

Using iNaturalist for WBA Observations

For those who would like to post photos and casual observations of butterflies without going to the effort of doing a full survey, WBA has put together a Project on iNaturalist. We are at *Washington State Butterflies*. Once you sign up with iNaturalist and join the Project, you can post butterflies and moths you see anywhere in WA, OR, ID and BC. You can see everyone else's observations too!

Go to iNaturalist.org, and create an account. Then under Community, go to Projects, and search for *Washington State Butterflies* - make sure you don't accidentally get the DC group. Our logo is on our page, and one of Melanie Weiss' wonderful photos, of swallowtails puddling. Join the Project and you're in! Once registered, every Lepidoptera observation you post for this year will be part of the Project. On the Observations tab you will see everything that's been posted so far. The Species tab is just the species list for the Project. Identifiers are the other iNat users that have made an identification on one of our observations - they aren't necessarily members. The Observers tab lists everyone that's posted an observation in our Project.

When you post an observation, you can do so either from your smartphone with the iNat app, or from your computer. The simplest way to do it, which you can do while in the field so long as you have cell reception, is take a photo with your phone, open iNat, add an observation, choose the photo, see if it can identify the subject for you or type in a name, check the location, and post!

iNat will try to identify the subject of your photo from its database. It's fairly good with butterflies. The date of the observation is taken from the date on the photo. If you want, you can set the Geoprivacy to Open (everyone can see the point on the map), Obscured (a general area), or Private (no location shows). Anything listed as endangered or threatened is automatically Obscured.

iNat should be able to tell where the observation is from the GPS on your phone, but if not, you can click a point on their map. You can also post observations from your computer through their website, and you can post observations without a photo, or with no name at all beyond Lepidoptera. So long as you have joined the Project, have at least Lepidoptera for an identification, a location in the 4 state area, and a date within 2020, then your observation will be added to our Project.

Thank you!

Regina Johnson