



EarthSnap makes it easy for users to identify animal and plant species | Photo source EarthSnap, Inc.

Innovation > Computing & Tech > An app to identify animal and plant species through a phone camera

## AN APP TO IDENTIFY ANIMAL AND PLANT SPECIES THROUGH A PHONE CAMERA



COMPUTING & TECH

**By bringing nature into people's phones, EarthSnap is hoping to hijack the phone addiction and help people to re-engage with the world around them**

**Spotted:** As smartphones have become increasingly ubiquitous, there has been a corresponding increase in the amount of time that people spend looking at screens. This has led to concerns about the effect that phones are having on our ability to connect with the world around us. While efforts to get people to put down their phones and engage with nature have often been unsuccessful, one new app is hoping to change that.

EarthSnap is a new app that allows people to identify plant and animal species via their mobile phone's camera. The app also provides information about the local area and its wildlife, helping to educate users about the natural world. The information will be open-source and shared with citizens and the scientific community. By making this tool available to as many people as possible, Eric Ralls, Founder and CEO of EarthSnap said he aims to "bring people back to nature, to help them realize that humanity is a part of nature, not 'apart' from nature."

EarthSnap also features a social community: Earthchat. The e-social community connects users with other ecologically conscious individuals and organisations from all over the world via forums and feeds. The hope is that this will help promote and spread eco-friendly causes. EarthSnap is fully launched and can be found on the AppleStore and Google Playstore. The platform currently holds information on 2 million plant and animal species, and will use uploaded photos to grow EarthSnap's database.

There are around 8.7 million species on Earth. With land use, pollution, and climate change driving a loss of biodiversity and an increasing number of species at risk, it is essential that we find ways to identify and protect them. Springwise has spotted several other recent innovations that aim to preserve and promote biodiversity. These include a method for [conducting environmental surveys using DNA](#), [biotech that matches trees to the eco-system](#), and a [catfood brand helping to restore the world's coral reefs](#).

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## Takeaway:

Every day, an estimated 150 plant and animal species are lost due to human activity, according to the [UN Convention on Biological Diversity](#). This means that up to 10 per cent of the world's species could disappear each decade. And experts believe that the current extinction rate is [1,000 to 10,000 times higher](#) than the natural rate. The UN Conference on Biodiversity (COP 15) is set to take place in Canada in December this year. It will bring together world leaders to set biodiversity targets for the next decade. Whatever the final targets are, actions to prevent biodiversity loss will require the buy-in of the public and innovations like EarthSnap will play an important role in making people feel connected to nature.