

TIER 1

Lake Biodiversity Stewards

Monitoring Guide

Step 1: What You Will Monitor



As a Tier 1 volunteer, your primary task is to observe and document lake biodiversity. This includes (a) the littoral zone, the shallow area of a lake near the shore, (b) the riparian zone, the area of land along the edges of the lake, often filled with plants and trees, and (c) the shoreline.

Key monitoring areas:

- **Wildlife:** Observe and document any wildlife you encounter, including fish, birds, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and insects. Pay attention to their behaviour, location, and abundance.
- **Native plants and trees:** Document the presence of native plants and trees along the shoreline.
- **Invasive species:** If you spot any invasive species (e.g., purple loosestrife, Japanese knotweed), document their location and abundance. This is crucial for managing and protecting local biodiversity. Visit the [invasive species guide](#) for more information.
- **Contextual information:** Observations will include location and weather conditions.

Step 2: Monitoring Tools & Resources



iNaturalist

- iNaturalist will be your primary tool for documenting biodiversity. Use it to make detailed observations and upload photos.
- Download the iNaturalist app (available for iOS and Android) or visit the website: www.inaturalist.org
- Create an account or log in if you already have one.
- Head to the [Lake Blitz Lake Biodiversity Project](#)

Lake Blitz Kit (Optional for Tier 1 volunteers)

- If you have a Lake Blitz Kit from previous seasons, you can continue taking air and water temperature measurements and report your data using the Tier 2 Observation Form.

Step 3: Make an Observation



- Open the iNaturalist app and click the camera icon to create a new observation.
- Take a photo or choose one from your gallery.
- Add details: Include the species name (if known), location, and date.
- In the notes, add weather conditions, wildlife behaviour and/or location details.
- Once your observation details are entered, tap the "Projects" section (usually a button below the observation details).
- Select the appropriate project from your list.
- If you don't see the project listed, tap the "Add to Project" button, search for "Lake Blitz Biodiversity Project", select it, and confirm.

Tips for Successful Monitoring



Choose your monitoring locations carefully:

- Focus on areas where you can easily observe wildlife and plants, such as upland vegetation, submerged vegetation, and along the edge of the water.
- Focus on a specific stretch of shoreline (e.g., 30 meters) to monitor consistently
- If you spot wildlife beyond the littoral zone, be sure to document it and note its location.

Take clear, detailed photos:

- When documenting species, try to get clear photos of the plants or animals, showing key identification features. This will help others identify the species accurately and add scientific value to your observations.

Use the resources:

- If you're not sure about a species, use the Lake Blitz iNaturalist community to help identify it, or refer to local guides and field books for assistance.
- You can also use other tools like Seek by iNaturalist, Google Image Search, and Merlin for identification.

Observe and document behavior:

- For wildlife, note any important behaviours, such as feeding, nesting, or migrating. This adds depth to your observations.
- Watch for early plant growth, wildlife migration, and water level changes.

Shoreline condition and habitat health:

- Check for signs of erosion, sediment buildup, or debris.
- Document types of plants along the shoreline (e.g., grasses, trees, aquatic plants).
- Monitor changes in plant composition, including changes in size and health.
- Record weather conditions (e.g., temperature, rainfall).

Head to the [Lake Blitz FAQ section](#) for more information or contact us at lakeblitz@livinglakescanada.ca