

## Become an iNaturalist citizen since and help monitor living things in the Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve

One thing you can do is **become an iNaturalist citizen scientist** and contribute data to our project!

### What is iNaturalist?

It's an online database to which anyone from anywhere in the world can contribute to by recording data on living things and uploading to the database. It's a record in real time of what's happening in our natural world and this data is so valuable to experts and scientists who could directly use the data to:

- monitor changes in ecology,
- map species diversity
- document new species
- monitor the impacts humans and pollution or climate change are having on breeding and migration, flowering/fruited times, etc.
- Work out from this data where vulnerable species need protection and what action is necessary to stop their demise

Importantly **you don't need to be an expert!** Your data is still very valuable and even if you don't know species names, the experts in iNaturalist (and there are some highly knowledgeable experts - many who are local!) will help you identify it correctly.

### Step 1

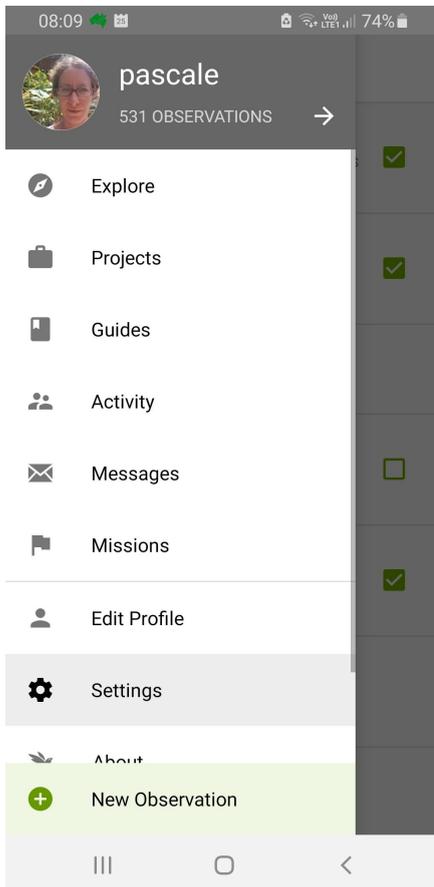
Download the iNaturalist App on your phone or computer (free) or go to the Australian website:

<https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/>

where you can log in, sign up or find out more

### Step 2

Sign up for free (you will need to provide an email or create a name & create a password to have an account to add data). Why do you need an account? So data can be verified as actually being observed by a human, and to enable (if you wish!) communication between other members who may wish to find out more about what you saw. It's great how interactive iNaturalist is. You can find experts in a certain field and ask questions to help you learn, you can explore what's been observed in your area, you can join projects, change your settings, look at your old observations, find out more about a particular organism and so much more!

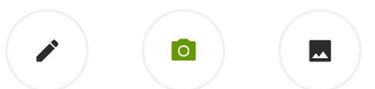


### Step 3

Go out and snap a few photos of a living thing (or once living...it could be dead, or could be scat or a feather or a nest!) and add a new observation with the photos. You can also record sounds e.g. frogs.

Tip 1: Start off in your own backyard and practice taking focused zoomed in photos from different angles of the organism.

Tip 2: Use the "camera" app on your phone to take photos rather than the camera icon in iNaturalist (I find images are better quality and upload faster). Then use "choose image" to select the photos.



No Media    Take Photo    Choose Image



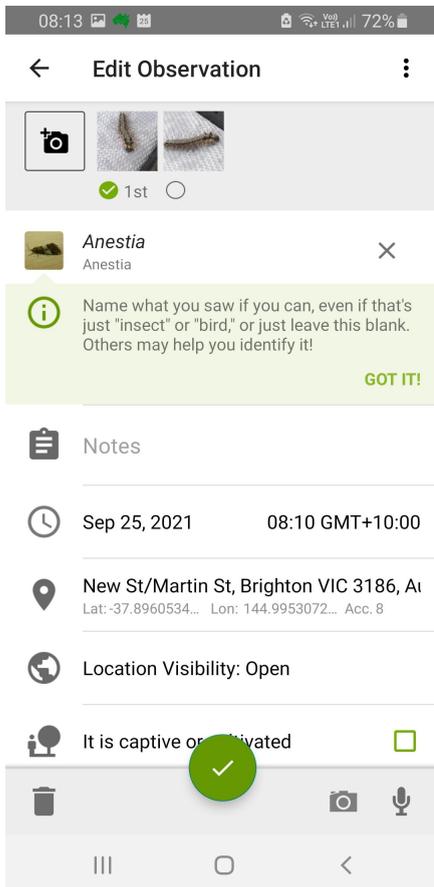
Record Sound    Choose Sound



Tip: You might not be able to see a creature but hear it (eg bird, cricket, frog), in which case you can also click "record sound/choose sound" ! Hopefully we'll be adding frog sounds soon from our chain of ponds!

### Step 4

Try to identify (ID) the organism with as much knowledge as you have, but don't guess! If you only know it's an insect, write Insecta... sometimes the app will suggest a genus or species based on the image, but sometimes this can be a mistake as the species might not be from that part of the world. Leave it to the experts who will suggest an ID later. The best thing about iNaturalist is you can interact with these specialists down the track, finding out more about the key characteristics which helped them work out the species. You can always add notes about what you saw or why you can't work it out under 'Notes'.



### Step 5

Make sure you add time and location. Sometimes this comes up automatically as our digital photos can store GPS and time metadata, but if not, click on the clock icon and manually add it. For location, click on

the grey pin icon  the GPS on your phone will mark where you are (ensure you are still standing next to where you took your photos). If you haven't given permission for iNaturalist to read your location in your settings, this can instead take you to a map of Google Earth off the coast of Africa, but if you then click on

the "target"  icon on the bottom left corner as it marks your location. Click save.

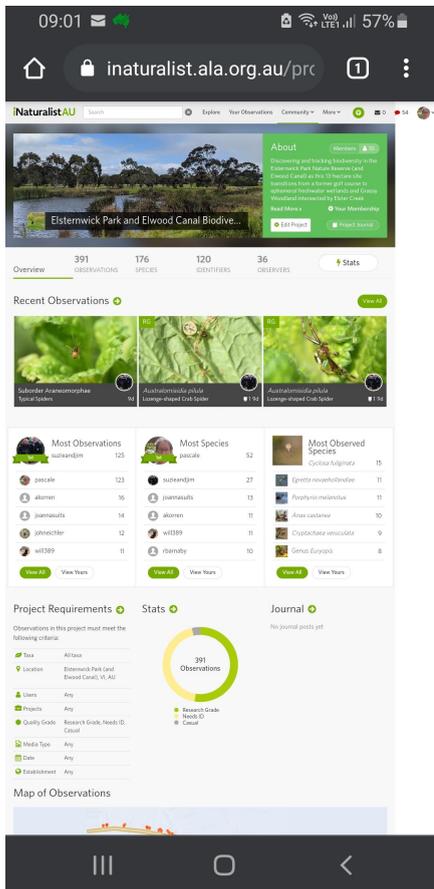
Tip: If you know this is a rare, threatened or/and an endangered species, you can change the visibility of your location to "closed" to prevent people potentially stealing a rare species.

### Step 6

If this organism is a pet or you think it was planted (cultivated) then you must click the box marked it is captive or cultivated so we can rule out certain data that's not wild (some scientists don't want this data)

### Step 7

If you happen to be in the zone for our Elsternwick Park and Elwood Canal Biodiversity Project on iNaturalist (<https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/elsternwick-park-and-elwood-canal-biodiversity>) your data automatically gets added to our list of observations which will be so useful for our long term monitoring on the health and diversity of our reserve! You can also join our project to see what others are observing:



Any issues in signing up, feel free to ask me! [pascalejacq@yahoo.com](mailto:pascalejacq@yahoo.com)

Please join our growing list of iNaturalist members in our local area, and learn, contribute and be amazed at how many living things are all around us!!

Pascale Jacq