

Below is a guide on how to carry out biodiversity/ecological monitoring for a site. This might be a back garden, or a business. It will help you to see the changes your actions are creating.

### 1. Baseline

In order to measure changes in biodiversity it is very useful to have a baseline from which to start. You should take plenty of photos before starting and ideally create a map of the habitats. This is really easy to do. Draw an outline of your site and then sketch in the different areas. These could include bare ground, paths, grass, flowerbeds.



Keep a list of everything you see. This will change over the seasons, so you might want to do a few surveys to make sure you've got everything. Alternatively, survey once, but make sure you always survey at about that time of year.

The best time to do this is May - August.

### 2. Monitoring



Once you have decided when you are going to do your survey, and how often, you need to start! Go over the site, with your habitat map. Note down what you species you see, and where. Then just sit and watch for a while. Note down birds, bees and butterflies that you see visiting the area. It will be difficult to know the species at first, but take photos if you can and use apps and guides to help you. The length of time it will take to do this will vary, depending on the size of the site, what habitats it contains and how many of you take part. It's a great thing to do as a group (following Covid guidelines).

For ad hoc sightings we suggest you either keep a note somewhere of what is seen, or send your record in straight away. You can do this using the iRecord app. More information on that below. You will need to include some basic information with all your sightings, so it's good to make sure you know these things:

- Who (your name and contact)
- What (what did you see)
- Where (be specific, a grid reference is best)
- When (date)
- Photos (if you can!)

Do this regularly and you will be able to see (and prove!) the positive changes your actions are having. By submitting your records, you will also be contributing to our knowledge of biodiversity across the city.

### 3. Submitting your records

- a. iRecord. You can submit your records for the Green Minds Project to iRecord. Set up an account at [iRecord | Manage and share your wildlife records \(brc.ac.uk\)](https://www.brc.ac.uk/iRecord). Once you have an account set up, go to Activities and then Browse All Activities. On Page 17 (or thereabouts) you will find the Green Minds Activity. Click the star to join. You can download the app on your phone to record sightings as you go. The GM activity will accept any record from within Plymouth.
- b. TO DBRC. You can download a spreadsheet from the Green Minds resources page and submit it to DBRC.



### 4. Training and skills

There will be opportunities to improve skills in monitoring and identification of some common species you are likely to find throughout the project. We will be able to point you towards resources you will need.

You can find lots of useful information on the Green Minds website:

[Greenminds | Knowledge Hub \(greenmindsplymouth.com\)](https://www.greenmindsplymouth.com)

