OPEN LAB:
VIRTUAL LAB INATURALIST PROJECT

Welcome to the Ontario Envirothon Virtual Lab iNaturalist project! If you are new to iNaturalist, please review this beginners guide to get started. For additional instructions, you can check out this pair of instructional videos from the University of Waterloo's Ecology Lab that will walk you through how to use both the website and the app.

Spot

By posting on iNaturalist, you are contributing to one of the largest citizen science projects. As such, pets, cultivated garden plants, and house plants are not recommended. These sightings will be considered "casual grade", as they are captive or cultivated, and will not be included in the Envirothon Virtual Lab 2020 Project.

This project only accepts observations made between May 18th and June 26th, regardless of the day the observations were posted.

While observing nature, please follow current public health guidelines and keep a safe distance from others.
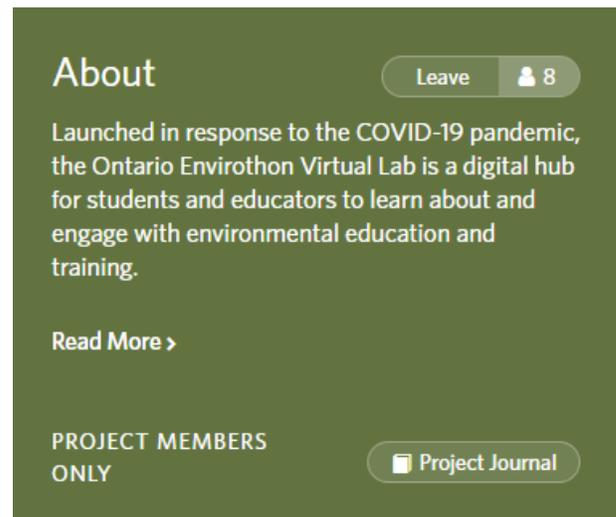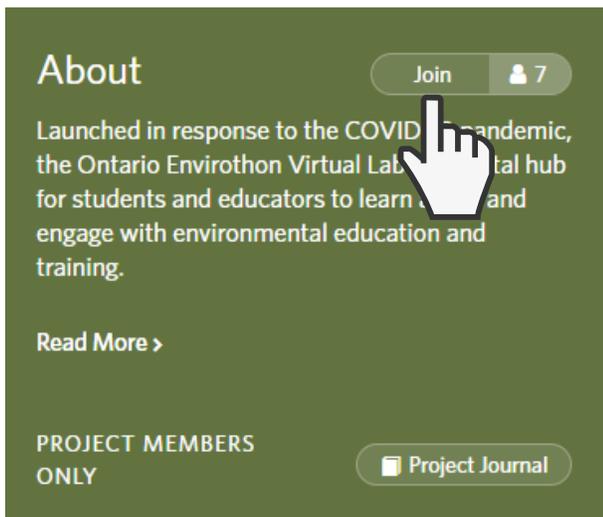

Snap

When taking photos, the more the merrier! A single photo may not capture key features of the plant fungus, or animal that you have set your sights on, making it difficult to identify. For example, a good observation of a tree would contain a photo of the leaves, one of the branches, and another showing the bark.

In addition to photos, iNaturalist accepts audio clips! If you cannot see the bird (or frog) that you can clearly hear, the sound can be recorded and submitted as an observation.

Submit

Be bold with your suggested ID, but if you do not know what you have seen or heard, don't be afraid to use a more general identification (ie genus or family level). The community will be able to narrow down your observation to a species if enough evidence is provided.

For your sightings to be included in the Virtual Lab project, you first need to join the project. From this point onwards, any "Needs ID" or "Research Grade" observations that you make between May 18th and June 26th will automatically be added to the project. There is no need to manually add it to the project.

Locations can be set for each observation. Public means that everyone can see where your observation is located. Obscured means that everyone can see the general area your observation was made, but nowhere specific. Private means that the coordinates are completely hidden from everyone except you. This is important to note if you are making observations in your backyard versus a public space.

Note: Species at risk (such as turtles) are automatically obscured from public view. Don't worry if your SAR sighting doesn't show up on the map on the project page – it will still be included in the project!

Remember to have fun, be bold, and stay curious! Check out other sightings in the project and see what YOU can identify!