

LEAVE NO TRACE

When Using iNaturalist Canada



Use these easy tips to minimize your impact as you explore nature and outdoor spaces to record wildlife observations.



Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Planning ahead includes knowing the weather and any regulations for your destination that might impact your activities (e.g., dogs, may be best left at home!). Local park regulations might include access points, area closures, or any special rules you should follow when out iNatting.
- Think about the equipment you will need – ex. magnifying lens, binoculars and digital camera for close-ups.
- Check out iNaturalist.ca's explore page to find out what species you might encounter.

Walk on Durable Surfaces

- Walk on existing trails to avoid damaging plants or squashing insects. To minimize erosion, avoid cutting corners or creating shortcuts. Waterproof footwear is a bonus!
- If you do go off-trail, try to step on rocks, gravel, sand, dry grass, or bare soil to minimize your impact.
- Ask yourself, is it necessary to go off trail for this one observation? Or is there another of the same species right near the trail to capture instead?

Pack it in, Pack it Out

- Carry all your trash to the nearest waste can or, better yet, bring it home with you, and get ready for your outing by organizing with re-usable packaging.
- *If it didn't grow there, it doesn't go there!* Biodegradable waste like orange peels and peanut shells take many months to break down and aren't part of the Canadian ecosystem. Pack them out with your trash.

Leave What You Find

- By leaving nature the way you find it, others will also have the chance to make their “discoveries”.
- Many destinations have hundreds, even thousands of visitors a day – plants, rocks, even dead wood – all should remain in place for our ecosystem to continue to flourish.
- Capture distinctive features of the organism with one or more in-focus photos instead of picking or collecting anything for identification.

Respect Wildlife

- Give animals lots of space to continue their natural behaviours. To get a closer look, use binoculars or the zoom lens on your camera. If your subject seems to be getting irritated, move on and refrain from chasing it down for that perfect shot or sound recording.
- Are dogs allowed? Even the most well-behaved dogs can scare wildlife or interfere with your observations.
- Refrain from baiting or feeding animals to draw them in for a better photo. Feeding wild animals can be tempting, but this can impact their health and teach them to rely on humans rather than continuing to seek out their natural food sources.
- While it's tempting to catch frogs, salamanders and butterflies, only qualified individuals should handle wildlife if absolutely necessary for photographing key features.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

- Make sure everyone has the opportunity to appreciate nature by giving space and moving aside to record your important observations. Take the opportunity to mention iNaturalist Canada to others around you so that they can also contribute.
- Will others hear you coming? Quiet travel is the way to go – take it all in and have a great day! You're also likely to see more wildlife by staying quiet.

Leave No Trace Canada is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and inspiring low impact, outdoor activity through education, research and partnerships. Leave No Trace builds awareness, appreciation and respect for our parks and natural areas. Learn more at leavenotrace.ca.



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