



THE YOUTH FOR ARCTIC NATURE APP

Developing New Tools for Encouraging Youth Connection to Nature

Our website



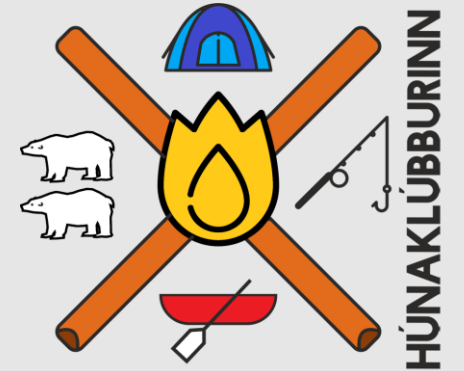
Authors

NNV NÁTTÚRUSTOFA
NORDURLANDS
VESTRA



Cécile Chauvat
and
Jessica Aquino

Partners



Funded by



Introduction

The **Youth for Arctic Nature (YAN)** project is an international **environmental education** project based in Iceland. It is meant primarily for youth between the ages of 5-30 and early-stage career individuals living in the **East Atlantic Arctic**.

Goals include:

- Encouraging **youth connection to local nature** by giving them more opportunities to be outside through **place-based education** and outdoor activities including community monitoring of local nature.
- **Connecting youth together** through shared interest in nature.
- **Connecting youth to their own community** by organizing activities with local knowledge holders and scientists.

Connection to nature in childhood is linked to health and well being in adulthood (Hartig et al, 2014), as well as increased environmental stewardship (Broom, 2017).



Why an app

The YAN project started in 2020, soon after the start of the **Covid-19 pandemic**.

An approach where youth groups would come together in real life was no longer possible. The app was designed as an alternative solution.

Apps facilitate **community science**, which has been shown to be effective in the Arctic to follow **population health in endangered species** (Granquist, 2022), as well as to **monitor environmental factors** (Danielsen et al., 2020).

While there are other apps for nature monitoring, making a **dedicated app that is safe for youth, easy to use, flexible, scalable, and easy to translate** was necessary for the project.

Projects

Some examples of projects using the app in 2023 include:

- The **Great Seal Count**. Annual event where locals and visitors count seals. This was shown to **predict national trends** in seal populations (Granquist, 2022).
- **New youth nature club** with **Hólar University students**. This rural University welcomes many students who are interested in nature and outdoor activities.
- **Fish monitoring** with local youth groups. An annual ice fishing event teaching where data about the fish and the ice are recorded.
- **Nature monitoring day**. In July, the **Icelandic Museum of Natural History** is organizing this day for families to discover local species using the app.

How it works

• Joining or creating a team

Every project has a dedicated team with a single administrator.

• Creating a plot

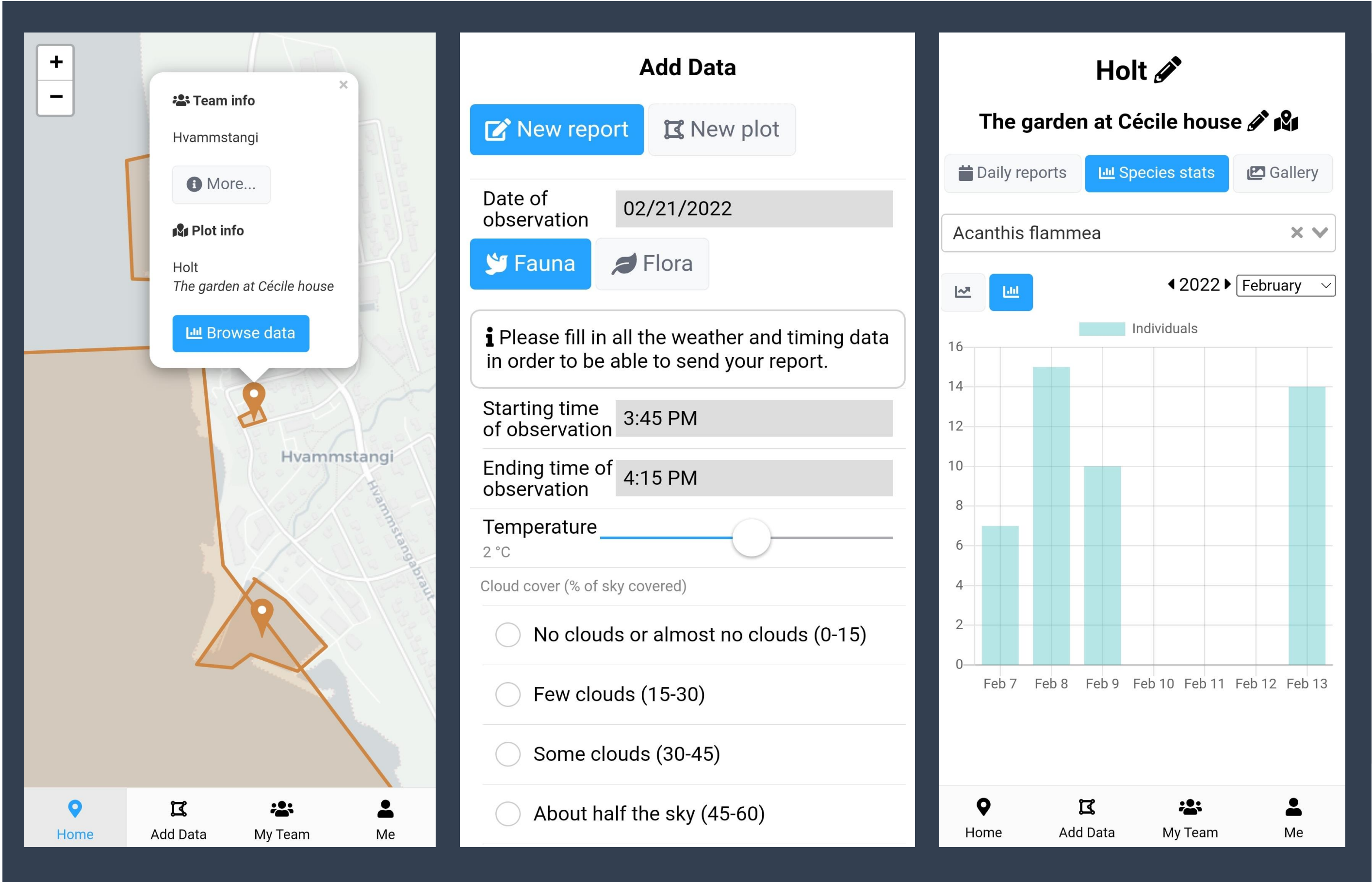
Any team member can create a monitoring plot, which can be used by anyone on the team.

• Adding a monitoring report

In a monitoring plot, team members can add an observation report with species, number of individuals, and environmental factors. They can also upload photos.

• Exploring results

Anyone on the app can view reports and species statistic for monitoring plots.



Future work

- **Collecting results** throughout 2023
- **Recruiting two students** in summer 2023 to work on **further development** of the app and using it for a **pilot tourism project** with seal watching visitors.
 - Starting **international monitoring projects**.
 - Securing **funding beyond 2023**.

Do you live in the Arctic or Subarctic and have an interest in community monitoring?

Contact us at cecile@nnv.is

Our website: www.arcticnature.org



References

- Broom, C. (2017). Exploring the Relations between Childhood Experiences in Nature and Young Adults' Environmental Attitudes and Behaviours. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ae.2017.1>
- Danielsen, F., Johnson, N., Lee, O., Fidel, M., Iversen, L., Poulsen, M. K., Eicken, H., Albin, A., Hansen, S. G., Pulsifer, P. L., Thorne, P., & Enghoff, M. (2020). *Community-Based Monitoring in the Arctic*. University Press of Colorado. <http://www.istor.org/stable/j.ctv21fqh1v>
- Granquist, S. M., and Aquino, J. F. (2022). Collecting scientific data through community science: The case of the Icelandic harbor seal (*Phoca vitulina*) population. The 2022 Arctic Circle Assembly, October 13-16, Reykjavik, Iceland.
- Hartig, T., Mitchell, R., De Vries, S., & Frumkin, H. (2014). Nature and health. *Annual Review of Public Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-032013-182443>