

# Exploring nature with iSpot

This booklet contains a guide to help you develop your skills using iSpot and tips to take your interest in nature further.

## iSpot – your place to share nature

[www.iSpot.org.uk](http://www.iSpot.org.uk) is a website aimed at helping anyone identify anything in nature. On iSpot you can share your interest with a friendly community, take a look at the latest spots, add your own observations, join in discussions and get help identifying what you have seen.

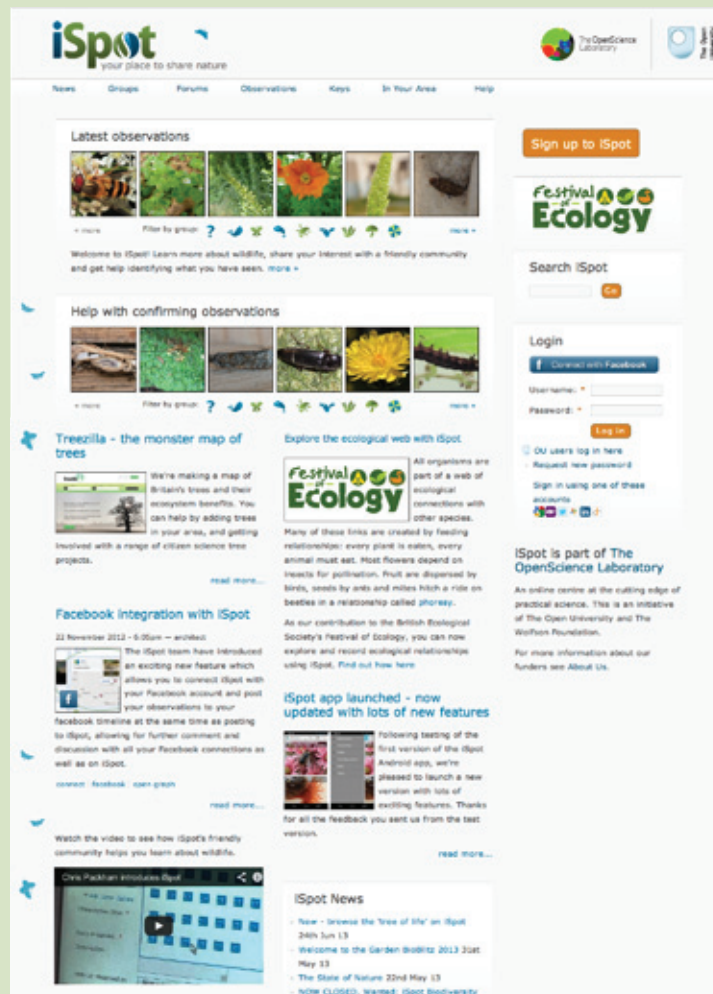
- Go to [www.ispot.org.uk](http://www.ispot.org.uk) (or search for 'ispot')

### What happens on iSpot?

You can browse the thousands of observations from other users and once registered you can add your own, suggest an identification yourself or see if anyone else can identify it for you.

You can also help others by adding identifications to their observations, which you may like to do as your knowledge grows. Your reputation on the site grows as people agree with your identifications.

Visit our forums which offer lively debate about wildlife and related topics.



Observations on iSpot show the variety of life



Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*) © Geoff Eimon



Bee Chafer Beetle (*Trichilus rooseus*) © Rob Coleman



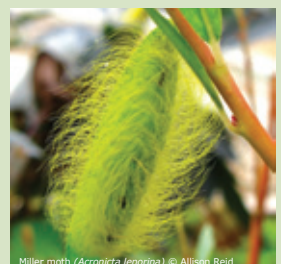
Wood Blewits (*Clathrus ruber*) © Elizabeth Ellis



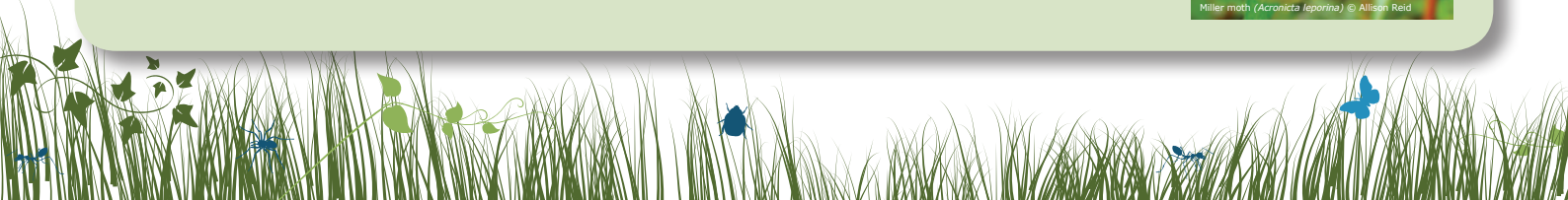
Wood Anemone (*Anemone hepatica*) © David Ashurst



Euonymus Leaf-notcher (*Pryeria sinica*) © Julian Dobbin



Miller moth (*Acronicta leporina*) © Allison Reid





# Five steps to using iSpot

- 1. Browse observations:** Look at some of the latest observations. Anyone can see what's on the site without registering, just go to the home page, and click on the photos for the latest observations.
  - 2. Register:** To join in the activity you will need to register (it's free!). Click on the 'Sign up to iSpot' button, provide a user name, email address, and password.
- Now go outside and make some observations, taking a digital camera with you, if you can.
- 3. Add an observation:** Adding your own observations to iSpot allows you to get more out of the website and participate fully. It's easy to upload a photo or a description of the wildlife you have seen. Click 'Add an observation', select and attach the photo then fill in the details.
  - 4. Add an identification:** If you know the name of what you have seen, you can say so! Add an English or scientific name, click on the 'Get recommended' button, and match the name. If you don't know the name, that's fine, leave it blank and others will help you identify it.
  - 5. Provide a location:** Click on 'Use map' to select your location from the map, if your camera has not filled this information in automatically. If you do not want to reveal the precise location of the observation, there is an option to do this.

Now you are registered and have added an observation on iSpot you can also assist others by adding identifications to their observations or agree with their identifications.

1. Connect your camera, select and attach your photo.
2. Give it a title. This will appear at the top of your photo on iSpot.
3. Insert the date the photo was taken.
4. Insert as much other information as you can.
5. If you know the name of the plant or animal insert it here and someone will tell you whether you are right or not.
6. Is it bird, plant, mammal, etc?
7. Click the 'Use map' button to select your location using Google Maps.

You can now 'Preview' or 'Save' your observation. Once saved it will appear on iSpot for other iSpot users to see.

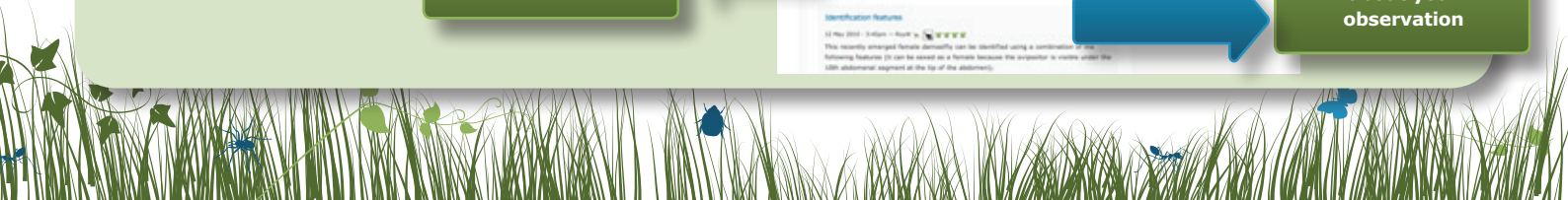
View species distribution maps via the National Biodiversity Network

Compare with other observations of the same species

Add an observation

The iSpot community can help identify your observation

Post and view comments made by the iSpot community about your observation





# Explore even more with iSpot!

**Tagging an observation:** iSpot can also group together observations from events and activities such as a bioblitz, which is a race to record as much wildlife as possible in a defined period, usually over 24 hours. Ask the organiser for the event's 'iSpot descriptive tag'. You can see observations made from these type of events at: [www.ispot.org.uk/bioblitz](http://www.ispot.org.uk/bioblitz)




**Ecological interactions:** You may see a bird feeding on a particular fruit, a butterfly visiting a flower, or a lichen growing on a tree – on iSpot you can get help understanding the connections between what you have seen, and record the link.

All organisms are part of a web of connections with other species. iSpot will show you which insects eat the plants you have seen (and vice-versa). You can also record your own observations of ecological interactions. Follow the instructions provided: [www.ispot.org.uk/help-interactions](http://www.ispot.org.uk/help-interactions).

**Help with what to 'spot'!** For help and advice on what to spot, where to see it, and how to identify it, click on 'Group' and select the wildlife group you are interested in.




AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES




BIRDS




FUNGI & LICHENS




FISH



INVERTEBRATES



MAMMALS

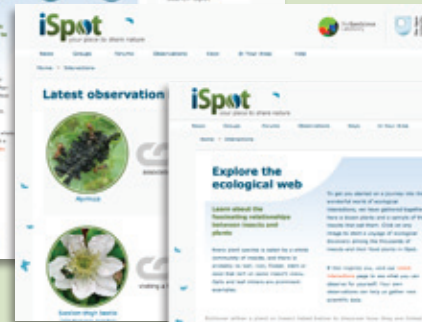
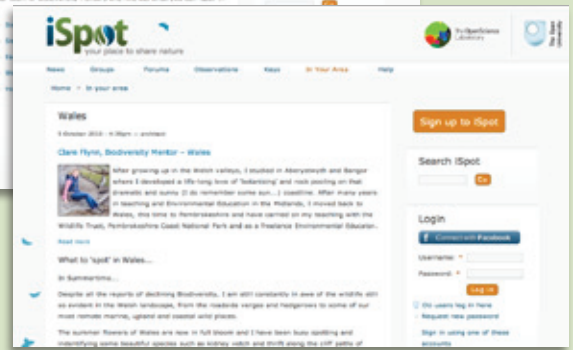


PLANTS



OTHER ORGANISMS

You can also go to the 'In Your Area' section to find out what's happening and meet the iSpot Biodiversity Mentor for your region.



## Use iSpot's identification keys

iSpot has some additional features to assist with identification.

- Go to [www.ispot.org.uk](http://www.ispot.org.uk) and select 'Keys' from the top of the page.
- Full instructions on using the interactive keys are provided. You can find Keys to help you identify earthworms, minibeasts, ladybirds, dragonflies and damselflies, water beetles, woodlice, lichens and other species. If you are interested in creating your own key do let us know.

1. Pick characters in any order  
2. Select to describe your specimen  
3. Most likely species ticked  
4. Click for a full description  
5. Characters used so far  
6. Change your mind

If you would like to create a key please get in touch: [www.ispot.org.uk/contact](http://www.ispot.org.uk/contact)



## Contribute to the Monster Map of Trees

[www.Treezilla.org](http://www.Treezilla.org) is an exciting new citizen science platform that everyone from school children to university students and the general public can get involved with. Learn about your local trees; discover which species are growing in your street and the ecosystem services they provide.

Treezilla and iSpot are part of The OpenScience Laboratory, an online centre at the cutting edge of practical science. This is an initiative of The Open University and The Wolfson Foundation.



## Study the environment with The Open University

You can study an exciting range of environment courses at The Open University, from short modules to named degrees. For more information about learning with The Open University go to: [www3.open.ac.uk/study/](http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/)

You can also access free course materials and other information on nature and the environment on OpenLearn: [www.open.edu/openlearn/nature-environment](http://www.open.edu/openlearn/nature-environment)



Share your observations at: [www.ispot.org.uk](http://www.ispot.org.uk)  
To request further information please use the iSpot contact form: [www.ispot.org.uk/contact](http://www.ispot.org.uk/contact)

