

# Getting Familiar with iNaturalist

How to Be a Part of the iNaturalist Community



# Getting Started With iNaturalist



# What Can I do with iNaturalist?

- Identify plants, animals and fungi
- Help other users with IDs
- Become a citizen scientist
- iNaturalist is available in both mobile and desktop versions



# Getting Started

- Download the iNaturalist mobile app and make an account
- Once your account is all set you can start making observations!

**Look for this icon!**



# Using the Mobile App

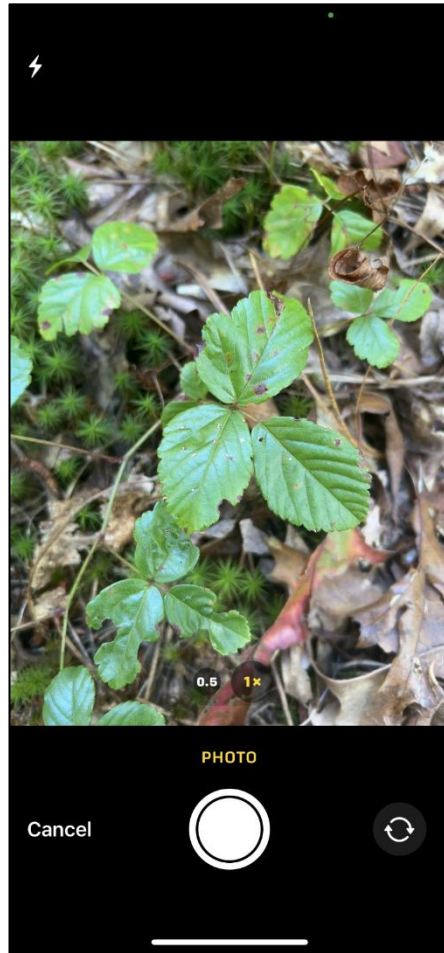


# How To Make an Observation?

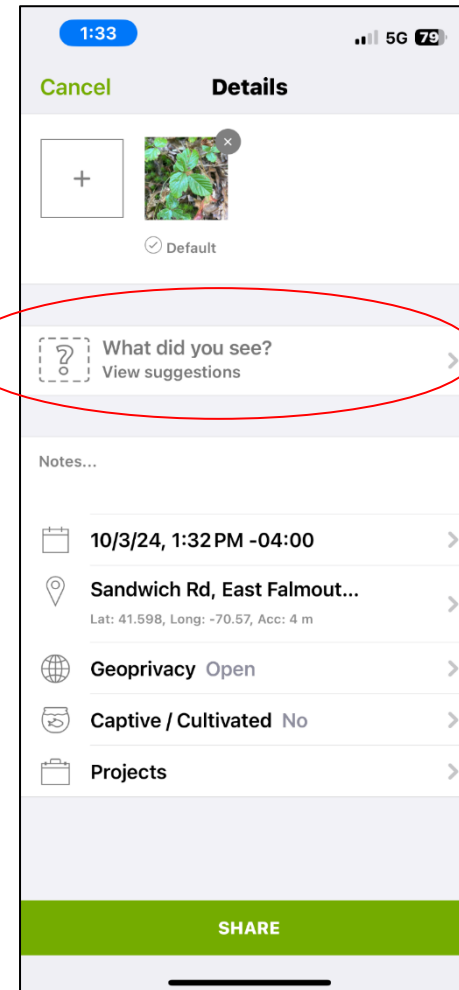


Observe

1. Open the mobile app and select the “Observe” icon

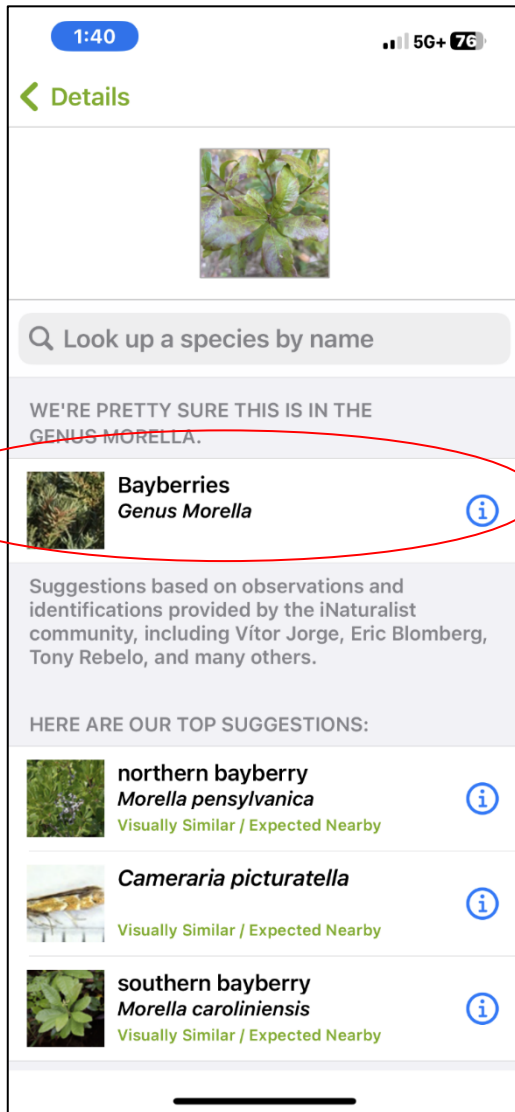


2. Take a picture of the organism you want to identify



3. View suggested IDs

# How to Make an Observation



4. See iNat's suggestions and make your best guess if you don't know. It is okay to choose a higher taxonomic level such as a genus or family

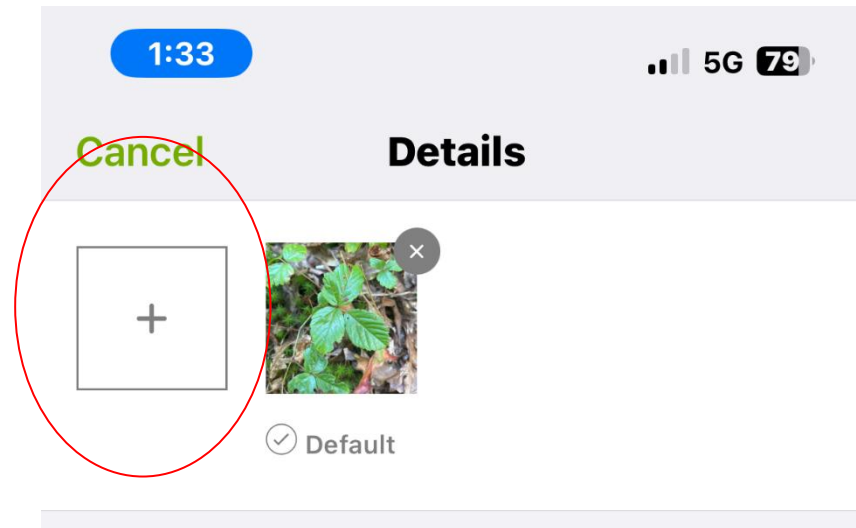
Don't worry about being 100% correct! Others in the iNat community can help you with ID later



5. Share the observation when you are ready. This makes it public and others can now suggest IDs

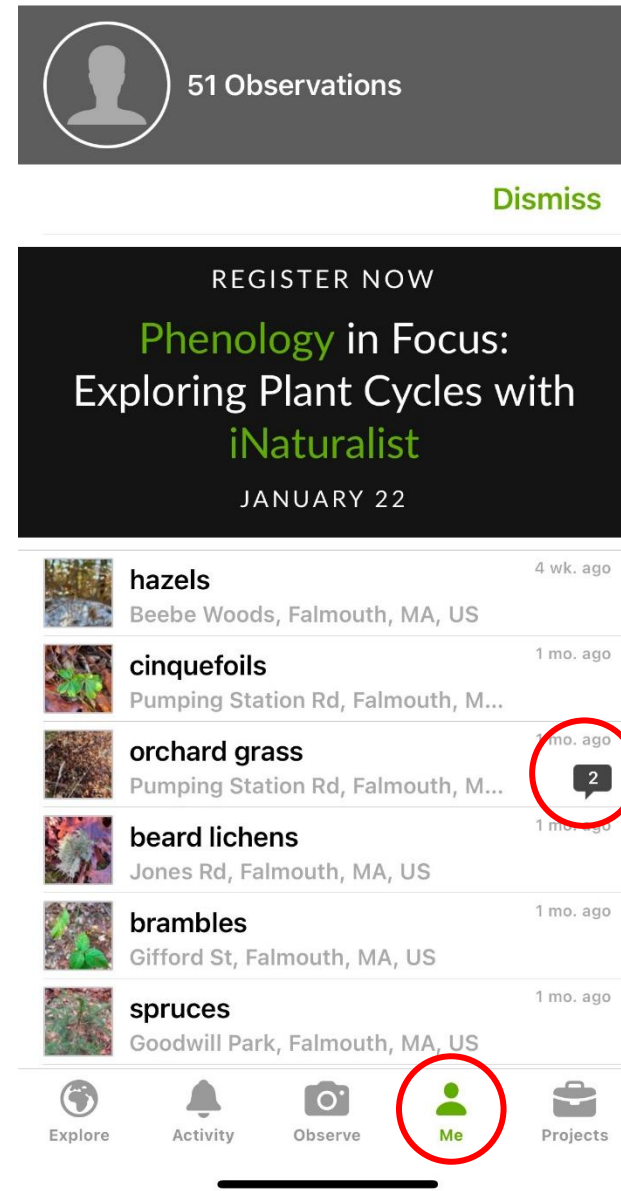
# Taking Multiple Photos for an Observation

- Under the “Details” page for the observation select the square with the “+” up at the top of the page
- Any other photos you have taken will also be here
- This should bring you to the camera to take another picture
- Add as many pictures as you think you will need to get an accurate ID



# Viewing Your Observations on the App

- Select the “Me” icon at the bottom of the screen to see a list of your observations
- You can go to this page to edit or delete any observations if needed
- The speech bubbles next to the observations indicate that someone recently added an ID or comment



# Tips for Taking Good Pictures

- You are more likely to get accurate ID suggestions if you take better photos
- Get close enough to show a good amount of detail
- Take multiple photos featuring different parts of the animal or plant
  - Ex. If you are trying to ID a plant, take pictures of the flowers, buds, and stems as well as the leaves
- Take clear photos (discard blurry photos)

# Photo Examples



Get close! Make sure your photo shows details of the essential parts of the organism such as leaves



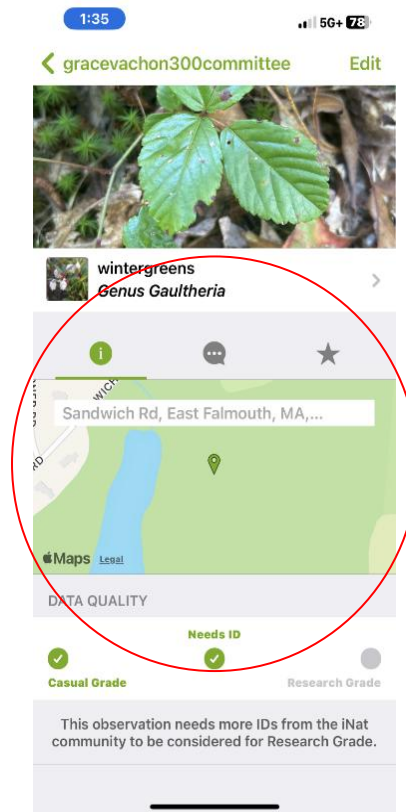
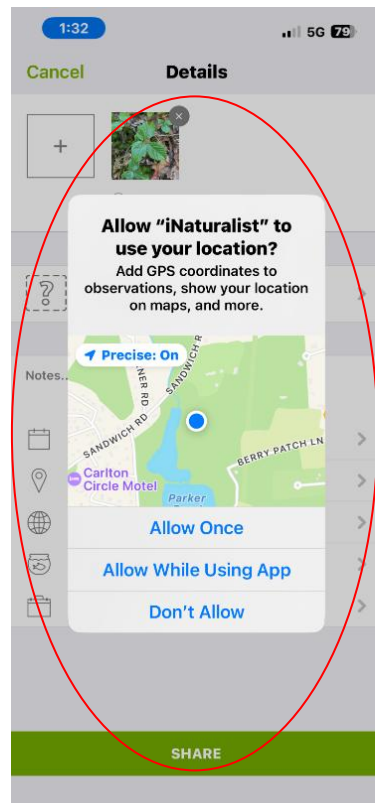
This is an example of a bad picture since it does not show a close up of the leaves, buds/flowers, or stems



Avoid blurry photos like this. Make sure the image is clear!

# Your Location on iNaturalist

- When you make an observation, iNaturalist will automatically show your location on the map
- If using the mobile app, you will need to allow iNaturalist to use your location

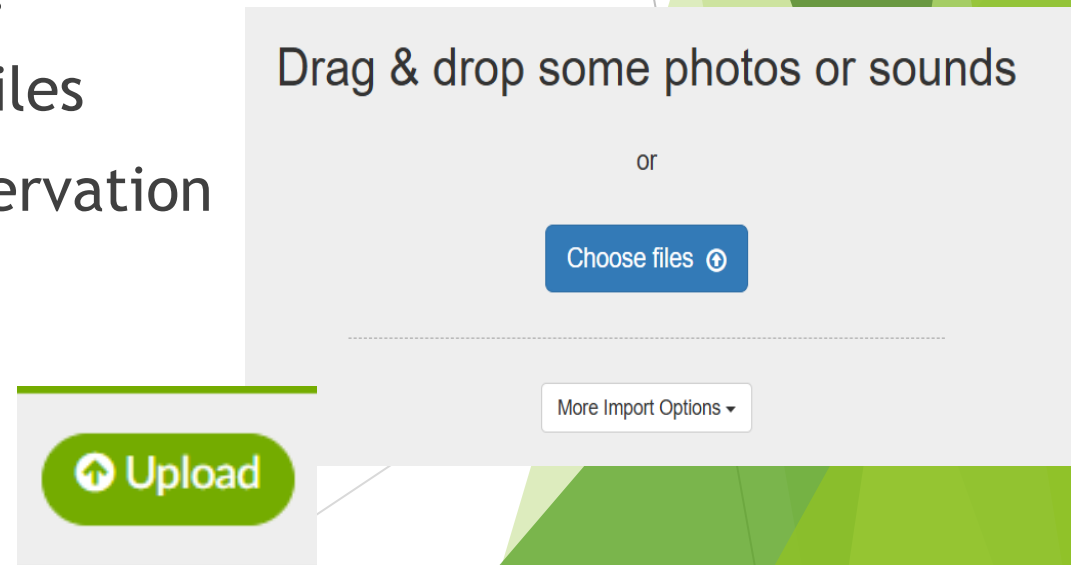


# Using iNaturalist Online



# Uploading to iNaturalist on Your Desktop

- Follow these steps to upload to iNaturalist on your desktop:
  - Upload the photos or sound files to your computer
  - Pull up iNaturalist on your desktop and log in
  - Select the “Upload” button at the top of the page
  - Either drag and drop the file(s) or select “Choose files”
  - Input the species name, date, and location.
  - Select “Add” to add any additional media files
  - Select the submit button to upload the observation
  - Go to “My Observations” to view, edit, and delete any observations



Add any additional media files or remove the observation

iNaturalist

gracevachon300committee

+ Add

✕ Remove

Combine

Duplicate

Select All

Submit 1 observation

Editing 1 observation:

Details



Japanese Knotweed



2024/09/09 3:04 PM



Falmouth, MA, USA

Notes

Location is public

Captive / Cultivated

Tags

Projects

Fields

Offset Time



Japanese Knotweed



2024/09/09 3:04 PM



Falmouth, MA, USA

Notes

Input species name

Select the date and time you made the observation

Search for and select the location where you made the observation

Submit your observation

# Uploading Sound Files to iNaturalist

- iNaturalist also allows you to upload sounds, such as bird song
- Follow the steps below to upload sound files to an iNaturalist observation:
  - Upload the sound file to your desktop as a wav, mp3, or m4a file
  - Go to iNaturalist on your desktop and select “Upload”
  - Upload the appropriate sound file like you would an image

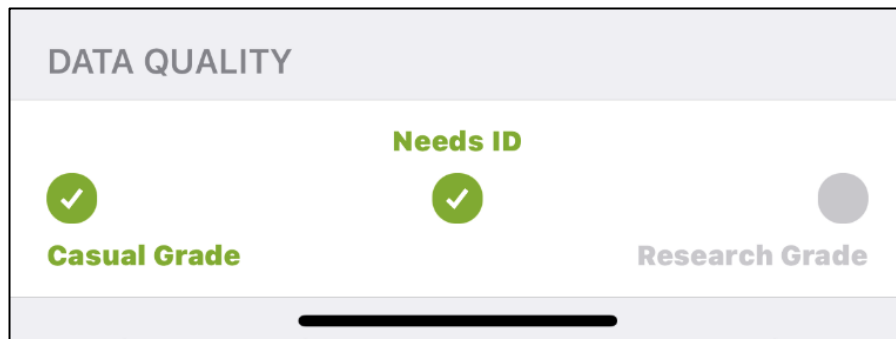


# Observation Quality






# Observation Quality

- *Verifiable* observations have a date, lat/long coordinates, attached media (sounds or photos), and are of wild organisms (not in captivity)
- Two categories of verifiable observations: *Needs ID* and *Research Grade*
- Research Grade observations are those at low taxonomic levels (family-species) that the majority of identifiers agree on
- All other verifiable observations are labeled as “Needs ID”



The below items are needed to achieve Research Grade:

-  Has ID supported by two or more
-  Community Taxon is precise
- - or -
-  The community must feel that the Community Taxon is the best it can be based on the evidence

# Observation Quality

- For the Biodiversity Ambassadors program, make sure that all of your observations are verifiable!
- Please do not upload an observation that . . . .
  - Does not show evidence of an organism (i.e. inanimate objects) or that does not show recent evidence (i.e. fossils)
  - Does not have attached media
  - Shows a captive or cultivated organism (i.e. pet dog)
  - Contains photos of different organisms
- Non-verifiable observations are labeled as “Casual”

# What is the Community Taxon?

- A community ID or taxon is one that at least 2/3rds of identifiers agree with
- All research grade observations must have a community taxon, meaning that they must also have at least 2 suggested IDs from different users

The screenshot displays the iNaturalist interface for a specific taxon, 'Intermediate Wood Fern' (*Dryopteris intermedia*). The left panel, titled 'Activity', shows a vertical timeline of user actions: 'gracevachon300committee' suggested an ID (ID Withdrawn, 2d), 'ccantley' suggested an ID (Improving, 2d), 'tammor' suggested an ID (2d), and 'gracevachon300committee' suggested an ID (1d). Each entry includes a user profile icon, a small image of the fern, and the taxon name. The right panel, titled 'Community Taxon', shows a progress bar for 'Cumulative IDs: 3 of 3' with a green bar reaching the 2/3rds mark. Below the bar are buttons for 'Agree', 'Compare', and 'About'. The 'Annotations' section includes a table with columns for 'Attribute', 'Value', 'Agree', and 'Disagree', with rows for 'Leaves' and 'Sex'. The 'Projects (2)' section lists '300 Committee Biodiversity Ambassadors (Test)' and 'December Challenge: Trees in Shallow Pond Woodlands'.

Activity

gracevachon300committee suggested an ID ID Withdrawn 2d

Wood Ferns  
Genus: *Dryopteris*

ccantley suggested an ID Improving 2d

Intermediate Wood Fern  
*Dryopteris intermedia*

tammor suggested an ID 2d

Intermediate Wood Fern  
*Dryopteris intermedia*

gracevachon300committee suggested an ID 1d

Intermediate Wood Fern  
*Dryopteris intermedia*

Comment Suggest an Identification

Community Taxon [What's this?](#)

Intermediate Wood Fern (*Dryopteris intermedia*)  
Cumulative IDs: 3 of 3

0 2/3rds 3

Agree Compare About

Annotations

Attribute	Value	Agree	Disagree
Leaves	Select ▾		
Sex	Select ▾		

Projects (2)

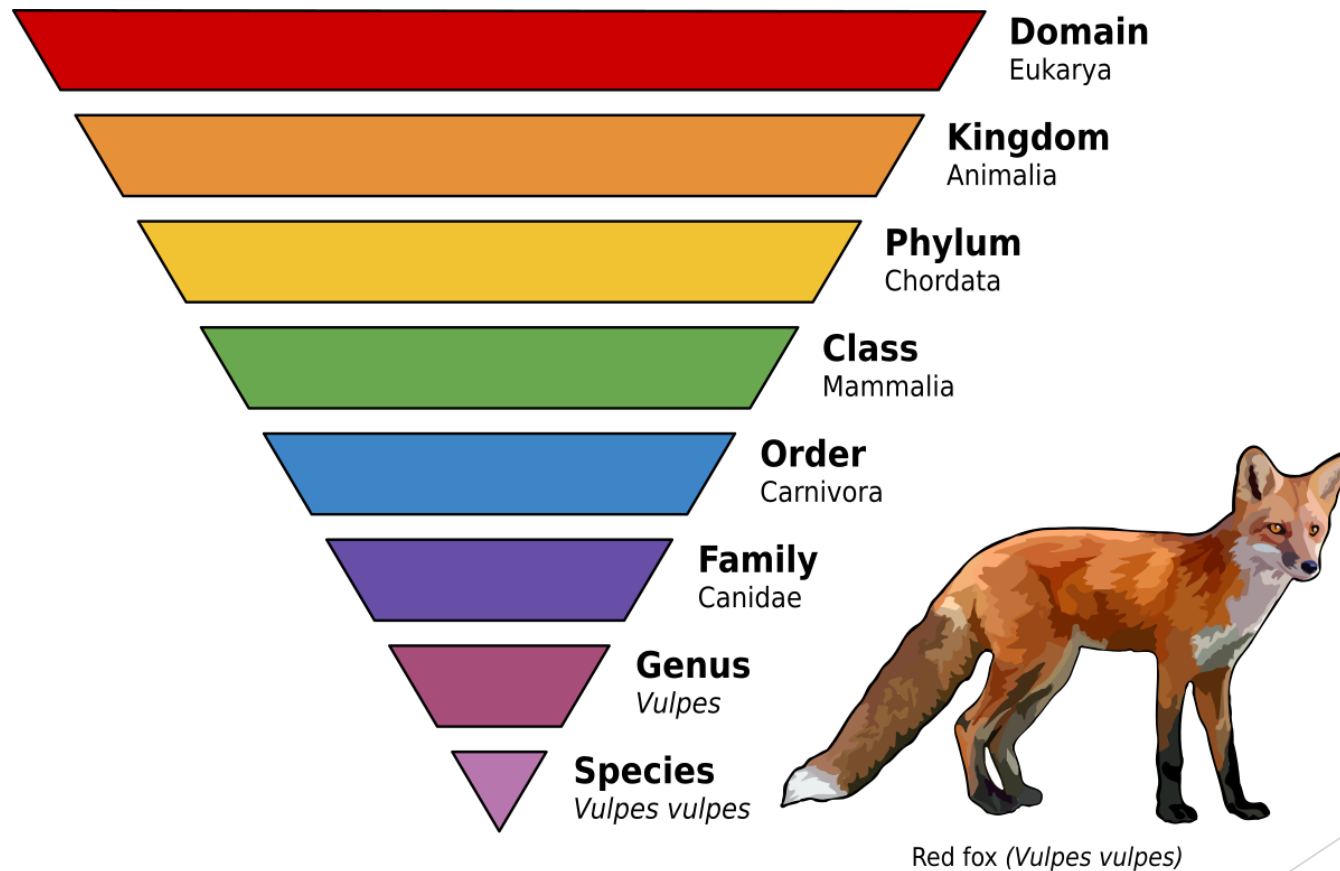
Add to a Project

300 Committee Biodiversity Ambassadors (Test)

December Challenge: Trees in Shallow Pond Woodlands

# Taxonomic Levels

- Every organism can be classified into each of the 7 levels shown below
- On iNaturalist, lower taxonomic levels mean better data quality



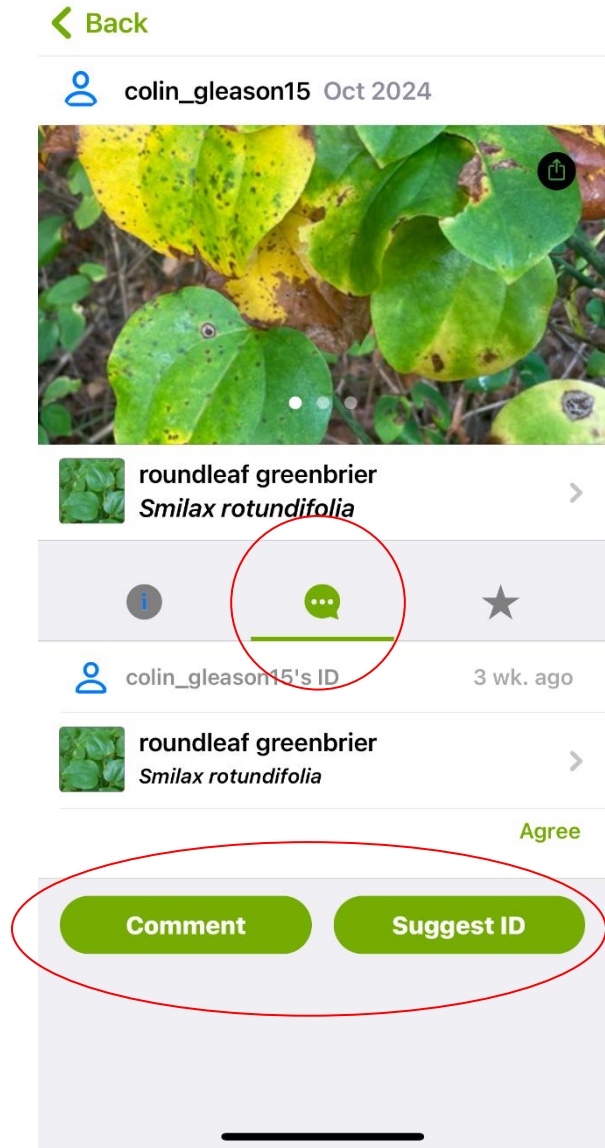
# Helping Other iNaturalist Users



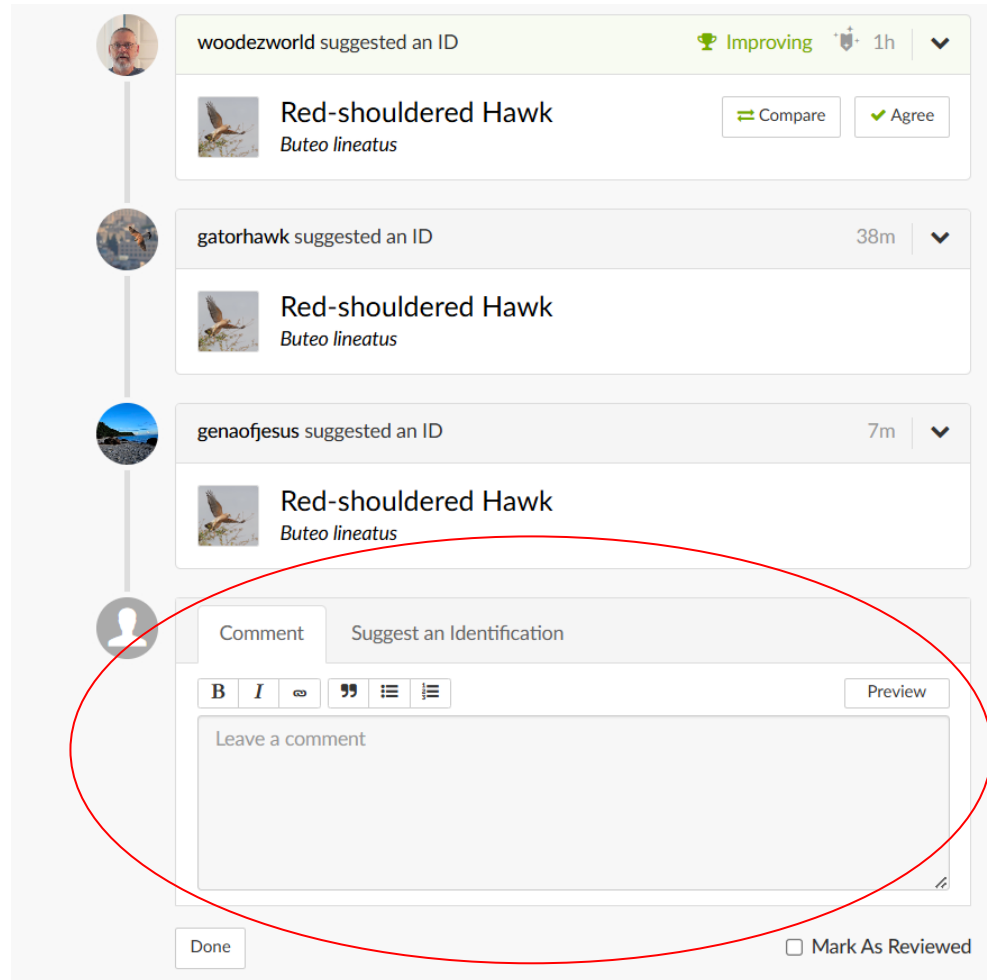
# How to Suggest IDs

- You can suggest IDs in the mobile app or on the desktop
- On the mobile app, select the observation then the speech bubble icon. You can suggest an ID or write a comment.
- On the desktop, type a suggested ID or comment into the correct box and select “done”
- You can also agree with current IDs by selecting “Agree”
- Only suggest an ID if you are confident in it
- It is okay to ID to a higher taxonomic level if you are not sure of the species
- Please keep all comments helpful and respectful!

# Mobile App:



# Desktop:



# The Explore Page and Projects



# iNaturalist Explore Page

- Use the explore page to view observations taken all over the world
- Also view species, identifiers, and users

Search for a particular species/location or add filters

Observations



Species

Location

Go

Filters

The World

220,675,170  
OBSERVATIONS

498,718  
SPECIES



399,048  
IDENTIFIERS



3,451,828  
OBSERVERS



Map

Grid

List

Layers

Places of Interest

Redo search in map



Choose a different format for displaying information

Switch to viewing species

Sliders

(Genus *Trachemys*)

Brazos County, TX, ... • Today

1 1h

Punctate Flower Chafer

(*Neorrhina punctatum*)

Linden NSW 2778, A... • Today

1 1h

Loggerhead Shrike

(*Lanius ludovicianus*)

Oviedo, FL 32765, ... • Today

2 1h

African Baobab

(*Adansonia digitata*)

Curado, Recife - S... • Today

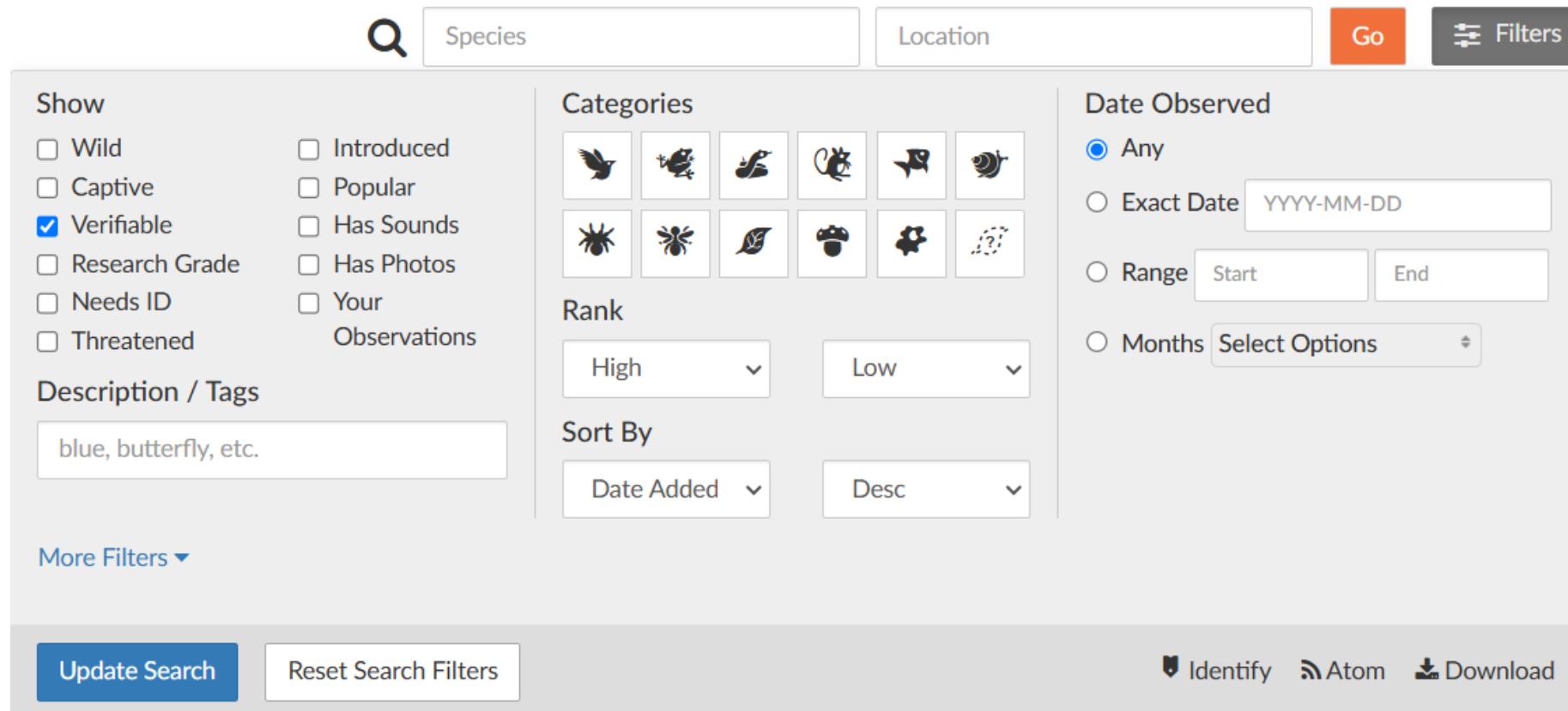
1 1h

*Cenococcum geophilum*

Prince Edward Isla • Nov. 3, 2024

# Using Filters

- Use filters to view observations with specific parameters
- You can filter by taxonomy (i.e. birds, fish), type of observation, date observation, and location
- Select “Update Search” to apply your filters



The screenshot shows a search interface with the following components:

- Search Bar:** A search icon followed by two input fields labeled "Species" and "Location", an orange "Go" button, and a grey "Filters" button with a filter icon.
- Show:** A list of checkboxes for observation types: Wild, Captive, Verifiable (checked), Research Grade, Needs ID, Threatened, Introduced, Popular, Has Sounds, Has Photos, and Your Observations.
- Description / Tags:** A text input field containing "blue, butterfly, etc."
- More Filters:** A dropdown arrow.
- Categories:** A grid of 12 icons representing different taxonomic groups: birds, insects, plants, and other organisms.
- Rank:** Two dropdown menus labeled "High" and "Low".
- Sort By:** Two dropdown menus labeled "Date Added" and "Desc".
- Date Observed:** Radio buttons for "Any" (selected), "Exact Date" (with a YYYY-MM-DD input field), "Range" (with Start and End input fields), and "Months" (with a "Select Options" dropdown).
- Buttons:** A blue "Update Search" button and a white "Reset Search Filters" button.
- Footer:** Icons for "Identify", "Atom", and "Download".

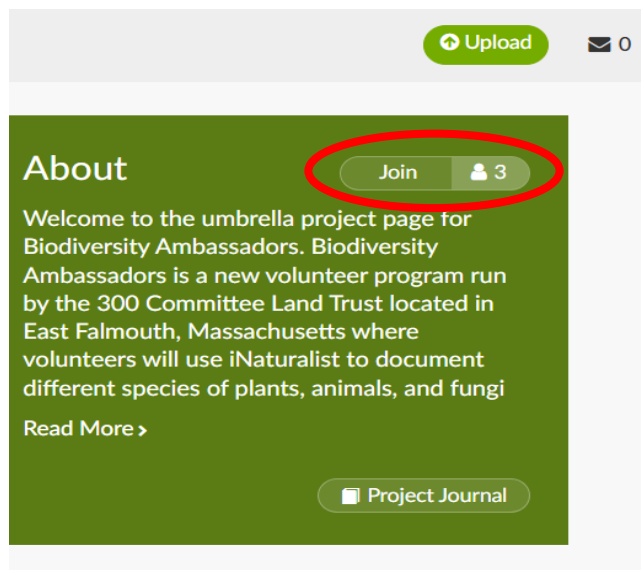
# iNaturalist Projects

- On iNaturalist, A project is a way to collate and group a set of observations
- 3 Types of Projects on iNaturalist: Collection, Traditional, Umbrella
  - **Collection:** Observations are automatically uploaded if they meet a certain set of requirements
  - **Traditional:** Observations have to be manually added
  - **Umbrella:** Groups a series of related projects together under a single project page

# Finding and Joining Projects

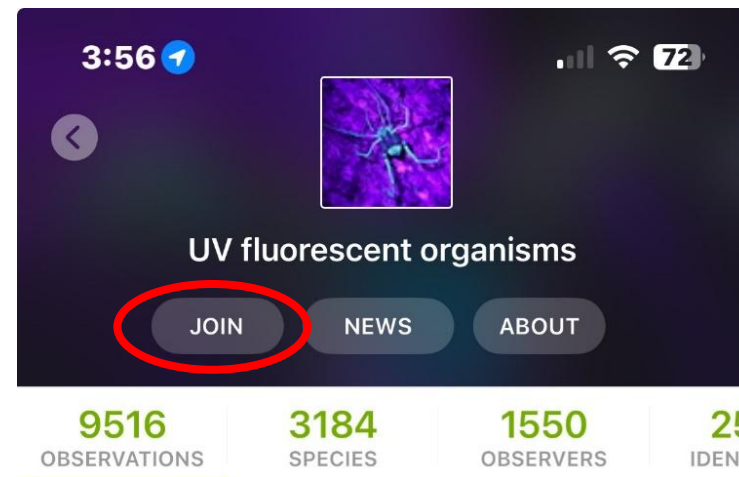
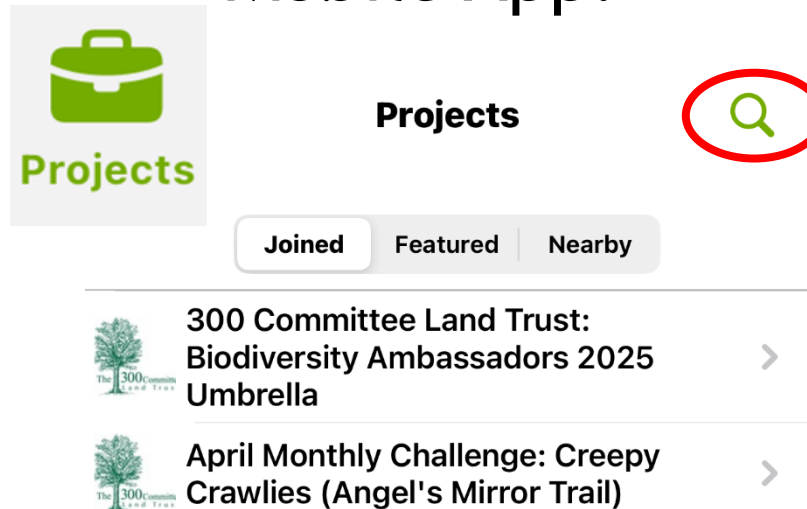
- Accessing Projects on the Webpage:
  - On the website, go to “Projects” under the “Community” tab
  - Search for the project in the lower search bar and select the correct project from the search results
  - Select “Join” at the top of the project page to become a member
- Accessing Projects on the Mobile App:
  - Select the “Projects” icon at the bottom of the screen and search for the project in the search bar. Any project that you are already a member of should show up in a list
  - Select “Join” to become a member.

# Desktop:



Search for project name in the search bar and then click "Join" on the project page

# Mobile App:



Select "Projects" at the bottom of the screen then search for the project. Click "Join" on the project page

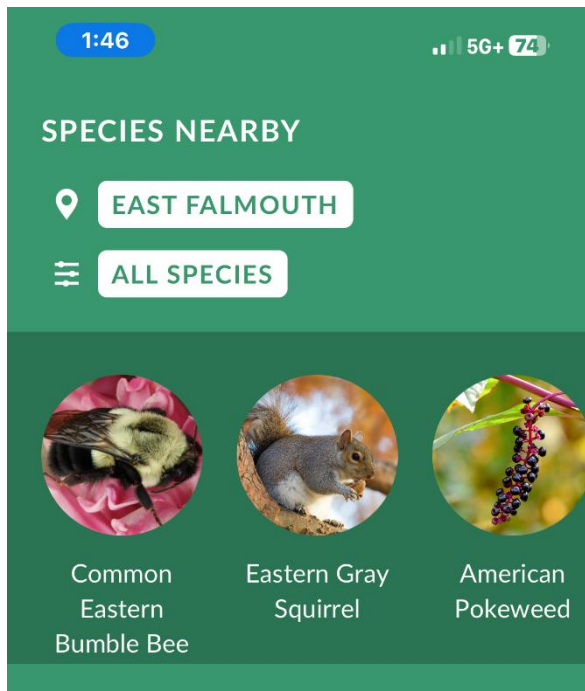
# An iNaturalist Alternative: The Seek App



# Using the Seek App



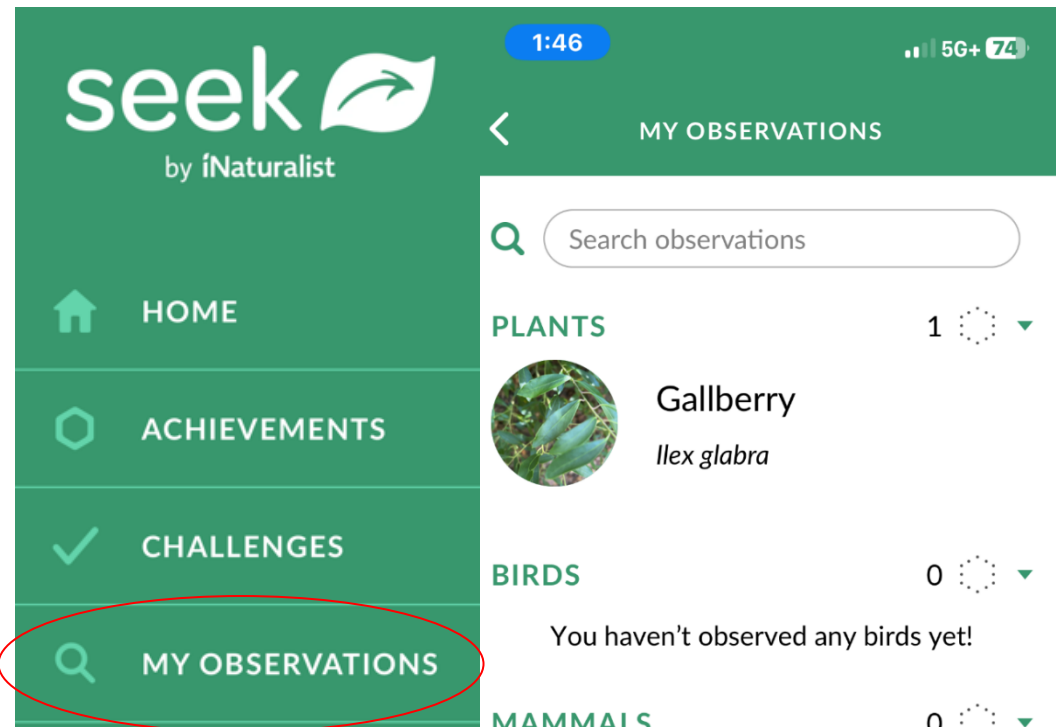
- Seek is an app created by iNaturalist for plant/animal ID
- No social media component - no suggesting IDs, comments
- Better for younger users (Must be 13+ to make an iNat account!)
- Data will not be used for research
- No internet connection required for use
- Activate the camera and hover over the object you want to ID
- An AI-generated ID will appear on the screen
- Take a picture when the organisms is identified to species or when the ID is as good as it can be
- Visit [this](#) page for more info about Seek vs. iNat



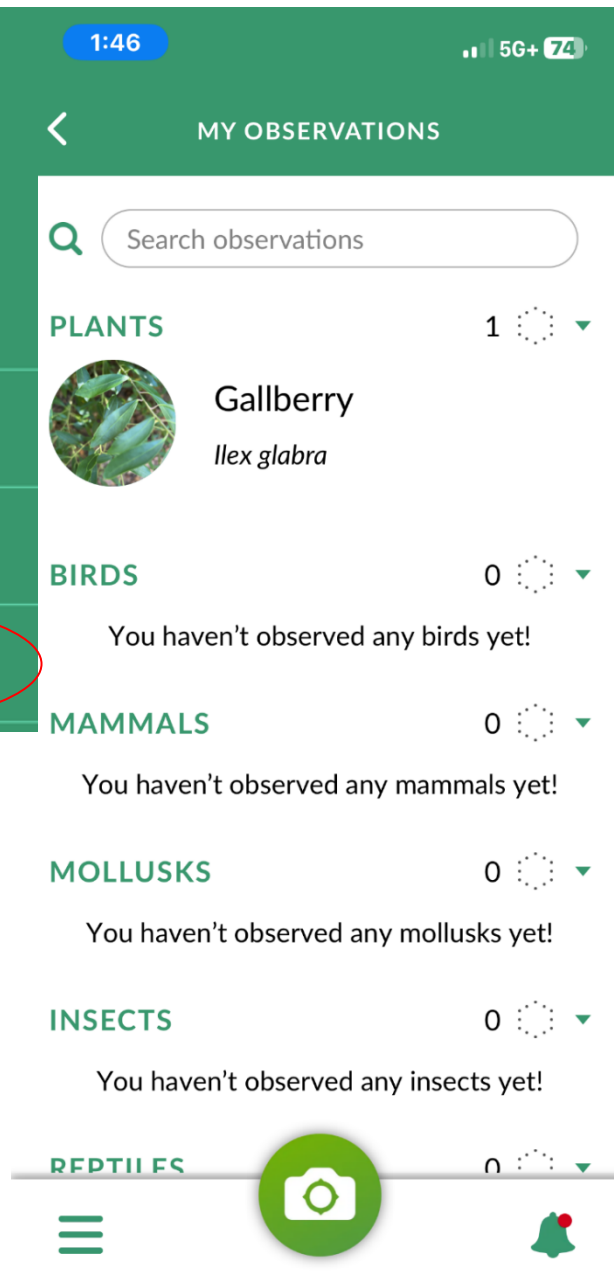
### CHALLENGES



Select the camera icon to see IDs and take pictures



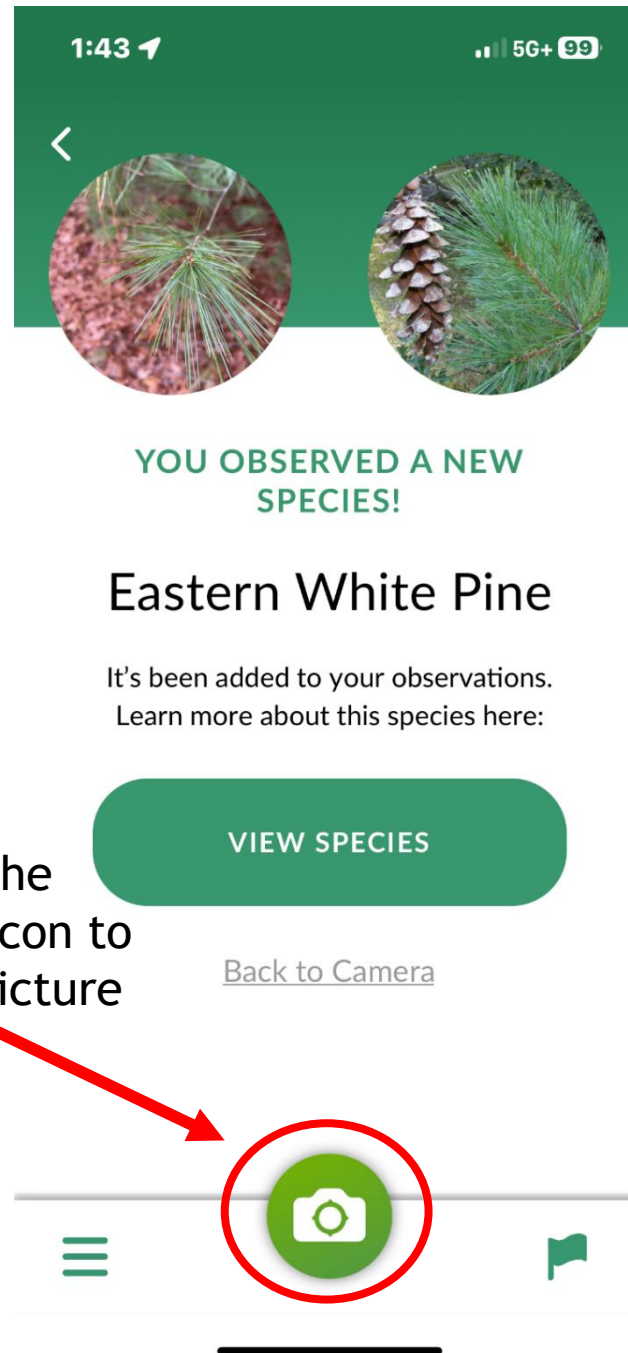
Select "My Observations" from the side menu to view your images and IDs





Dots tell you what taxonomic level the organism is identified to. Try to get ID to species level

Use the camera icon to take a picture

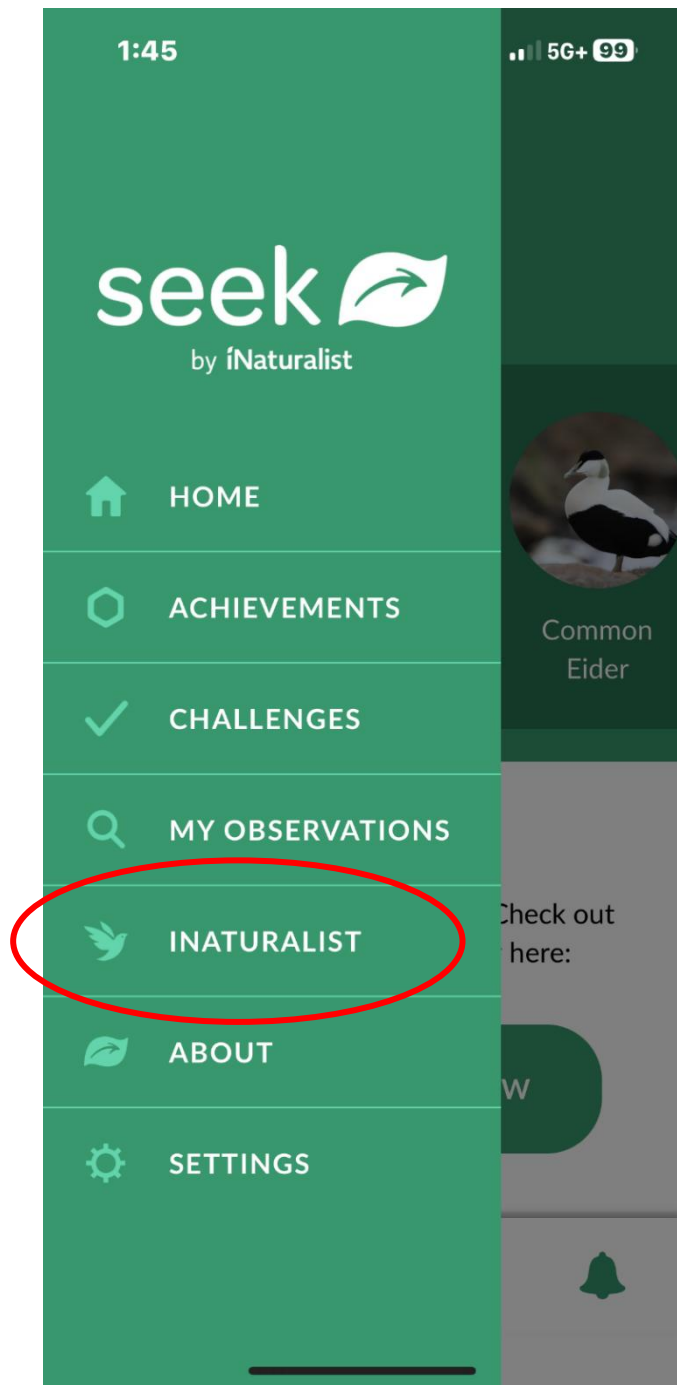


After you take the picture, select "View Species" to learn more about the species that you just observed.

# How to Upload Images from Seek to iNat

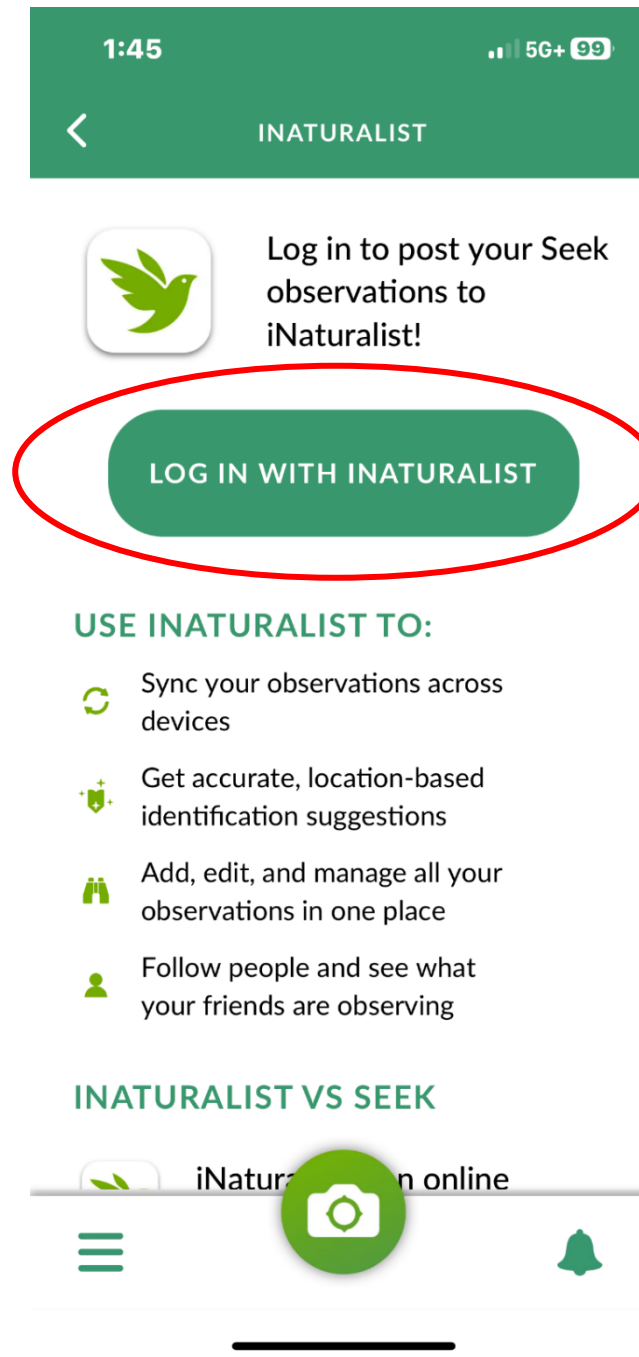
- Log into Seek with your iNaturalist account
- Take a picture of an object you want to ID
- Select the “Post to iNaturalist” button on the Identification screen
- Before posting, please make sure that . . .
  - The date and location of the observation are provided and correct
  - The ID is the one that you are most confident in
  - You can choose another ID other than the one provided by Seek if you would like





Select  
“iNaturalist”  
from the side  
menu, then  
select “Log in  
with iNaturalist”

Enter your  
iNaturalist  
account details



# What If Seek Cannot Identify the Organism?

- Take a picture of the lowest taxonomic level that it can be identified to (i.e. genus or family), then post to iNaturalist so others can help with a more specific ID
- Here are some tips for getting an accurate ID . . .
  - Minimize the background and try your best to focus the organism
  - Get close!
  - Focus on different parts of the organism, not just one (i.e. not just leaves but stems, flowers, buds, etc.)

# What is Biodiversity Ambassadors?



# About Biodiversity Ambassadors

- A citizen science project where participants use iNaturalist to catalog biodiversity on Falmouth's conservation lands
- iNaturalist projects created for 15+ conservation areas in Falmouth with public access and organized under a single landing page
- Collects photographic observations of animals, plants, and fungi in perpetuity
- Get involved by visiting any of those conservation areas and making observations
- More info available on T3C's website



# What If I Still Have Questions About iNaturalist or Seek?

- iNaturalist has a great help page which can you access [here](#)
- Here are some helpful articles and videos to get you started:
  - How to Sign up for an iNaturalist Account:  
<https://help.inaturalist.org/en/support/solutions/articles/151000195690-how-to-sign-up-for-an-inaturalist-account>
  - How to Make an Observation:  
<https://help.inaturalist.org/en/support/solutions/articles/151000192921-how-to-make-an-observation>
  - How to use the Identify Page:  
<https://help.inaturalist.org/en/support/solutions/articles/151000171681-how-to-use-the-identify-page>
  - How to Take Identifiable Photos (video):  
<https://help.inaturalist.org/en/support/solutions/articles/151000170787-how-to-take-identifiable-photos-video-tutorial>