NATUREMAPR
Moderator Practice Notes

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Introduction

Moderators have expertise in the plants, animals and fungi of a location or taxonomic category. They confirm the identification of the wildlife in the images posted to the site, engage in on-line conversations that educate and seek further information from users and provide land managers with specific conservation advice.

Moderators are crucial to the veracity of the data produced on the Naturemapr platforms.

Preferably each sighting to a platform will have at least three moderators who can confirm its identity, so that the identification task is shared, continues to function if a particular moderator takes a break, and there is a team of minds to consider problematic identifications.

Moderators are volunteers and should only participate if they enjoy and see benefit in sharing their knowledge. If a moderation task is becoming onerous then site administrators should be informed and the moderator should only spend the time on moderation tasks that they feel comfortable providing.

Moderators on the Naturmapr platforms include internationally recognised experts down to passionate school kids. The level of expertise held is not as important as a moderator only confirming the identification of those records for which they have a high level of certainty. A magpie identified by a twelve year old should be as accurate a record as a species of wasp identified by a wasp taxonomist.

Moderator Main Tasks

1. Identification of sightings
2. Maintenance of species structure

3. Informing, educating and encouraging users
4. Mentoring fellow moderators
5. Highlighting significant sightings and management actions required for significant sightings.
6. Maintaining photographic library

Identification of Sightings

Moderators tell the site administrators what area, or category of life they would like to moderate. This can be a broad interest such as such as all plants to something more specialised such as bristle flies.

From then on, every time someone loads a photograph belonging to the category or place of interest, an email asking for confirmation of identification will be sent to the moderator and all others who moderate that category or place.

Given that there is a moderation team and no time limits for identification, moderators should feel free to ignore or delete emails when you are busy or in need of a rest from the moderation task.

Rather than trolling through a list of emails moderators can go straight to the unidentified page and click on the category of interest to see any unconfirmed records.

https://southern-highlands.naturemapr.org/Community/Unidentified

As an example of the moderation task a landowner has lodged this photo of a Crinia from her land

The moderator either:

- confirms the suggested ID by clicking on the confirm button; or
- selects from the pull down list of possible sub-category and species options the correct species name of the photographed frog and then confirms an ID; or
- leaves a comment as to what it may be or that seeks further information from the reporter. Any comment is sent back in an email to the person that lodged the photograph.

In this case, the frog moderator (John Wombey) asked for a photo of the underside or belly. A photo was not available, so the moderator can then decide that on balance it is a species of Crinia or just confirm it as belong to the genus Crinia sp. or leave it unconfirmed.

If the photo doesn't provide enough information to make a meaningful identification, then the inconclusive evidence button should be clicked and the reason for the inability to provide an ID given. It should be borne in mind that for some groups, such as insects, an identification to the level of family or super family is likely to be meaningful to the reporter of the image.

Overall it is better for moderators to provide some information than to provide nothing, even if this is only a comment and non-confirmation.

The comments box can be utilised to clarify the rationale of any identification or to express the level of confidence. For example, in this case a final comment might be "this could be either *Crinia parasignifera* or *C. signifera*, but I have confirmed it as *C. parasignifera* as it appears to lack an extended dark patch from behind the eye to the groin which is usually distinctive of *C. signifera*."

Maintenance of Species Structure

If a photograph is of a species that hasn't previously been reported on Southern Highlands Nature Map, you can add that species to the list which appears on the drop-down menu by going into the administration tab (the cog in the right-hand side of the home page (⚙), and then click on the red manage taxonomy button under the Taxonomy heading. Then click on relevant category until you get to the species level (e.g. Plant – Daisy) then click on the ➕ Add a Species here button.

You will be asked for a scientific and common name, and to select from a drop down menu a sensitivity level, conservation level and level of invasiveness.

The sensitivity level determines who can see a particular record and places restrictions on those species for which there is concern that providing locational information may facilitate poaching (e.g. orchid or rare butterfly locations) or species for which there is another reason to hide the location (e.g. magic mushrooms). A sensitive species is one for which no GPS location is provided, but the reserve or locality in which it occurs will be indicated. For a highly sensitive species, no reserve or locality information is provided.

Conservation level incorporates both an indication of conservation importance and area of origin. Locally indigenous species fall within a hierarchy of conservation levels – locally extinct, very rare or legally listed as threatened, rare or uncommon, local native, vagrant native and cosmopolitan. Other categories are non-local (Australian) native plant and exotic (other exotic).

Level of invasiveness conveys to land managers just how serious a weed or pest a species may become. A weed or pest species can include a locally native species. A minor

Home → Plants → Daisies

Add Species

Species information:

Scientific Name

Common Name

Sensitivity

Please select... ▼

Conservation Level

Please select... ▼

Invasiveness

Please select... ▼

External Info Url

Description (Optional)

↶ ↷ | Formats ▾ | **B** *I* ≡ ≡

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Scientific name should be consistent with that of the *Australian Faunal Directory* or *Australian Plant Census.*

If using a higher taxonomic order, please indicate the order e.g. Aethina sp. (genus) or Erotylidae sp. (family)

Common name use the name(s) most utilised in the area covered by the relevant platform. Use consistent formatting for example title case for both names and lower case for the second word in a hyphenated name. Use a full stop after sp. and subsp. abbreviations. If a species lacks a common name an indication of the type of organism it is can be helpful, e.g a mushroom, or a beefly.

Sensitivity
Not sensitive – precise location given
Sensitive – only general locality name given
Highly Sensitive – no location info. given (project boundary only)

Conservation Level
A very rare /threatened species is one that is listed as threatened or vulnerable under the BCA and/or EPBC Acts. ==A species may also be classified as this if it meets the listing criteria (check).==
Rare or uncommon should be restricted to species only occasionally seen in the region or with so few know locations that special conservation attention is warranted.
Local means indigenous to the area covered by the platform.

Invasiveness
Non-invasive – never a pest or weed
Minor – Exotic species present but never a problem
Moderate – Species can become problematic in certain circumstances and should be controlled
Noxious or High Risk – Control of this species should be given a high priority.

External info Url – insert a link to a website which provides the most comprehensive information on the species.

Description – images and further web links can be inserted here. You may like to put information in here that directs people to note and photograph the key identification features or general ecological and distribution info that you think will be of interest.

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	There is a 10,000 character limit. If you paste directly from word this limit will be quickly filled up by HTML mark-up spaces. To get around this issue, copy text into notepad and from there cut and paste to platform.

weed or pest is an exotic species that is present but never in a problematic way. A moderate weed is one that would be a priority to control when newly established, while a noxious or high risk plant is a plant that a reporter or land manager would want to control as a matter of high priority.

A reporter may suggest that their species is new to the platform. If you agree, click on the

Add Species button. You will be taken to a page of all suggested new species if you could

click on the editing box ✎ of the species in which you are interested and fill in the relevant species information as per the chart above. The species name will then appear in the ready to add to taxonomy list. Please click on the box next to the name and allocate the appropriate taxonomic categories. You should now be able to confirm that species name.

Informing, educating and encouraging users

Naturemapr aims to be a friendly and participative way for gathering and sharing wildlife knowledge. It seeks to increase both individual and broader community understanding of our plants, animals and fungi, leading to more informed decisions and better conservation outcomes. Moderators are key to the fulfilment of these outcomes.

The confirmation of a species identification not only tells the recorder what that species is, but also builds on the shared knowledge of that species distribution and abundance across the region, and adds to the species lists for particular reserves, localities or private land holdings.

If this is all you have time to do as a moderator that is still a fantastic contribution.

You may also be able to use the comments box to encourage and engage in online conversations with interested people.

People should feel comfortable to make mistakes, if they make an incorrect suggestion an explanation as to why it is something else can be valuable. For example, if a person has suggested that a plant is *Bossiaea buxifolia* rather than *Bossiaea prostrata* the explanation in the comments box that "this is *B. prostrata* because the backside of the upright petals(standards) are pinkish brown while in *B. buxifolia* they are dark brown" is informative.

Interest of reporters can be piqued by adding an interesting fact about the reported sighting in the comments, such as "this is a male red-headed mouse spider following late summer or autumn rains males leave their trap-doored burrows looking for females. It takes four years for males to be old enough to breed, and at 15mm are only half the size of sluggish females that pretty much spend their entire lives in their 30cm deep burrows" or "May is the month when the nomadic Musk Lorikeet is most likely to visit Southern Highlands gardens, mainly feeding on flowering eucalypts."

Comments on sightings and photo contributions are great for overcoming users fear of posting records. Examples include, "great photo", "this is the first record of this species on (our platform)",

"this is one of the most southerly records of this species in Australia", or "this is one of the highest abundances recorded for this species in our region".

Mentoring fellow moderators

Ideally a user should be able to progress through using Naturemapr, from someone with an interest in wildlife, to become a naturalist with good local knowledge and then to some-one with expert knowledge who can moderate the sightings of others. Moderators can help in this task by mentoring a frequent contributor who wishes to begin an "apprenticeship" whereby within a certain category they begin by confirming readily identifiable species and gradually increase the range of species they identify as they become more knowledgeable. Initially they may just suggest identifications for moderator confirmation and as they begin to confirm species moderators would check their identifications, providing (private) feedback directly to the person being mentored.

Mentoring is a good way to help spread the identification workload.

Moderators should also feel that they are part of a team and can ask questions of each other to help clarify problematic or particularly significant sightings. Using the comments box to raise questions with each other enables others to listen in and learn from the conversation.

Highlighting significant sightings and management actions required

Often the moderators will be the only ones with the knowledge to recognise that a particular sighting is of conservation significance. Significant sightings, and the reason for the significance, should be highlighted by clicking on the [🏷 Significant] box, above the aerial location image.

If a sighting requires particular management (e.g. exclusion from fire; it is a high-risk invasive species that should be a priority to control; it is susceptible to grazing etc) this information should be placed in the comments. A landowner/ manager may have lodged the sighting, many land managers have direct access to the Naturemapr platforms, while the administrators of the site receive every comment and can direct the comment to those that need to know. A feature of Naturemapr is that a significant sighting can be made in the morning and related conservation action has been taken in the afternoon. This is a powerful feature of this citizen science tool.

Maintaining photographic library

The species and place field guides pull photographs from those identified as the defined images, which are the best three images of that species reported to the platform. To add photos of a new species or to replace an existing image with a better one, go to the species page (by clicking on the red species name of the individual sighting page) and then click on the define images box above the key species image. There will be no key image in a new species.
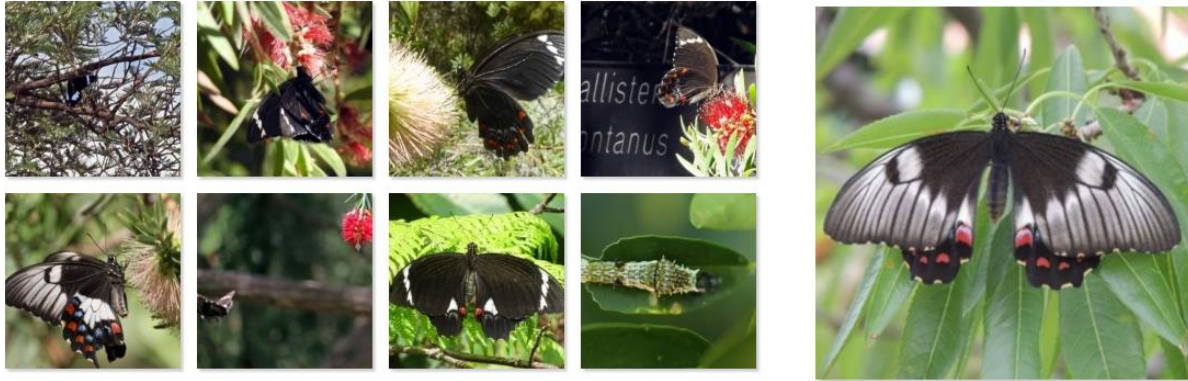
Papilio aegeus ✓ ✎ ⊘ sightings

Orchard Swallowtail - 53 sightings with images
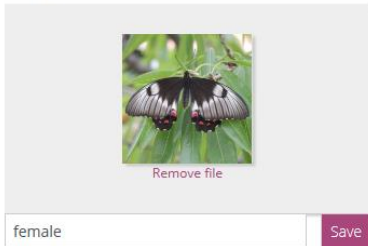
📍 View Species Distribution   📖 Define Images

You are then taken to a page showing all images of that species from which you choose the best three to be the "library" images of that species. Your three selections should include male and females images if they are different. You may also like to showcase juvenile, larvae or egg images. You just click on the image you want to use and move it into one of the three "best" images boxes.
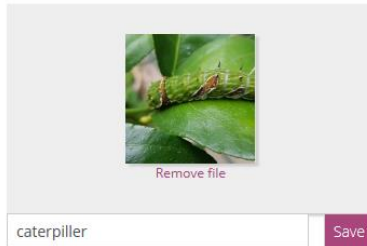
Orchard Swallowtail

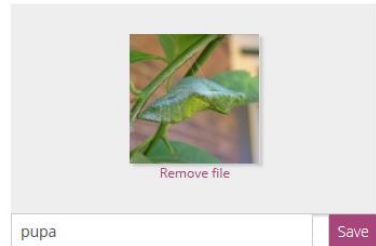Define sample images for this species by dragging and dropping images from the available image pool.

Sample Image 1	Sample Image 2	Sample Image 3
Remove file	Remove file	Remove file
female	Save	caterpiller	Save	pupa	Save

Image pool - 101 images