

How to Take Great Photos for Your Bioblitz

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1. Capture the Moment

Some animals fly or scurry away, so take a photo right away! On your second or third photo you can take your time to frame up the shot or get closer if you want to get a better picture. If you miss your chance to get that perfect shot, at least you'll have your first photo to use for iNaturalist.

2. Focus

Try to get your subject in focus by tapping on the screen, right on the part that you want to be in focus. If your device won't focus on the subject, you might be too close. Back up a little and try again. You can always crop the photo if you feel like your subject is too small in the frame, but you can never fix a photo that is out of focus.

3. Exposure

After you tap on the screen to focus, you can also change the exposure (brightness or darkness) by dragging your finger up or down on the screen outside of the focus square. This is especially helpful if your subject is backlit. Don't over brighten it, or you might lose some of the details that help to identify your subject.

4. Different Angles

Try to get a couple of angles of your subject. Of course, this is easier with plants and animals that move slowly! Try to take a profile (side view), an overhead shot, a shot of the animal's face, and even the underside if possible. (Scientists who study snails and slugs like all of these angles.) You can upload multiple photos onto one iNaturalist observation.

5. Know Your Camera

Does your camera have any special features? Is it waterproof? Does it have a macro lens? Can you edit and crop your photos with the camera? Taking a few minutes to get to know your camera's features and limitations will help you to take better photos of nature.

6. Safety First

Even though this is last on my list, it should be first on yours! Your safety and the safety of the wildlife you are photographing should be your priority. Many insects fly straight up to avoid predators, so don't position yourself directly above bees, wasps, and other flying insects. If you are lifting up a rock or board to look for animals underneath, lift it up from the far side and look over the top with your camera ready. That way, if an animal runs, swims, or slithers out, it will be moving away from you instead of toward you. After you take your photos, put the rock or board back exactly as you found it so that you will protect the animal's habitat.