



# EXPLORING BIODIVERSITY

Document and identify plants  
and animals around you.

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The iNaturalist app helps you record images of biodiversity and learn about the natural world. Join a community of naturalists who share observations of nature, collaboratively identify species, and share data with scientists.

If enough people record their observations, it will be like a living record of life on Earth that scientists and land managers could use to monitor changes in biodiversity, and that anyone could use to learn more about nature.



## MATERIALS NEEDED

Camera or smartphone with camera, Computer or smartphone with internet access, iNaturalist app. Optional: Clip-on lens kit

## STEP 1

Go to [scistarter.org/darksky](https://scistarter.org/darksky) and sign up for an account, or log in to your existing account. A SciStarter account helps you track your contributions and find relevant projects to participate in.

## STEP 2

Click the “Exploring Biodiversity” icon at [scistarter.org/darksky](https://scistarter.org/darksky) and follow the instructions to download the iNaturalist app and watch a brief video about the project. After you sign up on iNaturalist, return to your SciStarter Dashboard to add your iNaturalist user name to your SciStarter account profile. It’s easier than it sounds. In your SciStarter account settings, you’ll see an option to integrate with iNaturalist. That’s where you’ll add your iNaturalist user name. This will sync your project contributions from iNaturalist to SciStarter for years to come! Sometimes, it may take up to 24 hours for an observation to be credited in your SciStarter dashboard.

## STEP 3

Capture photos of living things, like plants or animals. Try to focus on “uncultivated” nature. Rather than a flower you grew in your garden, try to photograph a wildflower, a weed, or a caterpillar. Nature can be all around you: on the sidewalk in the big city, a tree in a forest. If you’re using the optional lens kit, capture photos of small things using the macro lens. To use this lens you need to be about an inch from your subject. Capture photos of things that are far away using the zoom lens.

(Continued on reverse)

#### **STEP 4**

After selecting your best photos, open the iNaturalist app or website and follow instructions to share your nature photos. Make sure you indicate the location of where you took the observation. Do your best to identify your observation: if all you know is that it's a plant, just say that. That's great, too!

#### **STEP 5**

The iNaturalist community of citizen scientists and experts will help identify your observation, and after enough people have verified it, it becomes "research grade" – meaning that it's shared with scientists around the world.

#### **STEP 6**

You can make as many observations as you would like!

#### **QUESTIONS?**

Please visit [scistarter.org/darksky-faq](https://scistarter.org/darksky-faq).

#### **LOOKING FOR MORE?**

Please visit to [scistarter.org/darksky-faq](https://scistarter.org/darksky-faq).

**PROJECT MATERIALS: CAMERA OR SMARTPHONE WITH CAMERA, COMPUTER OR SMARTPHONE WITH INTERNET ACCESS, INATURALIST APP. OPTIONAL: CLIP-ON LENS KIT**

