

Recording Apps – How to Create an Account

There are a few recording apps available. Many are taxon specific i.e. record one particular group such as birds, vascular plants etc. There are two widely-used apps that record a wide variety of wildlife: iNaturalist and iRecord.

We provide a very brief overview of the two apps and then simple instructions on how to create an account with your app of choice. Please do explore the two apps yourself to make sure it is right for you – don't rely on our overview alone!

The explanation below is from the perspective of the app but both iNaturalist and iRecord can also be used on web browsers/as websites if you prefer. You will still need to create an account so some of the advice below (e.g. account names) will be applicable regardless of whether you are using the app or web-based approach.

Which app is right for you?

iNaturalist was developed in California and is widely used around the world. It is relatively simple to use and has some great features including an identification aide which is continually being updated as the computer-learning model which underpins it gets better at identifying different species. The iNaturalist Community are also very helpful if you are unsure of your identification. If you are new to recording and/or are uncertain of your identification field skills, this might be the app for you. It does have some drawbacks such as an unclear verification process, but these are much less of an issue when you are first starting out.

iRecord is a UK-developed app. It is perhaps not as easy to use as iNaturalist and does require reasonable field skills so we would suggest using this app if you have experience of recording and are confident in your identification abilities. It can capture much more information than iNaturalist and has a much more rigorous verification process. It is widely used by many of the Cumbria County Recorders and Verifiers who regularly check and verify the records submitted.

We suggest using iNaturalist if you are new to recording and iRecord if you are an experienced recorder. However, we suggest taking a look at both and deciding which you prefer!

It is worth noting here that iNaturalist 'Research Grade' observations (i.e. identification agreed by original observer and at least one other person) are automatically sent to iRecord so you don't need to use both apps. In fact, we would suggest selecting one only to avoid the golden rule of recording – record your observation once!

General advice when using recording apps

Please bear in mind the following:

- Select a username that is similar to your own name as this helps to reassure verifiers and CBDC that you are a real person! Many verifiers will not look at accounts with ambiguous usernames e.g. Rainbow123. We understand that this is a public interface and you might not want your identity to be widely available but you can choose a name that reassures verifiers/recording centres that you are a real person and slightly obscures your identity. For instance, if your name is Jane Smith, jsmithcumbria1 would be acceptable. If privacy is important for you, do consider recording using another method such as a spreadsheet which can be sent to CBDC and won't be in the public domain.
- Allow the app to access your location: this will make recording your observations much easier and quicker.

- Only submit your observation once to avoid duplication. If you use other recording approaches or apps, consider how you might use them to avoid recording an observation more than once.
- Check the Creative Commons licence on your iNaturalist account when you have set it up if you want your records to be used by Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre. Separate instructions on how to do this are provided in another help document.

Creating an iNaturalist account

- Download from your preferred app store. Note that there is also 'Seek by iNaturalist' which is solely an identification aide and not used for recording.
- Once you have downloaded and opened the app, there is a brief introduction before you are asked if you would like to join iNaturalistUK. Click 'OK'.
- Select 'Sign Up'.
- Enter your email, suggest a username (please see note above about choosing a username that looks like a real name) and create a password.
- You will then need to agree to the three consent conditions and then your account has been set up.
- You will then be able to 'Explore', 'Activity', 'Observe', 'Me' and 'Projects'. For more information on how to use the app, see 'Using iNaturalist' for more help. To start recording, select 'Observe'.
- Remember to change your licence type if you would like CBDC to access your records to inform decision making in Cumbria. Follow the instructions in 'Changing your iNaturalist Licence'.

Creating an iRecord account

- Download from your preferred app store. There are a number of apps called 'iRecord' so make sure you download the recording app: it's logo is a green dragonfly.
- Open the app and read/scroll through the introduction. The app then gives you some tips on how to add observations and allows you to start recording straight away. However, any records made at this stage will be listed as 'pending' as you will need to create an account.
- If you have added a record, click 'upload' next to your pending record and you will be taken to a log in screen. At the bottom of this screen, you can 'Sign Up'.
- If you haven't submitted a record yet, click on the three horizontal lines for 'Menu' and then 'Sign Up'.
- Enter your first name, last name, email address and suggest a password to create a free account. When your account is live, do check your account via a web browser to make sure your username isn't your email account: if it is, do change so your email address isn't publicly available.
- Click 'Sign Up' button
- You will need to verify your email address before you can submit any records and confirm you accept the terms and conditions.
- You might then be prompted to change your media licence on your web browser: this will impact on how your images are used and not how your record is used so changing this isn't crucial for your records.
- You can now start recording: upload any existing 'pending' records or add new ones via the 'Home' screen of the app.
- Click the '+' to start recording or the 'Photo' icon to take a photograph.
- If you need further help, go to 'Menu' and there is a 'Help' option.