

# Can Citizen Science learn something from Pokemon-Go?

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Citizen science is a symbiosis between scientists and the wider public. Conventional science is based on systematic, repeated observations, and methodically testing theories in controlled experiments. NatureWatch NZ, the largest citizen bioscience platform in the country, has in 4 years attracted 0.001% of NZ's population to record over a quarter million observations of everything from kittens, first encounters, spread of aliens, biodiversity hotspots, to forest industry compilations of biodiversity. NatureWatch NZ is running at 4-8 times the level of uptake in the American parent iNaturalist. In a parallel universe, Pokemon-Go (PG) has taken the world by storm, drawing people out of their homes, into streets and parks, in unprecedented numbers to hunt down Pokemon! We explore how digital culture advances nature conservation goals and whether gaming successfully converts that desire for discovery and primal need for adrenaline into robust data. It's been observed that if PG fanatics were making natural history observations we would accumulate the equivalent of centuries of field data in the space of a few days! The long game is to get meaningful, enduring engagement that demonstrates market share to funders and achieves awareness of the natural world. There are inevitably hazards from anti-social behaviour and suboptimal use of technology, but the iNaturalist developers are busily refining the mobile app to attract larger numbers of those elusive adolescents with short attention spans. QuestaGame is one experimental interface endeavouring to turn nature-recording into a fun activity – with a competitive edge. Understanding and meeting the needs across a broad spectrum of potential users is critical to the value of citizen science. We analyse >270 topic, place and habitat-based Projects in NatureWatch NZ to see what is attracting people, how systematic acquisition of robust data can be made appealing while satisfying educational, science and government agency standards.