

iNaturalist Community Science Volunteer Guide

Thank you for joining CuriOdyssey as we support conservation and biodiversity research through iNaturalist. Community science projects such as this rely on the involvement of large numbers of participants--we truly appreciate your volunteer time and effort. It is our goal to make volunteering more accessible by offering this project which can be completed at a location, time and duration of your choice. Also, environmental sustainability and conservation are core values at CuriOdyssey. By participating in this project and reporting your volunteer hours form, you will be helping us measure the impact of our conservation projects.

Participating in this community science project involves two steps:

1. Using iNaturalist to photographically record nature sightings
2. Completing the CuriOdyssey Volunteer Hours Form to log the time you spend on this project each month

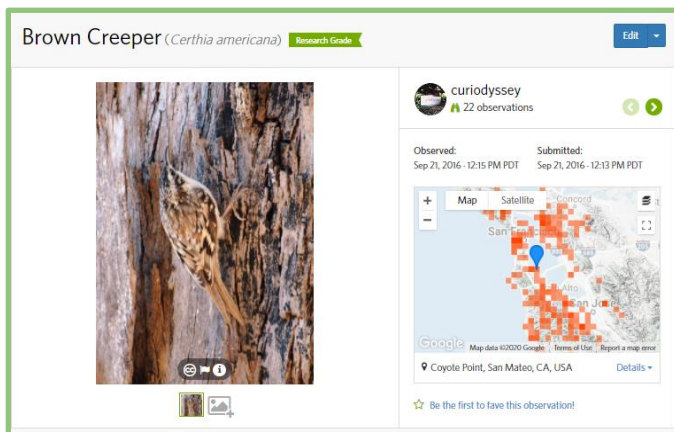
What is community science?

Community science refers to the participation of non-scientists in the collection of data which scientists can then use to understand communities (animals, human), ecosystems and more. Community science harnesses the power of community involvement and makes science more accessible to the general public.

What is iNaturalist, and how is it related to community science?

iNaturalist is a platform accessible through its website or mobile app where users make observations of wild plants, animals and fungus all over the world. The data collected by iNaturalist users can then be used by scientists and researchers to study biodiversity.

What is an observation in iNaturalist?



An observation is a sighting of an organism and includes:

- Location of sighting (we recommend using the 'obscured' location setting on the app)
- Time and date
- Identification of organism, if you know
- A photo or recording as evidence

Note: You do not need to concentrate on finding the most unusual or interesting subjects. Banana slugs and potato bugs are both valuable measures of biodiversity, as are

moths, mushrooms, dandelions, pigeons, deer and even common ground squirrels. We are looking for whatever you observe in your home or backyard, or on your walks. Once you post your picture, the iNaturalist program will suggest possible IDs and include links to more information about the organism.

Tips for taking the best quality photos

- Take multiple photos, if possible
- Try different angles
- Ensure the focus is on the right subject
- Be aware of lighting and avoid shadows. Full sun is best, with the sun at your back. Full shade can also work, if not too dark.
- Avoid overusing the zoom function. The photo will be sharper if you don't zoom and then crop the photo later.

What is crowdsource identification?

Users collaborate to identify other user's observations. You can learn more about your observations through identification by experts. Try finding observations in your area by going to the map in the "explore" tab.



Why does your contribution to iNaturalist matter?

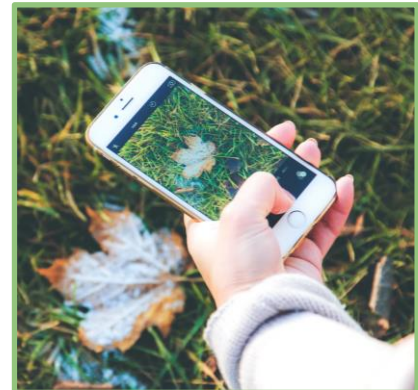
Using iNaturalist gives you a chance to collaborate with scientists and other naturalists to learn about biodiversity. Your contribution to iNaturalist can also be used as data for researchers, so every observation counts.

Still need help navigating iNaturalist? Here are some suggested videos:

- [How to observe using the iNat app](#)
- [How to observe from a computer](#)
- [How to take identifiable photos](#)

More information on navigating iNaturalist:

- [iNaturalist's Getting Started Guide](#)



Once you are familiar with using the iNaturalist app, you can use your volunteer time for CuriOdyssey to safely explore and make observations. Keep track of the amount of time that you spend and the number of observations you make.

You can make observations by going on a hike or walk in your local park or neighborhood, by exploring your own backyard, or even by looking into corners in your home where you might find insects. One of the benefits of using iNaturalist to participate in community science is that you can make observations anywhere. Also, San Mateo County has many beautiful parks where you can find countless species to photograph: [San Mateo County Parks](#) (Check park website for hours and possible entrance fees.)

Logging Your Hours

When you are finish volunteering on iNaturalist for CuriOdyssey each month, simply fill out the form to log your hours here: [Volunteer Form](#) Then start another month of observations!