

VOLUNTEER ON YOUR OWN – APPROVED ACTIVITIES

There are dozens of ESMN approved volunteer activities, truly something for everyone.

Many of these are organized activities involving coordination with a partner or sponsor. There are also many activities that you can do on your own, many whenever you wish.

This page lists approved “Volunteer On Your Own” opportunities. You may accrue volunteer service hours for these activities as long as you follow whatever requirements there may be, such as mandatory training, following established protocols, or submitting collected data.

If you are aware of similar activities not listed here, please send an email to contact@esmn.org with details.

Happy volunteering. Have fun and thank you for your service.

Article writing. Ongoing. Write an article on a nature or conservation issue for the ESMN website or for print or online newsletters, magazines or other outlets. Education and Outreach. Better Impact: Category 15.

- Link: <https://www.esmn.org/news>

Birdability. Volunteers survey Virginia Bird and Wildlife Trail sites for accessibility. Survey results are reported to Birdability and to Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources. Ongoing (until all Eastern Shore sites have been surveyed). Citizen Science. Better Impact: Category 21.

- Link: <http://www.viriniamasternaturalist.org/virginia-bird-and-wildlife-trail.html>
- Link: <https://www.birdability.org>

Butterfly Counts. Sponsored by North American Butterfly Association (NABA). Seasonal (June – August). Volunteers join an established “circle” to identify and count butterfly species seen in one-day period. Citizen Science. Better Impact: Category 14.

- Link: <https://naba.org/butterfly-counts>

Catch the King (CTK). Sponsored by Wetlands Watch. Seasonal (October generally). An annual tide mapping event where volunteers collect GPS flooding data during king tides using the Sea Level Rise phone app. Citizen Science. Better Impact: Category 14.

- Link: <https://www.wetlandswatch.org/catchtheking>

Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Sponsored by National Audubon Society. Seasonal (December – January). Volunteers count all the birds found during a 24-hour period within a predetermined 15-mile (diameter) circle; there are several established circles on the Eastern Shore. Citizen Science. Better Impact: Category 14.

- Link: <https://www.audubon.org/community-science/christmas-bird-count>

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City Nature Challenge using iNaturalist. Sponsored by The Nature Conservancy. Seasonal (April). Annual bioblitz; volunteers take pictures of insects, birds, plants, or wild animals of all kinds and upload photos to the iNaturalist app as part of this global competition. Citizen Science. Better Impact: Category 13.

- Link: <https://www.citynaturechallenge.org/>

Clean the Bay Day. Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Seasonal (First Saturday in June). Volunteers remove litter and debris from the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Stewardship. Better Impact: Category 16.

- Link: <https://www.cbf.org/events/clean-the-bay-day>

CoCoRaHS (Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network). Ongoing. Volunteers report daily precipitation measurements in their backyard. Citizen Science. Better Impact: Category 14.

- Link: <https://www.cocorahs.org>

Diamondback Dash. Sponsored by Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR). Seasonal (3 times/year). Using their own kayaks, volunteers paddle a predetermined "loop" and report back on their terrapin sightings. Citizen Science. Better Impact: Category 21.

- Link: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/diamondback-dash>

eBird Survey. Sponsored by Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Ongoing. Participants record bird sightings and submit checklists; cumulative data is used to study bird populations and distribution trends. Free app available. Citizen Science. Better Impact: Category 14.

- Link: <https://ebird.org>

FeederWatch. Sponsored by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Birds Canada. Seasonal (November – April). Participants count birds at their feeder or backyard and report data. Citizen Science. Better Impact: Category 14.

- Link: <https://feederwatch.org>

GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment). Sponsored by NASA. Ongoing. Participants use an app to observe their environment, including clouds, water, plants. Citizen Science. Better Impact: Category 14.

- Link: <https://observer.globe.gov>

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Great Backyard Bird Count. Sponsored by Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Seasonal (mid-February). Participants identify and count birds then submit results online. Citizen Science. Better Impact: Category 14.

- Link: <https://www.birdcount.org/>

iNaturalist. Ongoing. Participants share photos of plants and animals observed in nature. There is an established project: Master Naturalists: Eastern Shore of Virginia Project. Citizen Science. Better Impact: Category 14.

- Link: <https://www.inaturalist.org/>

NestWatch. Sponsored by Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Seasonal. Certified volunteers locate and monitor bird nests, record data and submit observations. Citizen Science. Better Impact: Category 14.

- Link: <https://nestwatch.org/>

OspreyWatch. Sponsored by Center for Conservation Biology. Seasonal (March 1 – August 31). Volunteers collect information on osprey nesting and breeding. Citizen Science. Better Impact: Category 14.

- Link: <https://www.osprey-watch.org/>

Turkey and Grouse Survey. Sponsored by Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources. Seasonal (July 1 – August 31). Volunteers record observations of turkey or grouse and submit data to the Department. Citizen Science. Better Impact: Category 21.

- Link: Survey instructions and data form may be found in the Better Impact Activity. For more information email: Katie.martin@dwr.virginia.gov.

Virginia Balloon Study. Ongoing. A joint effort by Clean Virginia Waterways and the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center. Volunteers report single or multiple occurrences of balloon litter or photos of animals affected. Citizen Science. Better Impact: Category 16.

- Link: <https://sites.google.com/site/virginiaballoonstudy/home>