

Be a Citizen Scientist

Our goal

We are creating a citizen scientist database of all kinds of life – from lichens to ants, mushrooms to plants, birds to mammals, and everything in between for The Nature Conservancy's preserves in Pennsylvania and Delaware.



The Nature Conservancy's roots began with local citizens and scientists concerned about special places and species. That legacy continues today. Across our lands, we are utilizing iNaturalist – a website and App for your mobile device that gives citizen scientists an opportunity to share and discuss their findings with other citizen scientists. The information captured on iNaturalist also provides our staff with the latest information and trends of what species, the good and the bad, native as well as invasive, are found on our lands across the state and then also dictates specific management and monitoring needs for these special places.



This project relies on iNaturalist.org, an easy to use citizen science app designed for you to record your observations of the natural world via a website or mobile device. Observations are often recorded as pictures of an organism but also can be audio clips or just pictures of evidence of an organism such as tracks. Your observations become a permanent record of biodiversity for you and researchers, as well as The Nature Conservancy staff.

Step 1: Sign up

You'll first need to sign up for a free iNaturalist account. You can do this from the web page www.iNaturalist.org or by installing the free iNaturalist mobile app from the Apple App store for iOS, or from Google Play for Android.

Click on "sign up" and enter a username, email, and password. For the website, you'll also need to select your time zone. You can select if you want your uploaded pictures and audio files to have a Creative Commons license allowing others to freely use them non-commercially.

Please make sure your observations get associated with this preserve by joining the project after signing up for iNaturalist. From a

mobile device select More and then Projects and search for the name of this preserve and select Join. From the website, click on Community and select Projects and search for the name of this preserve. This will direct you to the homepage of the project. In the upper right click "Join this project".

Step 2: Recording observations

Observations can be recorded directly from your mobile device into the app or from pictures saved to a computer and then uploaded to the website. The app or website will direct you through this process but as you record your observations, please remember to make sure the observation is associated with the preserve project by selecting Projects on the page for entering your observation and select the project. You'll be prompted to enter in the name of the preserve before your observation is uploaded. This is an important step to make the project useful for capturing that data for our monitoring and management needs.

Your observations are most useful if they have a time and place recorded with them. Often iNaturalist can determine the date automatically from your image. Mobile devices can usually automatically provide a location and for other images you can easily add a location with the app or website.

You do not need to know the name or your observed organism to record your observation. The community using iNaturalist can help with identification.

Your mobile device does not need to be online when your observations are recorded. They will be automatically synced once the device is online.

The screenshot shows the iNaturalist mobile app interface. At the top, a status bar indicates 'Unknown' and 'Needs ID'. Below this is a large photo of a green plant. To the right of the photo is a map showing the location of the observation. Below the map is a section for 'Community Taxon' with a message: 'The Community ID requires at least two identifications.' Below this is a section for 'Annotations' with a table for 'Attribute', 'Value', 'Agree', and 'Disagree'. Below the table is a section for 'Projects (1)' with a list of projects, including 'Cove Mountain Preserve'. Annotations are provided for various parts of the interface:

- Unknown**: Points to the status bar at the top.
- Needs ID**: Points to the status bar at the top.
- One organism per observation but you can include multiple photos.**: Points to the photo of the plant.
- Pictures showing any unique characteristics will help with identification.**: Points to the photo of the plant.
- Don't upload photos taken by other people and never include pictures of people, especially showing faces.**: Points to the photo of the plant.
- You don't have to know the name of the species, the iNaturalist community has identifiers that will verify the correct name for you.**: Points to the photo of the plant.
- Adding a few details to the observation might help with identification.**: Points to the 'Comment' and 'Suggest an Identification' section.
- If you don't know the name of the organism, put down the general category (i.e. "insects", "plants")**: Points to the 'Comment' and 'Suggest an Identification' section.
- Please remember to select the appropriate Preserve Project from the list of projects you have joined or by selecting the correct name.**: Points to the 'Projects (1)' section.

Questions, comments, more information?

Information, including tutorials, and other resources for iNaturalist are at <https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/getting+started>.

Please contact Molly Anderson at molly_anderson@tnc.org with any questions.