How to add observations to iNaturalist

(Adapted from Susan Schwartz, Friends of Five Creeks)

Smartphone app: You can use the iNaturalist app to snap a picture of your plant and animal observations of the natural world and then share them with our online community. You can use this app as a sort of mobile field notebook to help you keep track of the animals and plants you see at your site. You can also get help identifying the things you have photographed by syncing them with the iNaturalist online community.

To use this app, in the Observations section you should tap "Add" to record something you see. Then tap the camera icon to take a picture. You can add a species name and notes on your observation. **Be sure to add any observations at your site to the Columbia Riverkeeper Adopt-a-River Project**. Once you've added some observations, tap "**Sync**" to send them to iNaturalist.org.

There are several other sections to the app including: Map, which shows you a map of your area; Projects, which contains a list of projects you can join; and Settings. Be sure to join the Columbia Riverkeeper Adopt-a-River project and add your observations to this project.

What do I take a picture of?
- Whatever is interesting to you, and whatever you think you can get a pretty good close-up photograph of.
- It is generally important to document invasives and exotics as well as natives so don't worry too much about how "special" or "rare" a plant or animal is. You are trying to get a representative sample of the entire place, not just the best parts.
- Diversity is important, too, so look for things you personally haven't yet photographed.
- If you can, take several photographs of one object to show different features - bark, leaves, seeds, flowers, and then another of the whole plant. Sometimes this is the only way to make a definite ID.
- Smartphone tips
    - Turn screen brightness up on a bright day to make sure your focus is good.
    - Rest your "camera hand" on something else to steady it.
    - Point at the screen to show where you want to focus, newer phones will do this.

 Using the iNaturalist desktop interface is easy, but here is a little extra help:

1. From the project page (https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/columbia-riverkeeper-adopt-a-river), click **Add Observations to this Project** . You will be taken to a screen to sign into iNaturalist.

To protect and restore the water quality of the Columbia River and all life connected to it, from the headwaters to the Pacific Ocean.

If you are signing into iNaturalist for the first time, use one of the following options:

- Create a username and password. <u>You will receive an email with a link that you must use to activate the account.</u>

- Sign in with your Google, Yahoo, Flickr, Facebook, or Twitter account. If you do this, the next screen will ask you to click to approve or allow linking to that account<u>. With Facebook and Twitter, look carefully at the permissions you'd be giving.</u>

Either during this initial sign-in process or later in your Profile, indicate your time zone (Pacific) and indicate how the data you enter can be shared. Here, you can grant a general Creative Commons license, meaning that others can use but not sell your information and photos.

Once you sign in, click on **Dashboard**, then **Profile**, and then **Edit Account Settings and Profile**. Here you have another chance to set the time zone, and you can set details of how you are willing to share data and photos. You can give information about yourself. You can set links to accounts such as Google and Flickr so you can sign in with them in future. When you are done, return to the project page.

2. **Joining the project:** Once you are signed in at the project page, click **Add Observations to this Project.** At the upper left, read the project terms. If you agree, click the box to join the project.

3. **Adding observations:** Once you have signed in and joined the project, click **Add Observations to this Project**. Here is a good way to fill in the screen that comes up:

a. If you have a photo, upload it first (**Add photos**, right side of screen). Click on **Source** to choose to upload from your hard drive or from Picasa, Facebook, or Flickr. Things are easier if you have already geo-referenced and tagged your photos.

- An iNaturalist video that shows uploading from Flickr accounts as an example is here: http://vimeo.com/33439165

- An iNaturalist video that shows uploading photos in a batch, using Facebook as an example and with lots more information on using iNaturalist with Facebook, is here: http://vimeo.com/33437610

b. **Where were you**, center of screen, enter the city name where your observation occurred and click **Search**. This will zoom in on the project map. Zoom in -- you can zoom in closer if you use "map" or "satellite" view. Click as near as you can to where you saw plant or animal. This creates a marker. Use the hand icon to grab the marker and place it on the map where the observation occurred.

c. In **What did you see**, left side of screen, enter the common or Latin name if you know it. Don't worry too much about getting this right. The iNaturalist community will help, especially if you click the **ID please** box.

- It's important that you click Lookup and choose a matching taxon from the list. If you don't, your observation won't get associated with other observations of this species.

d. In **When did you see it**, enter the date of the observation. You can use text (e.g. June 20, 2011), yyyy-mm-dd, or the clickable calendar.

e. In Description, offer any information needed for identification.

f. f. Click **Save observation** or **Save and add another**.

That's all there is to it!

If you use an iPhone, get the free iNaturalist app here:
https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/inaturalist/id421397028?mt=8

See a video on how to use it here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28MWPNmdiVY

For android phones, get the free iNaturalist app here:
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.inaturalist.android&hl=en