlife and native plants to explore, observe, and document.
- [Skokie Lagoons](#) is one of the Forest Preserves of Cook County that provides a habitat for wildlife like ducks, herons, foxes, and a variety of fish.
- [Ladd Arboretum](#) hosts the Evanston Ecology Center, which includes a bird sanctuary and a walking and biking trail.
- [North Park Nature Center](#) has trails that wind through woodland, wetland, prairie and savanna, all within its 46 acre nature preserve.

Online Accounts of Birders and Botanists

- Justin Robinson ([@countrygentlemancooks](#)) is a botanist. His informative Instagram posts focus on the impact of colonization and systemic racism in botany.
- Corina Newsome is a zookeeper and biologist. Visit her [website](#) for reflections on both her work and diversification of birding, biology, and STEM.
- For Black STEM unity across multiple disciplines, including a specific birding thread, follow [@blackafinstem](#) on Instagram.
- Juíta Martinez is a Ph.D. student, avid wildlife blogger, and birder. She advocates for conservation and equity in the field through her [blog](#) and social media accounts.

Explore Further

- [National Audubon Society](#) has a free online bird guide to help learn about more than 800 North American bird species.
- [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#) provides a wealth of research and information about birds throughout the world. Consider using their bird ID app, [Merlin](#), for your next birding adventure.
- [Chicago Botanic Garden](#) cultivates 27 gardens and 4 natural areas while providing online information about horticulture and conservation practices.
- [The Morton Arboretum](#) is an outdoor museum of trees with programs and classes to learn about nature.
- [Illinois Native Plant Society](#) runs events to promote the appreciation, conservation, and study of native flora and natural communities.
- [Outdoor Afro](#) is a nationwide network that inspires Black leadership in nature.