

# Adopt-A-Pond iNaturalist Transition FAQs

This document may change over time based on feedback from the community.

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## What is iNaturalist? What platforms is it available on?

iNaturalist is a nonprofit community of naturalists, Community Scientists, and biologists seeking to map and share observations of biodiversity across the globe. With its vast range and dedicated personnel, it serves as a powerful facilitator of community science projects.

iNaturalist is available as an app on the iOS App Store and Android Play Store, as well as online on their fully functional website.

## What are the names of the AAP iNaturalist projects? Which should I join?

There are 3 Adopt-A-Pond projects available on iNaturalist:

Adopt-A-Pond Project: <https://inaturalist.ca/projects/adopt-a-pond>

Ontario Turtle Tally: <https://inaturalist.ca/projects/ontario-turtle-tally>

FrogWatch Ontario: <https://inaturalist.ca/projects/frogwatch-ontario>

Ontario Turtle Tally and FrogWatch Ontario are the taxon-specific Community Science projects that you know. It is through these “Traditional” projects that you can submit your observations.

The ‘Adopt-A-Pond’ project is an “Umbrella” Project that includes the Traditional projects, as well as any future projects our team may launch. All communications will be going through this Umbrella Project, so we highly suggest joining this project to ensure you receive updates and communications.

## Is there a tutorial on how to use iNaturalist for AAP projects?

To aid our Community Scientists in the transition to the iNaturalist platform, we have partnered with the Canadian Wildlife Federation to create a webinar with information and tips specific to the Ontario Turtle Tally and FrogWatch Ontario projects. You can watch this recorded webinar here: <https://youtu.be/rbARWMAeYbA?si=T26Old8Yb4A8V8ad>

You can also find step-by-step instructions on how to join and submit to the iNaturalist projects on the next page of this document.

## Will the Adopt-A-Pond app continue to be in use? What about the website?

Sightings will continue to be accepted via the current app and website till the end of 2024. Following this, sightings can be submitted to the projects via the iNaturalist website or app.

## How do I join and submit observations to the projects through iNaturalist?

You must have an iNaturalist account to submit observations. You can make an account here: <https://inaturalist.ca/signup>

**You must join the Ontario Turtle Tally and/or FrogWatch Ontario projects in order to submit observations to them.** See below for specific instructions based on your device.

### Join and submit to projects on an iPhone (iOS):

1. Click the “Project” tab located on the far right of the navigation bar, or tap the three dots labelled “More” and select “Projects” from the menu that appears.
2. Tap the magnifying glass icon and type the name of the project you would like to join in the search bar. Tap the project when it appears.
3. Tap the “Join” button on the project page. Once you have joined a project, it will appear under the “Joined” tab on the “Projects” page.
4. To submit, tap the “Observe” camera icon. Add observation details as prompted.
5. Tap the “Projects” option and select the project to which you would like to submit. Add any additional project-specific information that is requested.
6. Tap the green “Share” button to submit.

### Join and submit to projects on an Android device:

1. Tap the three lines in the top-left corner to access the menu and select “Projects”.
2. Tap the magnifying glass icon and type the name of the project you would like to join in the search bar. Tap the project when it appears.
3. Tap the “Join” button on the project page. Once you have joined a project, it will appear under the “Joined” tab on the “Projects” page.
4. To make an observation, access the menu again and select “New Observation”. You can also add observations by tapping the “Make an observation” button on the home page (to which the app will open by default). Add observation details as prompted.
5. Tap “Add to project(s)” and select the project to which you would like to submit. Add any additional project-specific information that is requested.
6. Tap the green check mark button at the bottom of the page to submit.

### Join and submit to projects on the iNaturalist website:

1. From the menu bar at the top of the page, go to “Community” and then “Projects”.
2. Type the name of the project you would like to join in the search bar that appears above the list of “Featured” projects.
3. On the main project page, click “Join this project” located in the top-right corner above the banner. Once you have joined a project, it will appear under “Projects” on the website home page as well as under the “Community” tab in the top menu.
4. To submit an observation, simply click the “Add Observations” ribbon and add information about your observation on the page that appears. Add any additional project-specific information that is requested.
5. When you are done, click “Save observation” at the bottom of the page to submit.

For more information on using the iNaturalist app, please visit this link: <https://cwf-fcf.org/en/resources/downloads/booklets-handouts/iNaturalist-App-How-to.pdf>

For more information on how to submit an observation through the website, please visit this link: <https://cwf-fcf.org/en/resources/downloads/booklets-handouts/iNaturalist-Web-How-to.pdf>

## **What if I am unsure of which species I have observed? Are observations verified?**

If you are unsure about what species you are observing, iNaturalist may suggest an identification using its integrated computer vision software, which learns to identify species based on existing verified photo submissions. Other community members can verify your submission or add notes and annotations. A member of our team will also continue to monitor and verify submissions, as we have done previously.

## **Will I lose access to my app submissions? Can I save my submissions history?**

When the app closes at the end of 2024, your submission data will no longer be accessible to you via the app. If you want an exported file of your submission data, please contact our team with the name and email associated with the account. Through iNaturalist, you will be able to download and save your observations yourself.

## **Will Adopt-A-Pond events continue to run?**

Yes! We are still committed to engaging with our community as much as possible and will continue to operate the Adopt-A-Pond events that you know and love.

PLEASE NOTE: if you would like to receive communications about Adopt-A-Pond events (such as Appreciation Day), you must complete the form on the Adopt-A-Pond iNaturalist Umbrella project, found in the About section <https://inaturalist.ca/projects/adopt-a-pond>

## **Why are the Community Science programs transitioning to iNaturalist?**

The transition to iNaturalist was decided to make more effective use of our resources, as well as expand our reach and maximize the impact our programs have on protecting wildlife and their habitats. iNaturalist was designed with the intention of promoting Community Science initiatives, and acts as an effective facilitator of Community Science projects. Additionally, with the large-scale backing that iNaturalist has, there are consistent and high-caliber tech support staff who maintain the app and frequently provide updates as needed.

## **What about vulnerable species? Who decides what information is restricted?**

With a conservation focused backbone, iNaturalist has built-in protocols to protect vulnerable species by restricting information as appropriate. There are 2 mechanisms that determine if information is restricted:

- 1) Personal geoprivacy. Each observer can change their geoprivacy settings from “open” (default) to “obscure” or “private”. Changing the geoprivacy settings to obscured or private will restrict public access to this information.
- 2) Depending on the classification of concern, geoprivacy for certain taxa and species will be limited to obstructed or private as appropriate. This is done to protect these sensitive and high-risk species from poaching.

## **What is the difference between open, obscured, and private observations?**

Open observations will have publicly viewable geographic locations, while obscured photos will provide a random point within a large geographic area near the observation. No geographic information is publicly available for private observations.

## **When will the programs launch on iNaturalist?**

The Ontario Turtle Tally and FrogWatch Ontario iNaturalist programs have launched! The existing Adopt-A-Pond app and website will run concurrently with the iNaturalist pilot projects till the end of 2024. For the 2025 season, our Community Science programs will be operating exclusively through iNaturalist.

## **How much personal data from members is stored? How is this data used?**

The only data stored by iNaturalist is the email and username used to create the account. This data is not shared externally; the only time it's used will be email communication through the iNaturalist platform.

When submitting observations, the program will use your phone's location to determine the geolocation of your submission. Your phone's location information is not stored; however, the geolocation of submissions will be stored alongside your observation.

**If you have additional questions not covered by this document, please visit the iNaturalist FAQ page <https://inaturalist.ca/pages/help> or reach out to [aap@torontozoo.ca](mailto:aap@torontozoo.ca).**