

# GSSEM & Audubon Great Lakes: Wild Indigo Patch Program - Backyard BioBlitz

This program is a collaboration between Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan and Audubon Great Lakes to create opportunities for exploration in backyards across Michigan. Many amazing things can be found in a simple square foot of nature. We encourage girls to look around at the many plants, birds, bugs, or even microbes around them and share the wonder of their world with us.



## DISCOVER

Encourage girls to go into their backyard or local green space, and identify a specific species of plants or animals that they find there. They can use a species-identifying app or guidebook to identify the species and learn everything they can about it. After, girls should do an in-depth study: counting, coloring, and gathering information. This information will then be used as part of the Take Action.

**Species Identification:** I found something I want to study, but what is it?

There are great resources out there—from guidebooks to apps—that can help you identify a species. Here are some of our favorite online resources: [Audubon](#), [Cornell Labs](#), [iNaturalist](#), [Bug Finder](#), or [MSU Extension](#).

**Counting/Sampling:** How many of a species did you find in your backyard?

This may be as easy as lifting every log/flowerpot and seeing how many pill bugs you find. With earthworms, you might dig up a 1'x1'x1' area, count the earthworms, and then measure your yard to estimate how many worms are in the whole thing. When counting birds or butterflies, you might take an afternoon (or several) and watch how many of a species of bird eat at your feeder or fly across your yard. For more information and a cool activity to understand sampling, [check this out](#).

**Coloring:** What do you observe about your species?

Create a field journal for your project and draw/color pictures of your species. Take note if there are differences in color between the male/female in a species, or if there's a difference in size/shape of a plant or insect in relation to the place they were found. For a great video to show younger girls how to create and use a nature journal, [check this out!](#)

**Gather Information:** What do you think is important to know about your species?

Use your observations and notes from your nature journal and go on a hunt for more information. Check out reliable resources like [encyclopedias](#) or scientific resources like [Audubon](#), [Cornell Labs](#), [iNaturalist](#), [Bug Finder](#), or [MSU Extension](#).

## CONNECT

Girls can research the positive and negative ways humans affect the species they've chosen. Find an expert online through university websites, specialty organizations (like Audubon, National Wildlife Foundation, Michigan Nature Association, or any club or group focused on a specific species), social media, or YouTube, and learn how you can help protect your backyard species. Find out what you can do in your own backyard.

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## TAKE ACTION

Girls will take the information they gathered in the Discover and Connect phase to create a presentation on their chosen plant or animal species that they identified. In the presentation, they can elaborate on the positive and negative role humans play on their chosen species and creative ways they'll combat the negative role humans play on their chosen species. Girls can create a 3-5 minute video to share their knowledge. Videos can be as serious or silly as you wish, as long as we get to meet your species, find out how we can help save that species, and why they're important to our ecosystem.

Girls can submit their videos to GSSEM by emailing them to [outdooreducation@gsssem.org](mailto:outdooreducation@gsssem.org). The videos will be shared through the Audubon Great Lakes: Wild Indigo Nature Exploration Program and Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan networks to inspire other youth to engage in conservation, environmental stewardship, going outside, and being active.

## Required Equipment:

- Binoculars
- Magnifying Glass
- Camera/Phone
- Species Identifying App (Seek, iNaturalist, Audubon Bird Guide, etc)

## PATCHES

Upon submission of their video, girls will receive their Wild Indigo patch and Audubon Great Lakes: Wild Indigo Nature Exploration Certificate. The first 200 girls to complete the program will receive their patches free, courtesy of Great Lakes Audubon. Additional patches will be available for purchase at GSSEM council shops.

## PARTNERS

**Audubon Great Lakes:** Wild Indigo Nature Exploration Program (Jeremiah Steen)