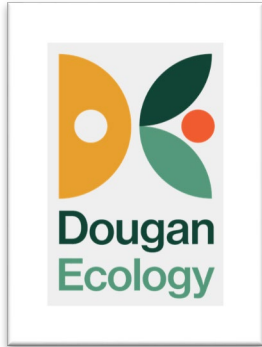


# iNaturalist Projects for Mini Forest Biodiversity Monitoring



Network  
of Nature™

Green  
Communities  
CANADA

mini  
forests

## **iNaturalist Basics:**

iNaturalist is an online social network of people sharing biodiversity information to help each other learn about nature. It functions as a free app and website ([iNaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org)) that allows users to record and identify plants, animals, and fungi using photo-based observations.

**Vision:** iNaturalist's vision is a world where everyone can understand and sustain biodiversity through the practice of observing wild organisms and sharing information about them.

**Mission:** iNaturalist's mission is to connect people to nature and advance biodiversity science and conservation.

## **How to use:**

To use it, take clear photos of an organism, upload them to the app, use the AI suggestion tool to identify it, add location/date, and share to build a public, scientific record.

## **Key Steps to Use iNaturalist:**

- **Create an Account:** Download the app (iOS/Android) or sign up on the [iNaturalist website](https://www.inaturalist.org).
- **Make an Observation:**
  - Tap the "+" (**Observe**) button in the app.

- Take a new photo/sound or upload from your gallery (multiple angles of a subject are best).
- **Identify the Species:**
  - Tap "**What did you see?**" to get AI-powered suggestions.
  - Select the best match or enter a general name (e.g., "Plants") if uncertain.
- **Add Data:**
  - Ensure date, time, and location are added (usually automatic).
  - Set **Geoprivacy** to "Open," "Obscured" (general area), or "Private".
  - Mark if the organism is captive/cultivated.
- **Share:** Click the checkmark or "**Share**" to upload your observation to the community.
- **Community Validation:** Other users will help confirm or refine your identification, allowing it to reach "Research Grade".


Web version:


# iNaturalist


+ Add ▾ × Remove ⚡ Combine Duplicate Select All

Editing 1 observation:

**Details** ▾

 White Admiral ⓧ

 2025/08/05 11:19 AM

 Huntsville, ON P0B, Canada

Notes

Location is public ▾


Captive / Cultivated


**Tags** ▾


**Projects** ▾


**Fields** ▾

**Offset Time** ▾

 1/3

 White Admiral ⓧ



 2025/08/05 11:19 AM

 Huntsville, ON P0B, Canada

Notes


Phone version:

9:31 📶 🔋 21


 **ilesmatt1984** 

57 OBSERVATIONS      55 SPECIES


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Genus *Cyathus*




Isabella Tiger Moth




Goldenrod Crab Spider








Ring-necked Pheasant 2



2






Boreal Owl


Menu    Explore    Me    Activity

11:25 📶 🔋 42



 **ADD AN ID** 




**TOP ID SUGGESTION**





Ungulates, Carnivorans,  
and Allies  
Superorder Laurasiatheria  
81.7%


 

**OTHER SUGGESTIONS**






American Mink  
*Neogale vison*  
13.5%






Loutre de Rivière  
*Lontra canadensis*  
10.9%










Fisher  
*Pekania pennanti*  
10.8%

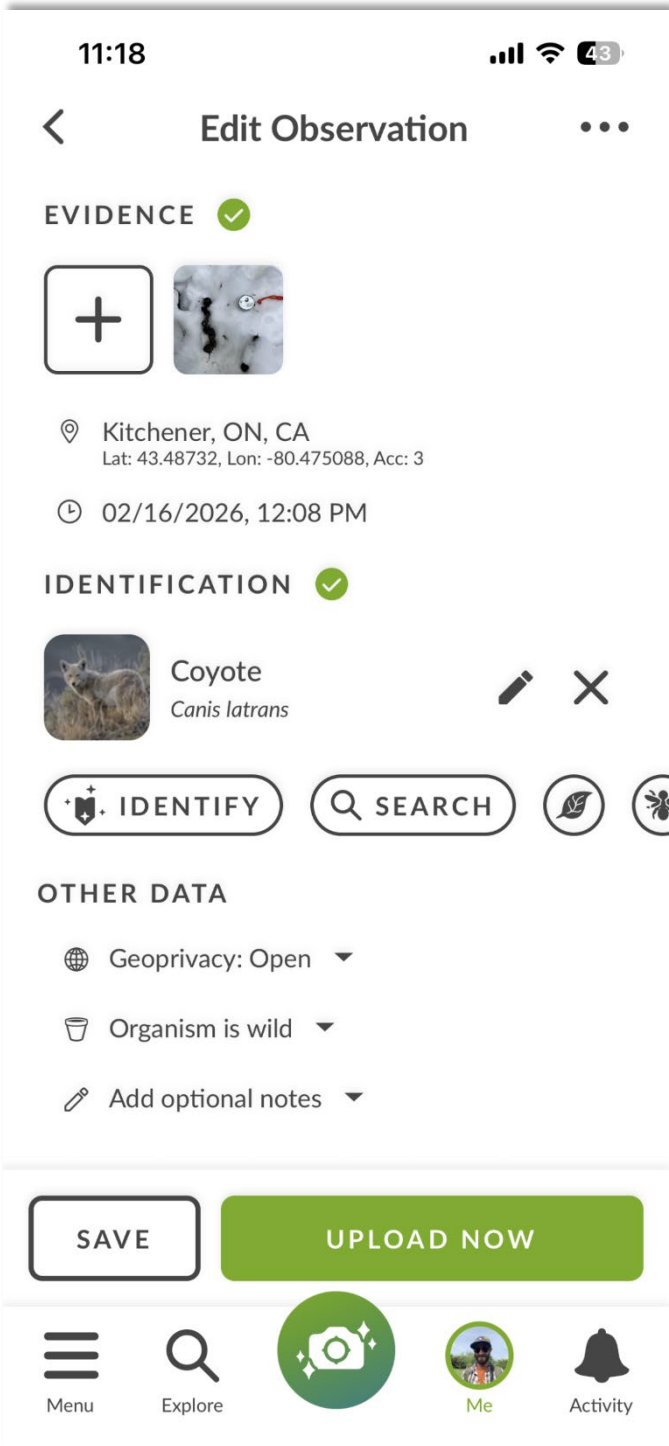
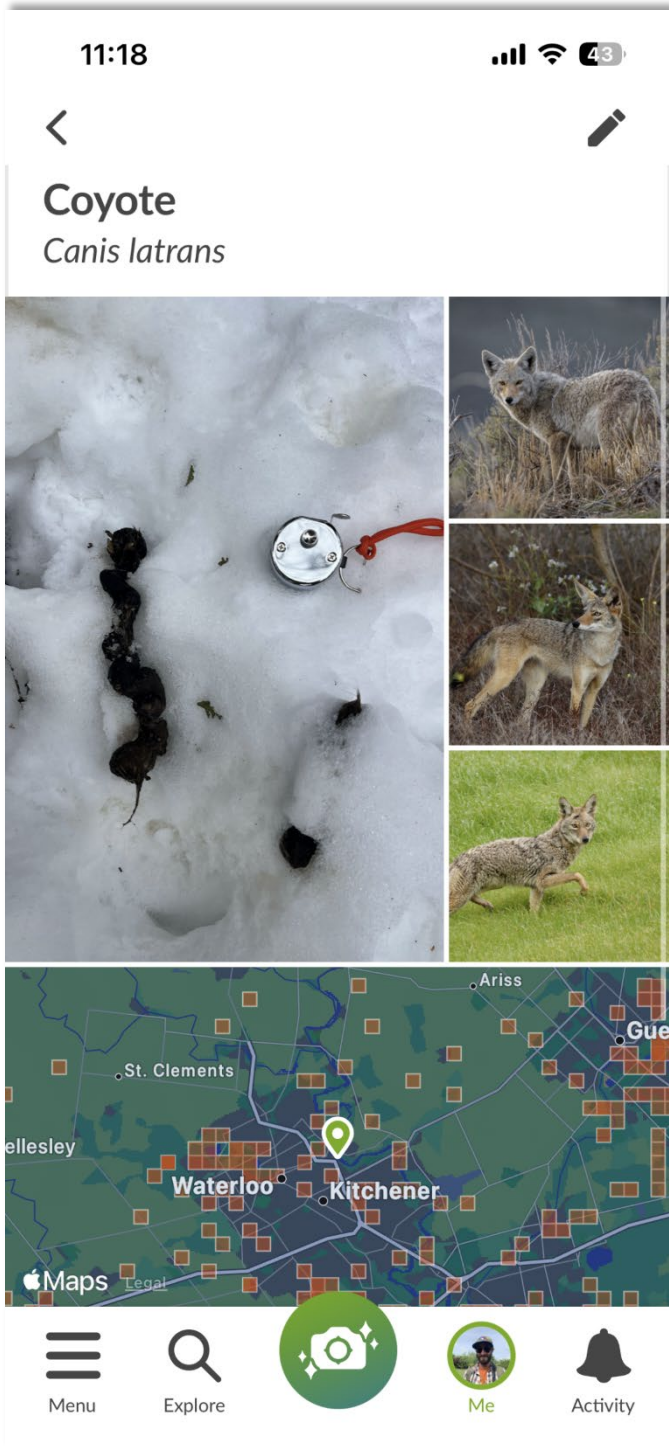


Cerf de Virginie  
*Odocoileus virginianus*  
6.3%

Menu    Explore    Me    Activity



## Monitoring Biodiversity at a Mini Forest site – Why?

- Biodiversity = the variety of living things present in an ecosystem.
- Important for health and function of ecosystems.
- Monitoring for biodiversity – plants, animals and fungi – helps understand how Mini Forests support life.
- Monitor changes as the forest establishes.



## Projects

### 1. Choose Your Project Type

- **Collection Project:** Automatically gathers observations based on set criteria like species, location, or date. This is the most common and easiest to manage. **This is the preferred option for each Mini Forest.**
  - Allows you to gather and visualize observations using the core iNaturalist search tools.
  - Everything that meets the project parameters will be included automatically.
  - Includes data visualizations, statistics, leaderboards and journal space (for announcements, organized activities, etc).

- **Traditional Project:** Requires users to manually add their observations to the project. To create this, you must have a confirmed email and at least 50 verifiable observations. **For smaller project or limited numbers of observers, this may be the best fit.**
- **Umbrella Project:** Collates and compares data from multiple existing projects, often used for large-scale events like the City Nature Challenge. We have an Umbrella Project for Mini Forest Biodiversity Monitoring. Visit the link to join:

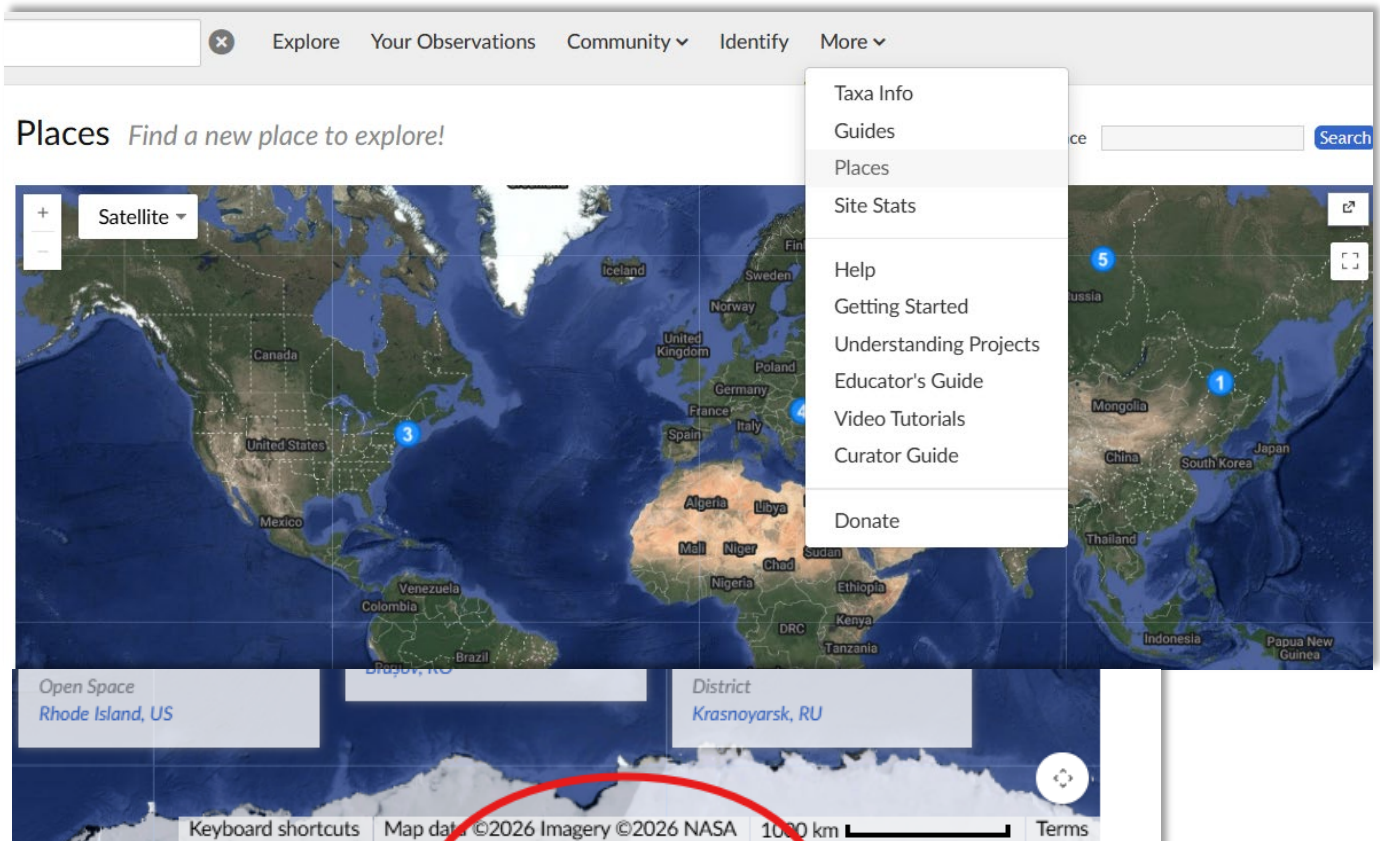
<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/mini-forest-biodiversity-monitoring-canada>

**Please message Umbrella Project Admin to have your Collection Project added!**

- Used to compare statistics across various Collection or Traditional projects.
- Projects need to be created, and then added to the Umbrella.
- Cannot contain other Umbrella projects.
- Can include 100s of projects.
- Visual data comparisons among all projects under the Umbrella.
- Leaderboards among projects.
- Map and links to individual projects.
- Journal for coordinated activities, e.g. bioblitzes, moth nights, etc.

## **2. Create a 'Place' for your Mini Forest**

- Requires at least 50 observations.
- You will need to import a KMZ or shapefile, which can be created in Google Earth, among other options. We recommend creating a shapefile which covers the Mini Forest and the surround habitat, trail, and nearby forest edges (within 100m of the Mini Forest) – to ensure that all species are easily recorded during by the project.



[Add a New Place >>](#)

World

species iNaturalist knows about  
information about their abundance,  
as first to observe that species

Name \*

Parent

KML \*

KML of the place boundary. You can make one using Google Maps, Google Earth, or most GIS applications. Must have at least one polygon, be under 1 MB (5 MB for site curators), and have an area smaller than ~700,000 square kilometers (roughly the size of Somalia or the US state of Texas).

No file chosen

Place type

Check lists allowed?

Note: check lists will be automatically disabled for very large places.

### 3. Create the Project

1. **Navigate:** Log in at iNaturalist.org, go to the **Community** tab, and select **Projects**.
2. **Start:** Click the "**Start a Project**" button.
3. **Details:** Enter a project name, summary, and upload an icon or banner image (ideally 950x400 pixels).
4. **Set Requirements:**
  - **Taxa:** Choose specific plants or animals to include.
  - **Location:** Select a predefined iNaturalist "Place." If your specific area (like a small local park) isn't in the system, you may need to **create a Place** first by uploading a KML file. (See above) or Add Mini Forest to included Places.
  - **Users:** Restrict data to specific participants if needed or include specific users (useful if you are having issues with GPS accuracy or observations being automatically included in your Collection Project).
5. **Save:** Click "**Done**" or "**Create**" at the bottom of the page.

# Project Details

## Project Name \*

Guelph York Road Mini Forest

Display project name


## Project Icon (PNG, JPG, or GIF)

Optional icon. Should be a minimum of 72px x 72px and will be cropped to a square.

 Choose file (or drag and drop)

## Project Banner (PNG or JPG)

Optional banner image. Ideal dimensions are 760px by 320px.

 Choose file (or drag and drop)

## Project Summary \*

Give a concise explanation of your project. Approximately the first 200 characters will be visible to the right of the project home screen banner so put the best stuff first!

Tracking biodiversity and species establishment at the Mini Forest in York Road Park.

This project was one of only five pilot communities in Canada in 2023 taking part in the National Mini Forest Pilot project led by Green Communities Canada. In September 2023, approximately 1,300 native trees, shrubs and groundcover plants were planted with the help of

## Project Summary Background Color

Make sure to choose a color dark enough so the white overlaid text is legible.

 #74ac00

## Leaderboard

The leaderboard panel displays users with the most observations, users with the most species, and the top observed species. It can be optionally hidden.

Hide Leaderboard

# Project Type


Collection  Umbrella (tracks multiple projects)

# Observation Requirements


Specify the filters for which observations to include in your project. You can select multiple species (or taxa), places, dates, or other criteria for observations to be automatically included.

Note: If you do not select taxa, places, or users, all will be included by default.


## Include Taxa

 Birds, monarch, etc.

## Include Places

 Zion National Park, Miami, etc.


## Include Users

 kueda, simon123, etc.


**York Road Park Mini Forest** 

## Exclusion Filters


### Exclude Taxa

 Birds, monarch, etc.

### Exclude Places

 Zion National Park, Miami, etc.

### Exclude Users

 kueda, simon123, etc.

## Project Members Only

Check the box below to only include observations made by users who have joined this project. Use the Exclude Users filter above to exclude observations from specific users, including the project owner and admins.

Only display observations from project members (people who have joined the project)

## Members

### Trust

If you want access to the hidden coordinates of obscured observations, this option will allow people who have joined this project to trust the project admins with access to those hidden coordinates. Project members will be able to grant access to the hidden coordinates of any of their observations that appear in this project, or just the observations that are obscured because of threatened taxa.

However, this will also notify all trusting project members every time you change the project observation requirements, so they can reassess whether they want to continue trusting you given the **new requirements**. Your access to hidden coordinates will be revoked for one week after changing the observation requirements so members have time to do this.

Allow members to trust this project with hidden coordinates

### Admin(s)

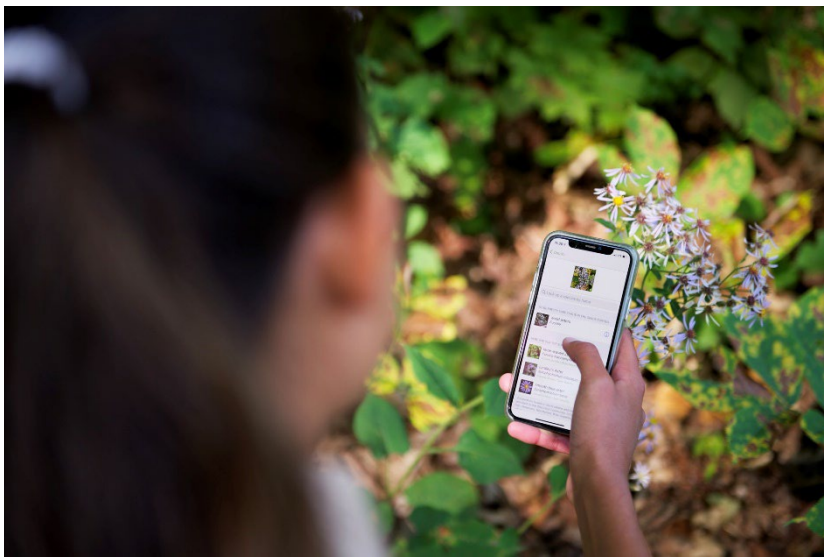
Note: these users will be able to edit ALL project details including admins. Admins must be existing members of the project.

kueta, simon123, etc.

Admins can only be added after the project has been created.

## 3. How to Use and Manage It

- **For Collection Projects:** Observations will appear automatically as soon as they meet your criteria. You can monitor progress via the project dashboard.
- **For Traditional Projects:** You and other members must manually select "Add to Project" on each observation's details page.
- **Engagement:** Use the **Project Journal** to post updates or news to followers.
- **Curation:** You can recruit "Project Curators" to help identify species or manage the data.



# Biodiversity Monitoring Protocol

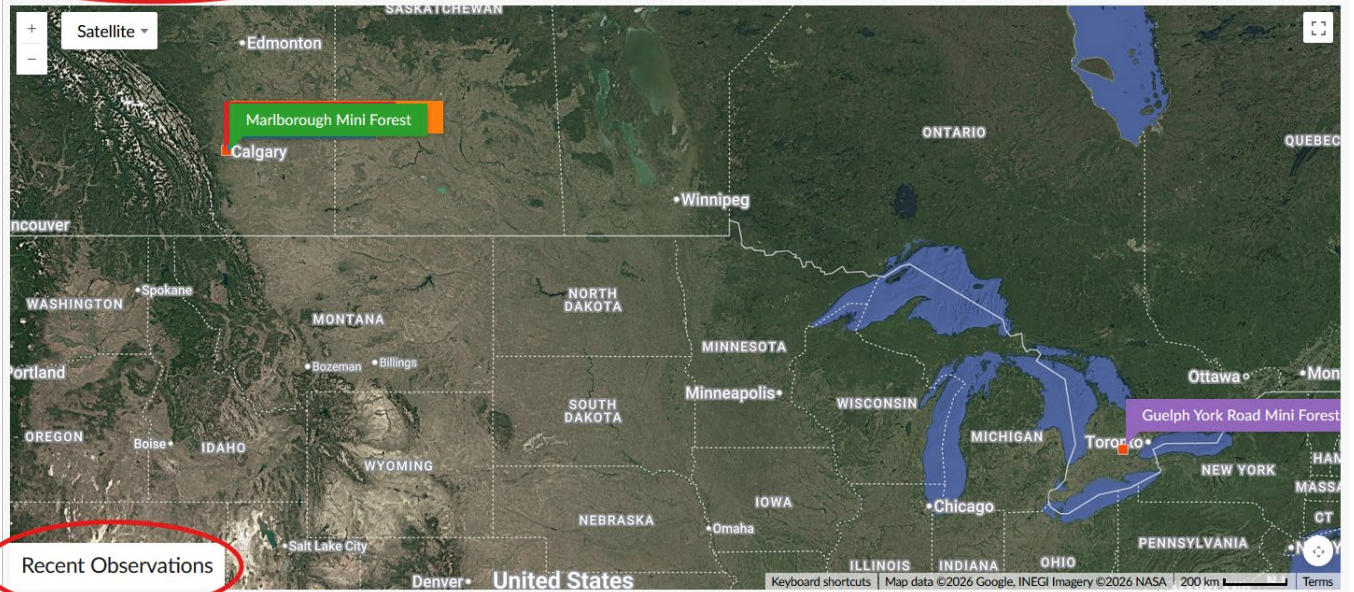
1. Try to visit Mini Forest (at least) **weekly during May-October**.
  2. Walk around Mini Forest edge/perimeter.
  3. You can also walk through any trail which cuts through the Mini Forest (if applicable).
  4. Record/photograph all any insect species that you can.
  5. A good **macro lens** and/or some **patience** may be necessary.
  6. Focus on insects – **survey when warm (15 °C min.) and not windy**.
  7. Take a photograph of all insects and add to the iNaturalist project for your mini forest.
  8. Include your best guess for identifying the species.
- **BONUS:** photograph any other invertebrates, birds, mammals, herpetofauna, fungus, newly/naturally establishing plants. Birds can also be recorded with Merlin App... but CAUTION... confirm with visual!
  - Anyone in community can contribute additional observations, but ensure minimum coverage is achieved (can be multiple observers rotating visits)
  - **UMBRELLA JOURNAL** will be used to coordinate additional surveys and **community science activities**, e.g. ideas for *bioblitzes*, *moth-nights*, *bird-sits*, *wildlife tracking workshop*, etc.



## Umbrella Project – Link:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/mini-forest-biodiversity-monitoring-canada>

### Map of Observations



### Recent Observations



### Journal

