IT

NEWSLETTER | AUGUST 2025

Thank you for being a part of this movement for nature! Your involvement and support makes these impacts possible.

Read on for new discoveries and stories from the iNaturalist community.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: What's the most common reason people use iNaturalist?

A. To contribute to science

B. To learn about plants and animals

C. To protect wildlife and habitats

D. To compete with other users

(Scroll to the end for the answer!)

🔍 Observations in Action

Real-world science, powered by iNaturalist observations

How a passion for rule-breaking plants led to finding three new species

Plants don't follow rules. "You can find plants that don't do photosynthesis, plants that don't need roots, plants without flowers, plants that are basically just flowers, flowers that don't look like

flowers, plants without leaves or with modified leaves, soft leaves, hard leaves, plants that climb, plants that never touch the ground, giant plants, toxic plants, hairy plants, sticky plants," explains Alisson Fierro-Minda (alissonfm), "Basically they do whatever they want, and I love to see them doing it."

This love for botanical rule-breaking has led Alisson to describe three new species of *Bomarea* — climbing plants in the Alstroemeriaceae family — using iNaturalist observations as the starting point for each discovery: "I come from a low-income background, so I had no personal transportation, nor funding for bus tickets. Most of my field experiences have been linked to university or work, but iNaturalist gave me the opportunity to explore the world just from home."

Read more about how Alisson found and described these new species!

**Other new species recently described include:** a stick insect that weighs as much as a golf ball, two fungi, two plant bugs, and a scorpionweed that was "hiding in plain sight."

Stunning blue dragonflies well-suited to survive

If you're in North America: the next time you see a dragonfly in a city, there's a chance it's a blue dasher (*Pachydiplax longipennis*). They're among the top 40 most-observed North American animals on iNaturalist, and new research using iNaturalist observations shows they're surprisingly well-adapted to thrive in places like park ponds and storm drains. Genetic changes help them handle pollution and stress better than other dragonfly species. Read about them in The New York Times!

Museum collections and iNaturalist observations tell different — and equally important — stories
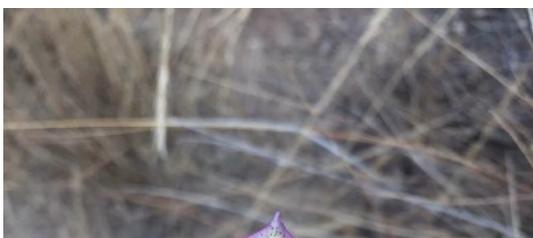
Scientists found that combining museum specimens with iNaturalist observations gives a more complete picture of plant diversity than using either source alone. Museum collections capture historical data but

miss recent changes, while iNaturalist shows current activity but depends on where people observe. The study confirms that both traditional collecting and community science are essential for understanding how plant communities respond to environmental changes — and that when combined together, make for a powerful resource in better understanding (and protecting) our natural world.

How community science "totally unlocked" our understanding of Portuguese Man O' Wars

Genetic research and community science proved what researchers suspected for centuries but couldn't confirm: bluebottles (also widely known as Portuguese Man O' Wars) aren't just one species, but four! About 4,000 images from iNaturalist observations supported this amazing research, and now the community is hard at work updating all the existing iNaturalist records to reflect the change. Learn more about the effort from the scientists at the center of it.

Read more stories

🐞 iNaturalist Community

Stories from iNaturalist community members

An outrageously orange rare flower

Sometimes the best discoveries are hiding on old hard drives! Botanist Paúl Gonzáles found a seven-year-old photo that became the first iNaturalist record of *Mastigostyla macbridei* — a plant so rare it's only been documented three times since 1923.

"Yes, we're cold!" — the world's most remote iNat observations

When expedition cruise ship divers (like those aboard the Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic fleet of ships) descend into Arctic and Antarctic waters, they're filling critical biodiversity gaps in some of Earth's most remote, least-studied places. Their "Underwater Life of LEX" project has already connected researchers with valuable imagery for ongoing studies and directly advancing polar marine science.

🌊 Stay Connected

Tips, resources, & ways to plug in

Celebrate the spineless! 🦋🐌🕷️

We celebrated #InverteFest last week — and it's never a bad time to go outside, turn over a rock or peer into a flower, and share the snails, insects, spiders, and other creatures without backbones you find. Check out the #InverteFest project to see what people found!

iNat Tip: Keep track of your favorite projects

The Projects section in the Community menu on the website now shows up to 7 projects based on which ones you admin and recent activity. Learn how to set this up!

The newest computer vision model is here ✨

Our engineering team is always improving and updating the computer vision model that powers iNaturalist's AI-identification features. Interested in learning more about how it works? Follow along with our latest update!

QUESTION OF THE MONTH:
What's the most common reason people use iNaturalist?

B. Learning about plants and animals is often the most frequent motivation for people using iNaturalist — in particular, among the 429 community members surveyed by researchers. In this study, whether someone had made 10

observations or thousands, the desire to learn consistently ranked as the top reason people use the platform!

Thank you for *everything* that you do to support iNaturalist!

iNaturalist is an independent, tax-exempt, 501(c)(3), nonprofit organization based in the United States of America (EIN/Tax ID: 92-1296468).

[Ways to support iNaturalist](#)