

ACTIVITY

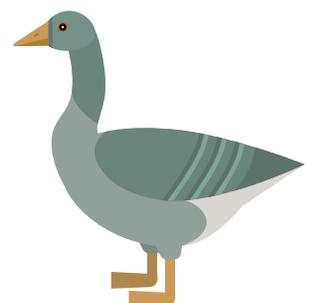
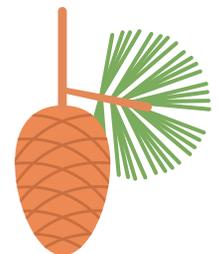
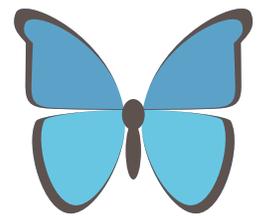
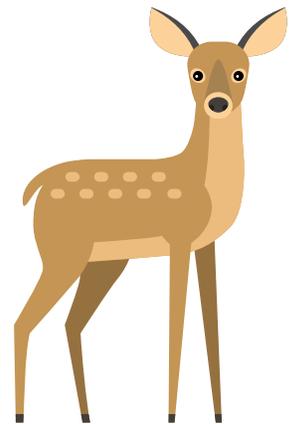
Are There Geckos in Your Garden?

[Listen to the Balinese story](#) of the gecko who can't get any sleep.

How many animals were listed in the story of the gecko? Each animal in the story was affected by another, not unlike animals in the world around us. Have you seen animals interacting with others in your backyard or on hikes? Have you ever seen animal footprints along a sandy path? You may see footprints from birds, lizards, racoons, opossums, or coyotes that passed by earlier that day!

Your backyard has many animals, more than you may have thought!

After listening to the story about the gecko, it's now your turn to see how many critters you can find in your backyard or on a park trail while helping scientists — you can be a citizen scientist!



DURATION

15 min to as long as you like

GRADES

1–12

STANDARDS

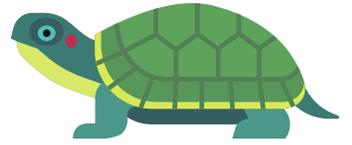
K–2: Life Sciences 2nd grade
3: Life Sciences 3rd grade
4: Life Sciences 2nd, 3rd grades
6: Ecology 5th grade
7: Living Systems 5th grade
9–12: Ecology 6th grade

MATERIALS

- Download the [app iNaturalists](#) from the California Academy of Sciences.
- [Apple Store](#)
- [Google Play](#)
- An open area with vegetation such as your backyard or a park trail

PROCEDURE

- 1 When you spot an insect, lizard, frog, a bird, or other wildlife, open the [app iNaturalists](#).
- 2 Take a photo using the app.
- 3 iNaturalist will automatically generate suggestions to identify your critter based on your photo and location.
- 4 You can then share your observations with the community to discuss and confirm your findings.
- 5 Your observation may be vetted as Research Grade and shared with scientists working to better understand and protect nature.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 How many of the animals were introduced from another state or country?
- 2 If you found more introduced species than native species, what do you think that means?
- 3 What is the impact of introduced species on food sources, environmental adaptations, competition?
- 4 Every insect and animal is on the food chain — where does your observed animal lie on that food chain? What does your animal eat? What might it be wary of?
- 5 How do you think your animal has adapted to its environment? Does it blend into its environment or is it really noticeable? Is it slow moving or fast moving? If it's slow moving, how might it defend itself against threats?
- 6 Do you see different animals at different times of the year? What might that mean?
- 7 Can you tell if the environment where you're making your observations is healthy? What does a healthy or unhealthy environment look like?

