Using iNaturalist to Enhance Student Learning
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Online Asynchronous + Traditional In-Person

ES 1123: Environmental Zoology

- Introductory-level course on basic biological concepts and animal classification
- Required for Environmental Science majors
- Core Life Sciences curriculum component area course

Applicable Settings

- Courses which study biodiversity at any level would be enhanced by the incorporation of iNaturalist in the course

iNaturalist Project Synopsis and Challenges

- Semester-long project requires students work outside of class to collect wild animal observations
- Students take photos of wild animals they observe and submit to the iNaturalist citizen science platform
- The iNaturalist community helps in correct identification of taxa
- Major Challenge: Ensuring integrity of student data.

Student Learning Outcomes Satisfied

- Classify select animals into taxonomic ranks.
- Describe morphological and biological characteristics of select invertebrate and vertebrate taxa.
- Collect accurate animal biodiversity data for citizen science platforms.

Student Benefits and Impact

- Technique supports course goals through hands-on approach
- Students provide data that can be used by scientists
- Many students have communicated ancillary mental health benefits of getting outside for class:
  “I learned from iNaturalist that I should go outside more and not always inside constantly working on school-related things... when I started taking breaks and going outside it reminded me of all the good things I have and that I should be thankful to have those things to build me up.”

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