

Citizen science: Armies of volunteers aid research

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(AP) -- Besides being a researcher in New York's Hudson River Estuary Program, environmental scientist Chris Bowser leads citizen projects that collect reams of data for other scientists.

His Steve Irwin-style exuberance and enthusiasm make Bowser an ideal leader in the rapidly expanding world of [citizen science](#). In return for their volunteer work, these citizen scientists get hands-on experience and learn more about the world around them.

Once restricted mainly to counting birds - most famously, in Audubon's 111-year-old Christmas Bird Count - citizen science has expanded rapidly in recent years, both in number and variety of projects.

Some projects count things - [fireflies](#), [ladybugs](#), frogs. Others record data on water quality, weather or flower budding. Still others already have the data but need a lot of people to sort through it.

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