

iNaturalist User Guide

iNaturalist is a resource where community members can submit wildlife photos in their area as well as help other users identify the species of their observations. This tool is used to track biodiversity in the community around you and used by scientists in their research! Below is a guide explaining how to create an account, how to submit an observation and how to identify other users submissions.

Note: participants under the age of 12, should have parents' permission and assistance to use iNaturalist. For users under 12, check out the Seek app (created by iNaturalist).

Create Account

You need to create an account to submit your observations, to do this go to <https://inaturalist.ca/>. In the top right corner, click "Sign Up" to create an account.

Once you've logged in, you will be brought to your **Home** tab. Under the *All Updates* tab is where you will see all general updates from the users you follow, and the topics you subscribe to, forum updates, etc. You can subscribe to topics through the icons pictured here located on the bottom right of the screen.



Subscribe to a Taxon



Subscribe to a Place

The *Your Content* tab is specific to your observations. The *Following* tab will show the observation updates to the users, species or locations you follow. The *Real Time Discussions* tab will show discussions happening about observations on iNaturalist – if you comment on a discussion you will automatically be subscribed.

Beside the **Home** tab, you will see the **Profile** tab is where you can edit account settings and personalize your profile.

The **Observations** tab is where you submit your observations (more below).

The **Projects** tab is where you can create or join projects you're interested in. You can create projects once you have greater than 50 observations.

Feel free to explore the other tabs as they will not be discussed here.

Submit an Observation

Once you've taken a photograph (or a few) of an organism or plant you would like to submit:

1. Click the **Observations** tab.

Observations

2. This will bring you to a page called Your Observations, click Add Observations.

3. To upload photos or sounds of your organism you can:

- Drag and drop a photo into this window
- Press the Choose files button and select the photos from your computer documents
- Press the Add button in the top left corner and select Photos or sounds, to select the photo(s) from your computer documents

After completing this, go to step 5.

4. To upload an observation without media (when you have no photo or sound), press the Add button in the top left corner and select Observation without media.

5. Now you need to edit your observation by inputting the details including:

- The Species name
 - If you uploaded a photo, click on Species name and suggestions for species will come up, select the option you know is the most accurate
 - If you have not uploaded a photo, no recommendations will come up. Only include the species name if you this with confidence, otherwise you can put a broader identifier such as Plant.
- The Date: select the date you observed or heard the organism or plant, not the day you are submitting the observation.
- Location: the location should be as precise as possible. When you click on Location, it will open a map to prompt you to identify the location
 - Use the search bar in the top left corner to search the location or input the latitude and longitude of the location (if you know this)
 - Use the accuracy feature to narrow or broaden the radius of the location
 - Use the Geoprivacy feature controls the privacy settings of the observation location – this is important to keep in mind if you're taking observations in your backyard:
 - Open: location is open to public
 - Obscure: does not show exact location, but reveals general area
 - Private: location is not available to the public
 - Description
 - Check box – Captive/Cultivated: check this box if the observation is a captive organism or from a cultivated source (i.e. a planted garden in your backyard or house plant)

6. Add any Tags with your submission that you feel are applicable. These tags are similar to hashtags and help with search ability.
7. Add the observation to any projects that you are a part of, you must be part of the project prior to submission for it to show.
8. Add Fields. Fields are additional data fields that can be added to your observations to help describe the observation. Through this option, you can request identification help if you do not know the Species of your observation. Do this by:
 - Searching “Need help to identify?” and select it
 - In drop down menu click Yes, then add it
9. Then click green Submit button in top left corner.

Help Identify Another Users Submission

Another part of iNaturalist is helping other users identify their observations. You should only be identifying if you feel confident in your species identification skills. Since this app is used for research and other applications, the accuracy of identification submissions is *important*.

To do so, follow these steps:

1. Go to the website Home Page, and select the Identify tab (see reference shown below).



2. This page will display observations that require help with identification, select the post you would like to identify.
3. Once you click on the photo, it will bring up the observation and you can:
 - Look at the previous suggestions from other users and agree with them by clicking the Agree button
 - Add a new identification by pressing Add ID (bottom left)
 - Leave a comment or question on the post by pressing the Comment (bottom right)



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Did you know?

In bird species that mate for life, the females and males will often look very similar in colouring (like the Canada Goose). This is because they don't need to compete to find a mate as much as other birds that do not mate for life! For example, male Mallards have vibrant colours relative to the female.

Share with us!

We would love to see photos of your research projects. Feel free to tag us or hashtag #GreenCalgary in your social media posts! Find us here:

