

**Title:** Zoom into Science

**Geographic Scope:** National

**Your Unit/Department/Group:** 4-H Youth

**Summary:** The Georgia 4-H Zoom into Science virtual science series offers 4-H youth the opportunity to connect with professionals in various natural science industries.

**Situation:** An integrated, cross-discipline approach to science education began in the 1990s with the National Science Foundation. Science Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) literacy “includes the conceptual understandings and procedural skills and abilities for individuals to address STEM-related personal, social, and global issues,” (Byhee, 2014). With economic competition truly becoming global and STEM-related careers continue to grow and expand, there is a need for young people to develop interest and skills in these areas, (Caprile, Palmen, Sanz, & Dente, 2015). Exposing young people to engaging STEM-related opportunities at younger ages teach valuable content and potentially increase youth interest and influence their career choices.

**Response:** Extension programming during the COVID-19 pandemic provides the opportunity for innovative and non-traditional delivery methods. As a response to provide educational STEM opportunities to youth during this time, the Georgia 4-H Zoom into Science webinar series allows youth to directly engage with natural science experts in their respective fields using a virtual platform. Not only do participants learn science content, but they are also exposed to a variety of STEM-related careers. Each one-hour session focuses on a particular science concept. Presenters share their real-world experiences often through photos and videos and allow youth to ask questions. Some presenters even featured live animals. All sessions are offered at no cost to families.

**Results/Impact:** Zoom into Science was consistently offered twice a month from September 2020 – May 2021. During the 2021 sessions, the webinar series has offered ten sessions engaging 698 families in real-time throughout the United States and Canada. Though the program was intended for Georgia 4-H families, successful social media promotion has quickly engaged 4-H youth at a larger geographic scale. Session topics have included astronomy, animal prosthesis, sea turtles, tortoises, poultry science, entomology civic science, and coastal erosion. Due to the programming being delivered virtually, presenters residing in Florida, Georgia, Texas, and Great Britain connected with the attendees. At the end of a session, an anonymous participant commented to a presenter, “I never understood the impacts of trash on marine life until now. This was very cool, especially since I don’t live near the ocean.” Another attendee commented, “ants are so fascinating!” One Georgia 4-H Agent shared, “I know it’s a lot of work to do organize these sessions, but they are so helpful for me and my programming.” An online viewing channel was created for asynchronous viewing opportunities.



# 2021 Impact Statement

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Program Function(s): Extension

Program Area(s): 4-H