

Be a Scientist

Are you curious about nature?
Many scientists are, too!



Scientists explore and examine different things in the world to better understand how they work. They observe and record their findings. They also share what they discover so that others learn from their experience and help conserve nature.



You can practice your investigation skills as a **Citizen Scientist**. Go outside with a pencil and journal, find a quiet place to sit, and observe what's around you. Use your senses to discover what's nearby—what do you see, feel, smell or hear? Record your findings in your journal, and include the time, date and weather. Keep track of what's around your special place each time you visit. You may find different animals, sounds or smells at different times of the day or in different weather. After making a few entries, read your notes and see what's similar from day to day and what's different.

For some wildlife, you can join lots of other people in collecting information and posting it on a website. The data you gather will help you and others better understand our world. Using this data, scientists have discovered many interesting things: many birds return north earlier than they used to, flowering trees bloom earlier than they used to, and many animals go into hibernation later than they used to. Here are some different citizen science projects you can participate in.



Discover what makes fireflies special by spending your summer evenings observing them for "Firefly Watch." Go to <https://legacy.mos.org/fireflywatch/> to learn what to watch for and how to record your findings. You'll keep a notebook of your observations and share your discoveries with others.

Squirrels are found almost everywhere in New York State, and they're fun and easy to watch. Take photos or draw pictures of those you see; send photos to "Project Squirrel" at www.projectsquirrel.org/, along with your observations. The more Project Squirrel receives, the more they (and we) will learn about squirrels.



Do you like insects and plants? The "Great Sunflower Project" connects both by looking at pollinators, such as bees and other insects in our communities. Count the pollinators on plants in your yard, favorite park or wild area each time you go out. Use field guides to identify the pollinator and the flower. Find more information at www.greatsunflower.org/

