

QUICK GUIDE:

Texas Master Naturalist Program Guidance for logging Volunteer Service Hours for iNaturalist, Texas Nature Trackers, and eBird Projects

Best practices for Texas Master Naturalists (TMNs) contributing data and service for conservation using the popular apps iNaturalist and eBird. More details are provided in a separate full guide (main) document - <https://txmn.tamu.edu/guidance-for-community-citizen-science-projects/>

About Texas Nature Trackers (TNT)

- TNT serves to link high-quality observations of Texas flora and fauna made by community scientists to Texas Parks & Wildlife Department databases for conservation planning and action.
- TNT utilizes the power of iNaturalist observations to collect data through 12 curated projects, training TMNs statewide to utilize this data collection tool for this purpose.
- Data collected through TNT projects may be used for long-term research and population monitoring.
- TNT staff can be reached by emailing tracker@tpwd.texas.gov for guidance.

Criteria for Earning Service Hours Utilizing iNaturalist

TMNs may earn service hours for contributions through iNaturalist by following these criteria:

- Meet the criteria for a verifiable observation with a sound file and/or photographic evidence
- Focus on wild organisms in Texas with emphasis on Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and/or species of management interest and concern
- Contain true location information with positional accuracy within 500 meters
- Observations must be shared with TNT projects or other projects approved by the chapter
- Time spent using iNaturalist on one's own property cannot be counted as service hours
- Data collection may come in the form of chapter-approved projects including:
 - Organized bioblitzes

- Organized surveys (non-bioblitz) on public land shared with TNT-hosted projects or public collection projects
- Organized surveys on private land where results are shared with TNT-hosted projects or other public collection projects
- Data collection under the umbrella of other projects (see main document for examples).
- iNaturalist species identification efforts for flora and fauna within Texas that include:
 - SGCN and other management priority species
 - Bioblitz results including City Nature Challenge, TexasPollinator Bioblitz or other TMN bioblitzes approved by chapters
 - Curation of observations within TNT iNaturalist projects as coordinated with TNT staff
 - Curation of observations made through chapter-conducted camera trap projects

Texas Nature Trackers Camera Trap Loan Program (CTLP)

TMNs may earn service hours through chapter approved CTLP projects with time spent:

- Scouting, deploying, monitoring, and maintaining cameras and site locations
- Organizing collected data and uploading to appropriate TNT project
- Gathering cameras and equipment at end of project
- Analyzing results, reporting findings and presentations about research efforts
- Reporting on lessons learned and best practices as result of project

Criteria for Earning Service Hours Entering Data into eBird

TMNs may earn service hours for data submission through eBird under the following criteria:

- No service hours may be collected for birding on casual, incidental, or personal birding trips
- Time entering data into eBird after or during personal birding trips can be counted as service hours, up to 15 minutes/trip and only by one member of the birding party
- Time spent formally analyzing eBird data
- Time spent conducting bird surveys on approved formal/official surveys should be logged under the chapter-approved project for those surveys (Christmas Bird Count, Breeding Bird Survey, etc. see link for examples). Time for eBird data entry may not also be counted for these.

- Formal/official surveys are approved at the chapter level and should conform to definition of a formal research survey - see main document