

Green Grant

Office of Sustainability

2025 - 2026 Awardee

Temple University Ecological Club

The Temple University Ecological Club is a group of students dedicated to spreading awareness of ecology and sustainability on Temple University's campus. Its mission is to diversify and advance the ecology profession through opportunities that stimulate and nurture the interest of all students to participate, and to lead in ecology. The TU Ecological Club is a chapter of ESA-SEEDS, a national organization under the umbrella of the Ecological Society of America.

Award Amount: \$800



Protect, Prevent, Persevere: Strategies for Reducing Bird Strikes in Philadelphia

Project Description

This student-led project addressed a significant sustainability challenge at Temple University: bird fatalities caused by window collisions. Urban environments with extensive glass surfaces pose serious risks to migratory and resident birds, a problem intensified by climate change and Temple's location along a major migratory flyway. This project built on years of education, outreach, and data analysis conducted by Temple's SEEDS chapter to transition from awareness to measurable action. The project had three specific components: education and training, applied citizen science, and community engaged learning.

By combining education, citizen science, mitigation, and advocacy, this project supported biodiversity conservation, enhanced urban ecosystem health, and positioned Temple University as a leader in sustainable campus design.



Background

Flyway

Each year tens of millions of birds pass through Philadelphia during migration. Temple University is located in the center of the Spring and Fall bird migration route, termed the Atlantic flyway.

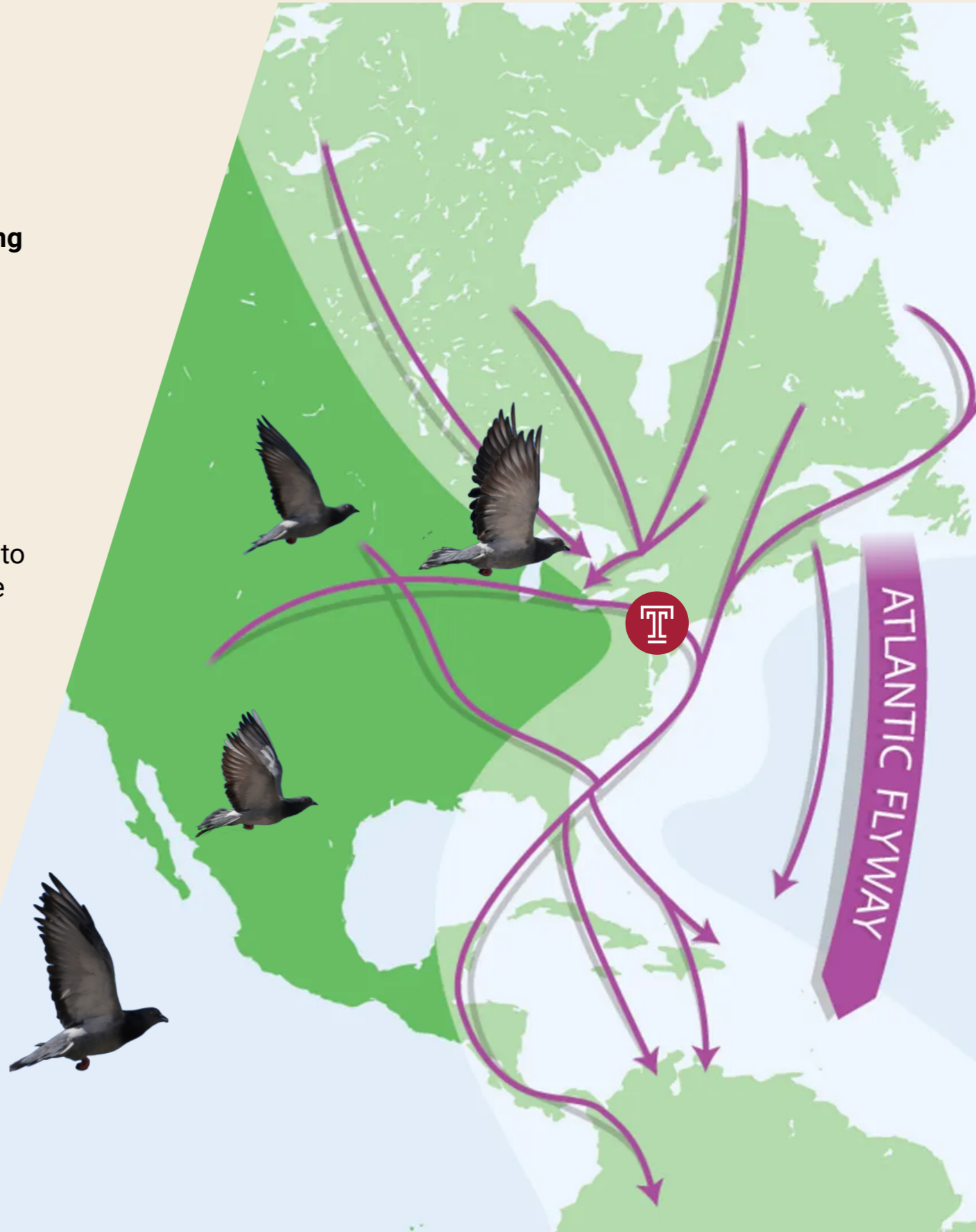
Spring Migration: April 1 - May 31st

Fall Migration: August 15 - November 15th

Why Collisions Happen

Each year, 100 million to 1 billion birds in the United States die due to window strikes. Big windows and indoor lights cause birds to strike windows.

- **Glass:** Glass and reflective surfaces can confuse birds due to the reflection of the surrounding environment or by appearing invisible.
- **Lights:** LED, fairy lights, and artificial glow around buildings can distract and disorient birds, especially when they are migrating at night.



Most Common Birds Found During Data Collection

Swamp Sparrow



Black and White Warbler



Common Yellowthroat



Ovenbird



Hermit Thrush



Dark-eyed Junco



White-throated Sparrow



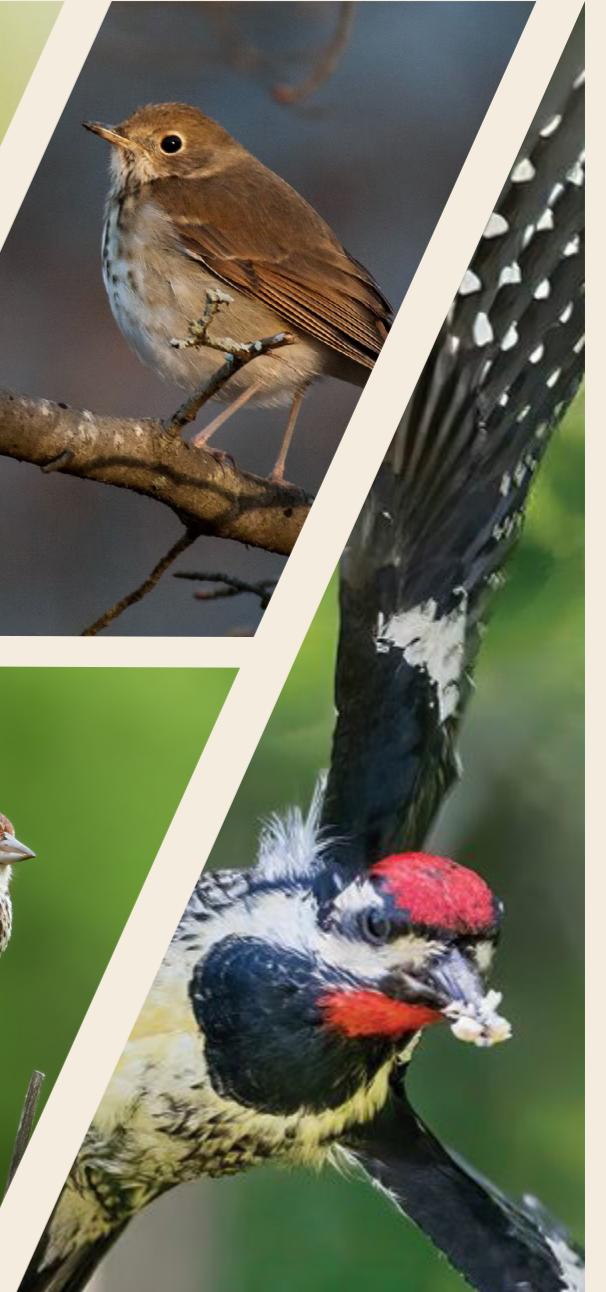
American Woodcock



Song Sparrow



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker



Education and Training

The Green Grant supported a series of workshops and trainings to educate students on the importance of bird strike mitigation on Temple's campus and in the greater Philadelphia area.

In March, members of TU Ecological Club hosted a collaborative workshop with the Office of Sustainability to educate students and staff on the work being done by Bird Safe Philly.

Bird Safe Philly is a partnership led by Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, Audubon Mid-Atlantic, Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, National Audubon Society, Valley Forge Audubon Society, and Wyncote Audubon Society.

This workshop featured guest speaker John Eskate, Volunteer and Civic Engagement Senior Manager at The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University. John spoke about the efforts being done across Philadelphia to install feather friendly window tape on buildings and organize volunteers to carry out projects with Bird Safe Philly. This was followed shortly after by a volunteer orientation to teach interested students how they can support Bird Safe Philly initiatives on Temple University's campus.

John Eskate, Volunteer and Civic Engagement Senior Manager at The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University



Community Engaged Learning

A major component of this Green Grant project involved setting up excursions to greenspaces around Philadelphia to teach students a little bit about the birds that call Philadelphia home.

From February to April, the TU Ecological Club ran four different excursions, fully funded by the Green Grant, to engage students' interest in birding beyond the boundaries of Temple's campus.

Audubon Discovery Center

The first excursion was a Saturday morning trip to the Discovery Center, where members of Audubon Mid-Atlantic walked attendees around the Strawberry Mansion Reservoir to identify different species of waterfowl and migratory birds.



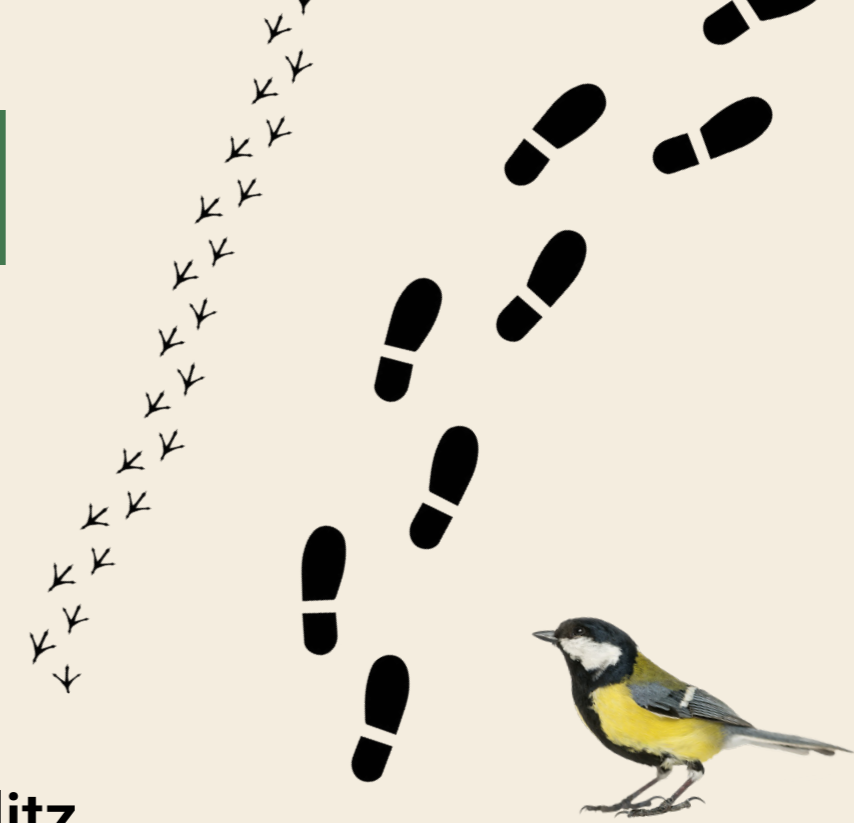
Community Engaged Learning (cont.)

John Heinz Film Center

In March, students volunteered at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge to place bird-safe stickers outside the visitor's center.



Students from the TU Ecological Club applying feather friendly tape to the exterior windows of the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center.



Bioblitz

Then, the programming calendar concluded in April with a visit to Temple Ambler's campus for a "BioBlitz" of the species found on campus, and a final visit to the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge for a day of birding and hiking in South Philadelphia.



Students from the TU Ecological Club participating in the annual "BioBlitz" at Ambler Campus to identify the most species through iNaturalist.



Citizen Science On Campus

In April, groups of trained volunteers engaged in the citizen science campaign of tagging, identifying, and collecting birds around campus that were victims of window collisions.

Student volunteers conducted weekly, fixed-time bird collision surveys on Temple's Main Campus, contributing to data collection for the Bird Safe Philly project. These weekly surveys gave students valuable experience in ecological data collection, while also contributing to critical long-term efforts to make Temple University's campus a safer place for all birds.

Education and Literacy

Students distributed educational zines to educate the Temple community on bird collision prevention methods.



Data Collection

Volunteers participated in weekly bird walks around Temple's campus to provide critical data on high collision areas.

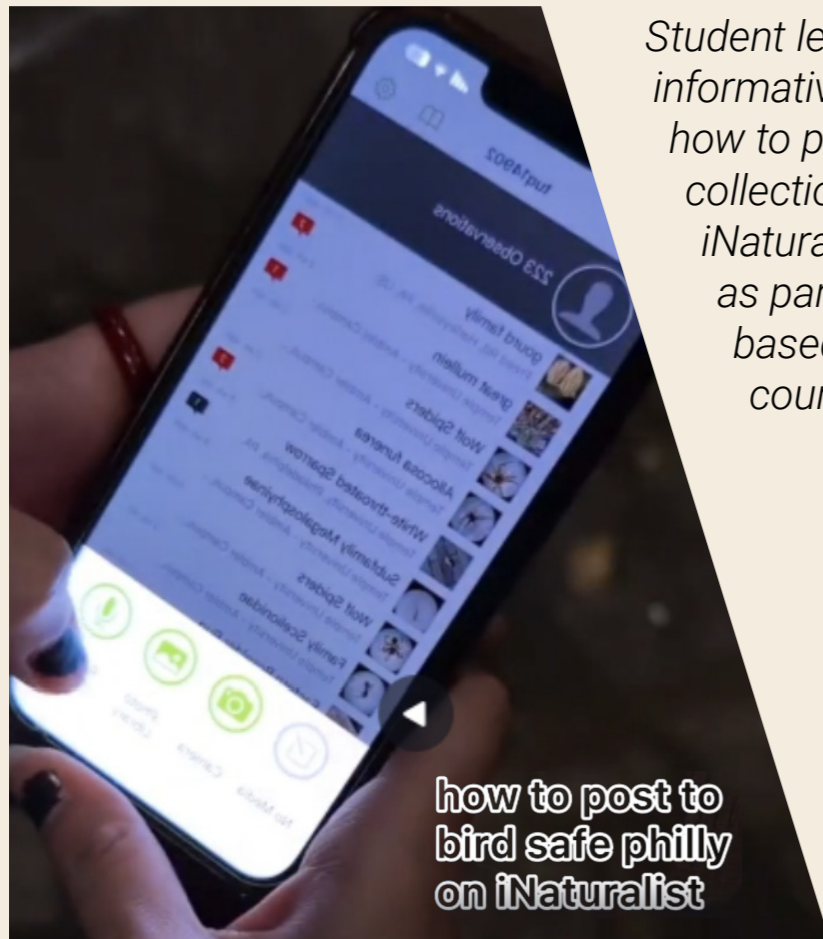


Why Is This Important?

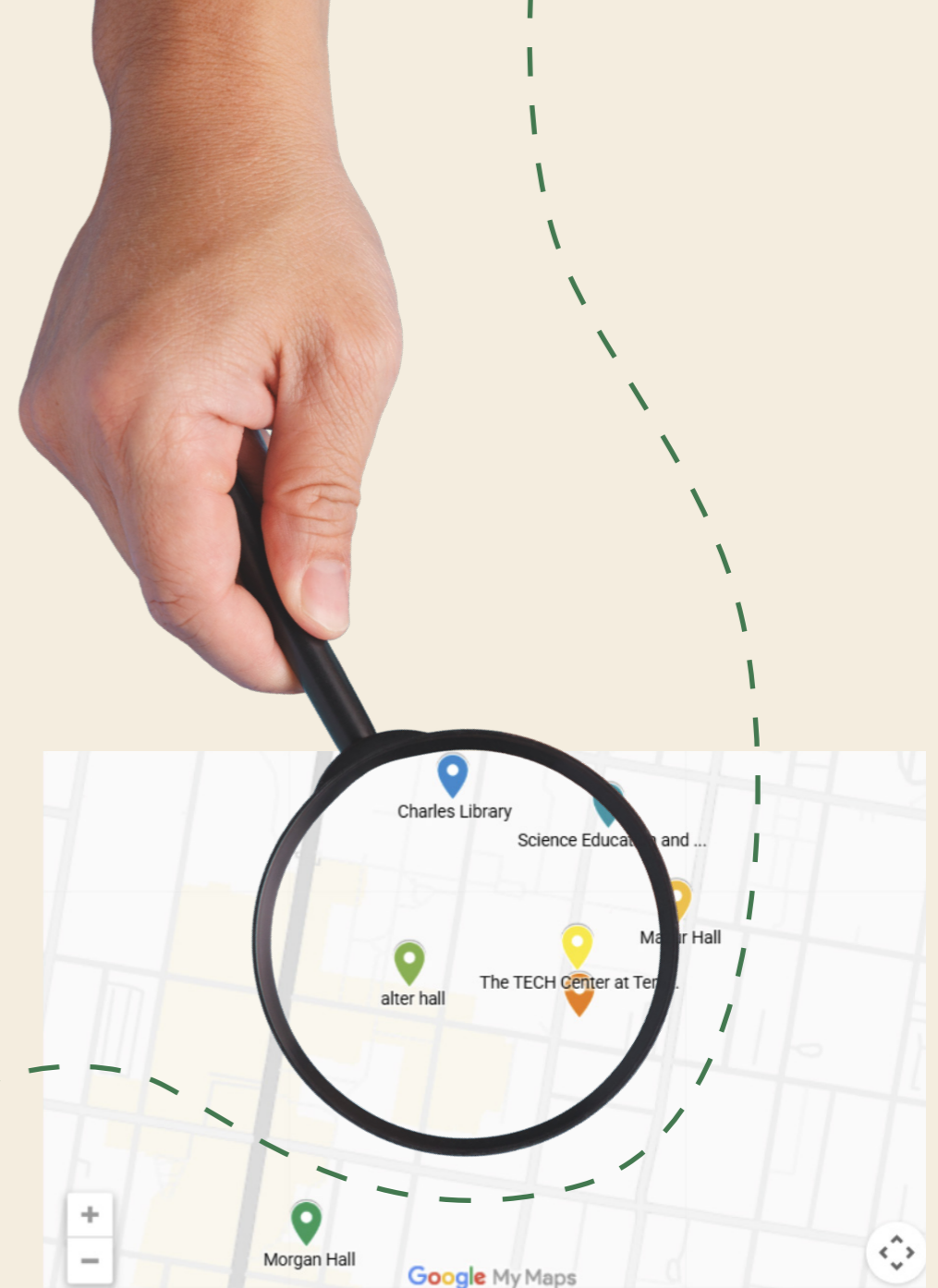
The Process

Student engagement is crucial to creating tangible change. By volunteering, students are contributing data and making a case for installing more bird-safe glass and protecting birds from urban hazards.

This volunteer group also allows students to gain experience in conservation efforts, breaking down barriers to entry in the fields of ecology and environmental science, increasing accessibility, and diversifying this field.



Student leaders creating informative videos on how to perform data collection on the iNaturalist mobile app as part of a project-based learning course assignment.



The Search

First, students walk the perimeter of the assigned buildings. There are 1-2 students per group. Everyone was instructed to closely inspect the base of windows, inside decorative planters, and the deep corners of entryways.

Hear From the Student Leaders



“As students, we don’t realize how much power we have to implement the sustainable changes we want to see on campus. Through organizing and advocacy, student organizations can influence campus policies and lead the charge on sustainable initiatives they care about.”

—**Jasleen Kalsi**

Biology major with a Spanish minor, CST '26



“To me, sustainability is about creating a more equitable, healthy, and green world for ourselves as well as future generations of people and ecosystems on our planet.”

—**Rachel Linhart**

Evolution, ecology, and evolution major, CST '26