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Introduction to Ecosystems: Using iSpot

OpenLearn



The OpenScience
Laboratory
An initiative of The Open University
and The Wolfson Foundation

iSpot

Your place to share nature



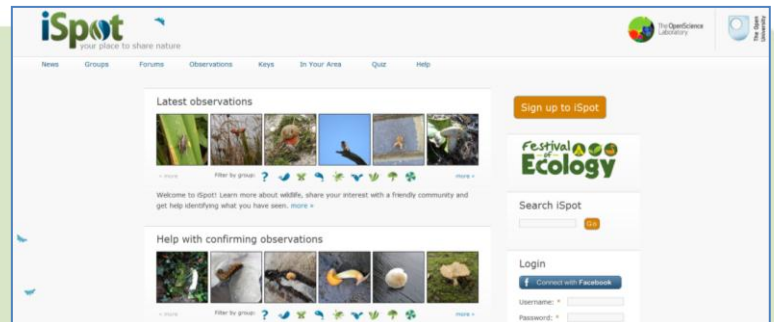
Introduction to Ecosystems: Using iSpot

5 Steps to using iSpot

Visit www.ispotnature.org to get started

- 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.
- Register:** To join in the activity you will need to register (it's free!). Click on the 'Sign up to iSpot' button and provide a user name, email address, and password.
- Add an observation:** Get outdoors and take a digital camera with you, if you can! 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.
- Add an identification:** If you think 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.
- Provide a location:** Click on 'Use map' to select your location from the map (your camera may fill in this information for you). If you do not want to reveal the precise location of the observation, there is an option to hide it.
- Add a tag:** Tag your observations on iSpot with the descriptive tag '#FLeco13' to signify 'FutureLearn Ecosystems 2013'. This will connect your observations to the others made as part of the 'Introduction to ecosystems' course on FutureLearn.

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



Sign up to iSpot

Sign up to iSpot

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. Tag your observation '#FLeco13'.

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 a bird, plant, mammal, etc?

7. Click the 'Use map' button to select your location using Google Maps.

Once you have completed all of the information, you can 'Preview' or 'Save' your observation; once saved it will appear on iSpot for others to see.

Remember to tag your observations:

#FLeco13

Descriptive tags:

#FLeco13

Tagging observations in this way means that you can browse the observations of others who are undertaking the free online 'Introduction to Ecosystems' course. You can also keep track of any observations which you make on iSpot as part of the course.



@iSpot_uk



Ecological Interactions on iSpot



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.

Visit the interactions page on iSpot (www.ispotnature.org/interactions) to explore the latest ecological relationships added to observations. Explore relationships between some of the UK's insects and plants and find out how they depend on each other by visiting our sample of the ecological web (www.ispotnature.org/interactions/ecological-web).

Look out for the carousel of images at the bottom of the observation page; when you get a likely ID for an observation you've added, the carousel at the bottom of the screen shows you species which have been associated with it.

Explore the ecological web

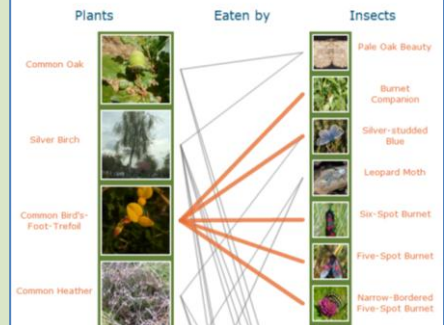
Learn about the fascinating relationships between insects and plants

Every plant species is eaten by a whole community of insects, and there is probably no leaf, root, flower, stem or seed that isn't on some insect's menu. Galls and leaf miners are prominent examples.

To get you started on a journey into the wonderful world of ecological interactions, we have gathered together here a dozen plants and a sample of the insects that eat them. Click on any image to start a voyage of ecological discovery among the thousands of insects and their food plants in iSpot.

If this inspires you, visit our [latest interactions](#) page to see what you can observe for yourself. Your own observations can help us gather new scientific data.

Roll over either a plant or insect listed below to discover how they are linked



How to add an ecological interaction to your observation

1. **Create/find an observation:** Create a new observation for the interaction you have seen. If you'd like to add an interaction to one of your existing observations, visit the page for the observation you wish to add the interaction to.

Please note: you can only add interactions to observations which are your own. Other users will not be able to add interactions to your observations.

2. **Click on 'Add an interaction':** This will allow you to select the type of interaction you have seen from a drop-down menu, you can also select any of the images from the original observation to show this.
3. **Click on 'Create observation':** Fill in all the information you can for the second species, you will notice that the date and location are filled in automatically, but you can change the date if needed. If you don't know the identification of the second species, you can leave it blank so others can help, just assign the correct 'group' to the observation. Once all this is done, remember to click 'save' at the bottom of the page.



10-08-2013 12 14 33



a flower being visited by



Silver-Washed Fritillary
(*Argynnis paphia*)