**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What's new in Nature's Notebook**

* [What's new in Spring 2011?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#new_2011)
* [What’s new with phenophase status in Spring 2011?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#new_pheno_status_2011)
* [What’s new with abundance and intensity in Spring 2011?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#new_intensity_2011)
* [What’s new with animal phenophases in Spring 2011?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#new_animal_2011)
* [What's new with plant phenophases in Spring 2011?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#new_plant_2011)
* [What is happening when I try to enter data from before Spring 2011?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#historic-protocol)

**Site selection**

* [What is a representative location?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#rep_location)
* [How do I choose an appropriate size for my site?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#appropriate_size)
* [Do I need permission to make observations on public land?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#permission)
* [How can I best mark my site?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#mark_site)

**Species selection**

* [How do I identify my plants and animals?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#how_id)
* [Can I start observing a plant if I am unsure which species it is?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#species_unknown)
* [What can I do if the plant or animal I would like to observe is not on the species list?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#not_on_list)
* [What exactly is a calibration species?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#calibration_sp)

**Individual plant selection**

* [How many individual plants of the same species should I observe?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#how_many)
* [Are there other things I should consider when selecting my plant(s)?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#plant_considerations)
* [How can I best mark the plant(s) that I am observing?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#plant_marking)
* [What if the plant I am observing dies?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#plant_death)

**Cloned plants**

* [I requested cloned lilacs but have not received them. What is the status of my request?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#where_is_my_lilac)
* [What type of lilac do I have? Aren't the cloned lilacs you sent me common lilacs?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#what_type_lilac)

**Making observations**

* [How do I print and use the datasheet packet?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#datasheet_packet)
* [How should I answer the various 'Time spent' questions?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#time_reporting)
* [Why do you care about snow on the ground or in the treetops at my site?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#snow)
* [How often should I make my observations?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#how_often)
* [At what time of day should I make my observations?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#what_time)
* [What if I never see some of the animals I am observing?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#never_see)
* [Why should I record my observations when nothing seems to be happening?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#no_change)
* [Why should I report on the intensity or abundance of my plant and animal phenophases?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#intensity)
* [What if I missed a phenophase?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#missed)
* [Why is it valuable to know that a phenophase did not occur at all in a given year?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#none_occurrance)
* [Why should I continue looking for a phenophase even after it has passed?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#keep_looking)

**Plant phenophases**

* [Can I still report 'Breaking leaf/needle buds' (trees and shrubs), 'Emerging needles' (pines), or 'Initial growth' (forbs and grasses) once I see 'Leaves/Needles' or 'Young leaves/needles' on the plant?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#breaking_leaf_buds)
* [Why is there a phenophase for ‘Emerging needles’ for pine species but not for other conifer species?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#pine_needles)
* [When should I report I no longer see 'Leaves/Needles'?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#end_leaves)
* [How do I judge what proportion of the canopy is full with leaves or needles?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#canopy_full)
* [How can I judge the proportion of full leaf size while leaves are still increasing in size?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#full_leaf_size)
* [Are you sure the phenophase 'Increasing leaf size' is appropriate for my plant?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#leaf_size_appropriate)
* [For ‘Colored leaves/needles’, why am I asked to report an estimate of the proportion of the plant canopy still full with GREEN leaves?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#canopy_colored)
* [Why are there no intensity options provided for ‘Falling leaves/needles’?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#no_fall_intensity)
* [How are the phenophases ‘Flowers’, 'Flower heads' (grasses), or 'Pollen cones' (conifers) different from ‘Open flowers’ or 'Open pollen cones'?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#flowers)
* [When should I choose ‘Peak flower’, ‘Peak opening’, or ‘Peak pollen’ to describe the intensity of 'Open flowers', 'Open pollen cones', or 'Pollen release'?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#peak_flower)
* [Why do some species have a phenophase for 'Pollen release' and others do not?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#pollen_release)
* [How is the phenophase ‘Fruits’ different from ‘Ripe fruits’?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#fruits)
* [Can I report seeing both ‘Unripe seed cones’ and ‘Ripe seed cones’ on the same plant at the same time?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#seed_cones)
* [Why should I look for 'Recent fruit drop' or 'Recent seed cone drop' (conifers), and how can I tell if mature fruits or seed cones have dropped from my plant since my last visit?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#mature_fruit_drop)
* [When should I stop reporting 'Yes' to seeing phenophases with an unclear endpoint?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#unclear_endpoint)

**Animal phenophases**

* [Can I still report seeing ‘Active individuals/adults’ or ‘Individuals/adults on land/water’ if I also report seeing another more specific phenophase?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#multi_phase)
* [How can I estimate the number of individuals in a large group of animals?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#estimate_animals)

**Entering your data online**

* [How frequently should I enter my observation data?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#enter_frequency)
* [What is the best way to enter the observation data recorded on my datasheets?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#enter_datasheet_packet)
* [How do I change observation data once I have entered it?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#correct_data)
* [How do I get rid of a plant or animal once I have added it to my site?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#delete_planimal)

**What's new in Nature's Notebook**

**What's new in Spring 2011?**

This spring we updated the phenology monitoring protocols in Nature’s Notebook, based on feedback from observers and from scientists who use the data. Please check the profile pages for your plant and animal species to see updated phenophase definitions and new phenophases.

If you have already starting observing this spring with the old phenophases, your observations are still valid, but we recommend you print out new datasheets and start using them right away. When you enter data in your Nature’s Notebook [Enter Observations](http://mynpn.usanpn.org/npnapps) form for observation dates on and after March 21, 2011, you will be asked to report on the new phenophases. The following FAQs summarize all the major changes and explain what to do if you had already started observing before the update.

* [What’s new with phenophase status in Spring 2011?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#new_pheno_status_2011)
* [What’s new with abundance and intensity in Spring 2011?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#new_intensity_2011)
* [What’s new with animal phenophases in Spring 2011?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#new_animal_2011)
* [What's new with plant phenophases in Spring 2011?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#new_plant_2011)
* [What is happening when I try to enter data from before Spring 2011?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#historic-protocol)

**What's new with phenophase status in Spring 2011?**

Up to now, you have been reporting ‘y’ if you saw that a phenophase ***was*** occurring, ‘n’ if you saw that a phenophase ***was not*** occurring, and ‘?’ if you were **uncertain** whether the phenophase was occurring or if you ***did not check*** for the phenophase. We have made a slight change for the last condition. If you checked for a phenophase and were not sure whether is was occurring or not, report ‘?’. If you did not even look or listen to check whether the phenophase was occurring, ***do not select any of the choices and leave them all uncircled***.

**What's new with abundance and intensity in Spring 2011?**

See [Why should I report on the intensity or abundance of my plant and animal phenophases?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#intensity) for information about why we have added the ability for you to estimate measures of intensity or abundance. Since this is a new feature, we would especially like your feedback on how easy or difficult these questions are to answer, and in the case of intensity categories, how well the choices seem to represent what is happening for your species over the course of the phenophase duration.  Reporting on the abundance or intensity of a phenophase is optional, so if you are unsure of what number to report or what category to choose, or if you simply find it to be too much trouble, it is ok to leave the box blank.

**What's new with animal phenophases in Spring 2011?**

Animal phenophases have not changed very much at all, but you may see a new phenophase or two for your species. If you started observing before March 21, 2011, you would not have looked for these new phenophases, so when asked for them on the [Enter Observations](http://mynpn.usanpn.org/npnapps) form, do not select any of the choices and leave them all uncircled. For the phenophases you did check for, you should leave the abundance box empty unless you remember how many individuals you saw in that phenophase on that observation date.

**What's new with plant phenophases in Spring 2011?**

For plants, some phenophase titles and definitions have changed slightly.  However, these changes were generally made to clarify the original phenophase definition and not to change the meaning.  There were also several new phenophases added for most plant species.  What follows is summary of the changes for each of the phenophases for your plant species, and how to report on each one if you were still using the old definitions for observations made on or after March 21, 2011.

* **‘Breaking leaf/needle buds’** have virtually the same definitions as ‘Emerging leaves/needles’, but we updated the titles of the phenophases to clarify that you are actually looking only for the first leaf or needle emerging from a bud and not leaves or needles emerging from a growing shoot all season long. You can now also report an estimate of the number of breaking leaf or needle buds you see on the plant at the time of each observation.

*If you were using the old definitions, simply report your post-Mar 20 observations for ‘Emerging leaves/needles’ under the ‘Breaking leaf/needle buds’ phenophase. Do not select a choice for intensity unless you happen to remember what it would have been at each observation date.*

* **‘Initial growth’** (forbs and grasses) has virtually the same definition as ‘Emerging growth’, but we updated the title of the phenophase to clarify that you are actually looking only for the initial stages of growth for each new shoot and not leaves emerging from a growing shoot all season long. Reporting of intensity for this phenophase is not currently available.

*If you were using the old definitions, simply report your post-Mar 20 observations for ‘Emerging growth’ under the ‘Initial growth’ phenophase.*

* **‘Leaves/Needles’** and **‘Young leaves/needles’** have virtually the same definitions as ‘Unfolded leaves/needles’ and ‘Young unfolded leaves/needles’ respectively.  For many species you can now also report an estimate of the number of young leaves/needles on the plant or the proportion of the plant canopy full with leaves or needles at the time of each observation. See [How do I judge what proportion of the canopy is full with leaves or needles?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#canopy_full) for more information.

*If you were using the old definitions, simply report your post-Mar 20 observations for ‘Young leaves/needles’ under the ‘Leaves/Needles’ phenophase. Do not select a choice for intensity unless you happen to remember what it would have been at each observation date.*

* **‘Increasing leaf size’** is similar to ‘>75% of full leaf size’, however we now ask observers to report whether or not the majority of leaves are still growing larger, and if so, what proportion of full size they are at the time of observation. This allows reporting for leaf size at a full range of increments from 25% to 95% of full size. See [How can I judge the proportion of full leaf size while leaves are still increasing in size?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#full_leaf_size) and [Are you sure the phenophase 'Increasing leaf size' is appropriate for my plant?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#leaf_size_appropriate) for more information.

*If you were using the old definitions and had circled ‘y’ to ‘>75% of full leaf size’, then for your post-Mar 20 observations you should either be circling ‘y’ for ‘Increasing leaf size’ and choosing the ’75-94%’ or ‘95% or more’ intensity choice, or you should be circling ‘n’ if the leaves stopped getting larger and where at 100% of full size. If you do not remember the size of your plant’s leaves on the given observation dates, either do not select a choice for intensity or do not report on this phenophase at all.*

* **‘Colored leaves/needles’** collapses ‘>50% of leaves/needles colored’ and ‘All leaves/needles colored’ into a single phenophase, and allows reporting for colored leaves or needles at a full range of increments from 5% to 95%. See [For ‘Colored leaves/needles’ why am I asked to report an estimate of the proportion of the plant canopy still full with GREEN leaves?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#canopy_colored) for more information.

*If you were using the old definitions and had circled ‘y’ to ‘>50% of leaves/needles colored’ or ‘All leaves/needles colored’ but ‘n’ for ‘All leaves/needles fallen’, then for your post-Mar 20 observations it is likely that ‘y’ should be circled for ‘Colored leaves/needles’ on that date. Intensity choices for the new phenophases are different enough from the old phenophases that it is probably best not to select a choice for intensity.*

* **‘Falling leaves/needles’** is similar to ‘>50% of leaves/needles fallen’, however we now ask observers to report whether or not they see any leaves falling or recently fallen from the plant. No intensity estimates are included for this phenophase because the proportion of leaves that have fallen from the plant can be calculated from the proportion of leaves left on the plant as reported for ‘Leaves/Needles’.

*If you were using the old definitions and had circled ‘y’ for ‘>50% of leaves/needles fallen’ and ‘n’ for ‘All leaves fallen’, then it is likely for your post-Mar 20 observations you should be circling ‘y’ for ‘Falling leaves/needles’.*

* ‘All leaves/needles fallen’ and ‘All leaves withered’ are no longer separate phenophases. They were redundant since this stage on the plant was already being reported when ‘Unfolded leaves/needles’ was reported as no longer occurring. It was also confusing as to when to stop reporting ‘All leaves/needles fallen’ or ‘All leaves withered’.

*If you had circled ‘y’ to ‘All leaves/needles fallen’ or ‘All leaves withered’, then for your post-Mar 20 observations it is likely that ‘n’ should be circled for ‘Leaves/Needles’ on that date.*

* **‘Flowers’**, **‘Flower heads’** (grasses), and **‘Pollen cones’** (conifers) are new phenophases. See [How are the phenophases ‘Flowers’, ‘Flower heads’ (grasses), or ‘Pollen cones’ (conifers) different from ‘Open flowers’ or ‘Open pollen cones’?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#flowers) for more information.

*If you were using the old definitions, for your post-Mar 20 observations you may report ‘y’ to ‘Flowers’, ‘Flower heads’, or ‘Pollen cones’ if you reported ‘y’ to ‘Open flowers’ or ‘Pollen release’. Do not select a choice for intensity unless you happen to remember what it would have been at each observation date.*

* ‘Flower buds’ is no longer a special phenophase for cacti, but the stage is included within the new definition for ‘Flowers’.

If *you had circled ‘y’ for ‘Flower buds’, then for your post-Mar 20 observations you should be circling ‘y’ for ‘Flowers’.*

* **‘Open flowers’** has virtually the same definition as before. You can now also report an estimate of the number of open flowers you see on the plant at the time of each observation.

I*f you were using the old definitions, simply report your post-Mar 21 observations for ‘Open flowers’ as usual. Do not select a choice for intensity unless you happen to remember what it would have been at each observation date.*

* **‘Open pollen cones’** is a new phenophase for conifers.

*If you were using the old definitions, for your post-Mar 20 observations you may report ‘y’ to ‘Open pollen cones’ if you reported ‘y’ to ‘Pollen release’. Do not select a choice for intensity unless you happen to remember what it would have been at each observation date.*

* ‘Full flowering’ is no longer a phenophase unto itself, but is included as an intensity choice (called ‘Peak flower’) for ‘Open flowers’. See [When should I choose ‘Peak flower’, ‘Peak opening’, or ‘Peak pollen’ to describe the intensity of 'Open flowers', 'Open pollen cones', or 'Pollen release'?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#peak_flower) for more information.

*If you had circled ‘y’ to ‘Full flowering’, then for your post-Mar 20 observations you should be circling ‘y’ for ‘Open flowers’ and choosing the ’Peak flower’ intensity choice.*

* **‘Pollen release’** should be checked carefully.  It is a new phenophase for some species, and for many of the species that previously had this phenophase (like birches, oaks and alders), the definition has changed somewhat.   ‘Pollen release’ should now be reported only if you can actually see pollen dust upon blowing or shaking the flower or pollen cone. Do not try to observe this phenophase if you can not get close enough to a flower or pollen cone to blow or shake it to see if pollen falls into your hand. You can now also report an estimate of the number of flowers or cones you see releasing pollen on the plant at the time of each observation.

*If you were using the old definitions and had circled ‘y’ to ‘Pollen release’, then for your post-Mar 20 observations you should either be circling ‘y’ for ‘Open flowers’ (birches, oaks, alders) or for ‘Open pollen cones’ (conifers). If you actually saw pollen in your hand, you can also report ‘y’ for the new ‘Pollen release’ phenophase. Do not select a choice for intensity unless you happen to remember what it would have been at each observation date.*

* ‘Full pollen release’ is no longer a phenophase unto itself, but is included as an intensity choice (called ‘Peak pollen’) for ‘Pollen release’.

*If you had circled ‘y’ to ‘Full pollen release’, then for your post-Mar 20 observations you should be circling ‘y’ for ‘Open flowers’ (birches, oaks, alders) or for ‘Open pollen cones’ (conifers), and choosing the ’Peak flower’ or ‘Peak opening’ intensity choice. If you actually saw pollen in your hand, you can also report ‘y’ for the new ‘Pollen release’ phenophase and choose the ’Peak pollen’ intensity choice.*

* **‘Fruits’** is a new phenophase. See [How is the phenophase ‘Fruits’ different from ‘Ripe fruits’?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#fruits) for more information. Note that specific information for identifying fruits on each plant species will soon be added after the general definition on each species' profile page.

*If you were using the old definitions, for your post-Mar 20 observations you may report ‘y’ to ‘Fruits’ if you reported ‘y’ to ‘Ripe fruits’. Do not select a choice for intensity unless you happen to remember what it would have been at each observation date.*

* **‘Unripe seed cones’** is a new phenophase. See [Can I report seeing both ‘Unripe seed cones’ and ‘Ripe seed cones’ on the same plant at the same time?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#seed_cones) for more information.

*If you were using the old definitions, there was no equivalent to this phenophase, so for your post-Mar 21 observations do not report anything for ‘Unripe seed cones’.*

* **‘Ripe fruits’** has virtually the same definition as before.  As with ‘Fruits’, specific information for identifying ripe fruits on each plant species will soon be added after the general definition on each species' profile page.  You can now also report an estimate of the number of ripe fruits you see on the plant at the time of each observation.

*If you were using the old definitions, simply report your post-Mar 21 observations for ‘Ripe fruits’ as usual. Do not select a choice for intensity unless you happen to remember what it would have been at each observation date.*

* **‘Ripe seed cones’** has virtually the same definition as before. You can now also report an estimate of the number of ripe seed cones you see on the plant at the time of each observation.

*If you were using the old definitions, simply report your post-Mar 21 observations for ‘Ripe seed cones’ as usual. Do not select a choice for intensity unless you happen to remember what it would have been at each observation date.*

* **‘Recent fruit drop’** and **‘Recent seed cone drop’** are new phenophases. See [Why should I look for ‘Recent fruit drop’ or ‘Recent seed cone drop’ (conifers), and how can I tell if mature fruits or seed cones have dropped from my plant since my last visit?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#mature_fruit_drop) for more information.

*If you were using the old definitions, there were no equivalents to these phenophase, so for your post-Mar 21 observations do not report anything for ‘Recent fruit drop’ or ‘Recent seed cone drop’.*

**What is happening when I try to enter data from before Spring 2011?**

In updating Nature's Notebook this year, we have added new phenophases and revised existing phenophase titles and definitions for many species. For example, we have added fruit phenophases and renamed some phenophases (what was ‘emerging leaves’ is now called ‘breaking leaf buds’). We want you to be able to go back and accurately add or edit your observations no matter what set of phenophases were used when you collected your data in the past.

Let's say you are finally getting around to entering observation data for your "red maple-1" that was collected in 2010. On the plant phenophase datasheet in front of you, which you printed and filled out last year, the first phenophase is ‘Emerging leaves’.  However, when you go to the Enter Observations page now, the first phenophase listed for your "red maple-1" is ‘Breaking leaf buds’. Don’t worry! Once you enter the observation date (as long as it was before March 21, 2011), you will get a pop-up box which says:

*The following individual(s) are associated with a different set of phenophases for the date you selected: red maple-1. We'll have to reset the page to continue; you'll lose any data on this page that you have not yet saved. Press 'Yes' to proceed.*

This message lets you know that you are going to move back to a point in time when your red maple had a different set of phenophases (or at least different phenophase definitions) associated with it. If you do want to go back to this point in time, proceed by clicking yes and enter your "red maple-1" data with the appropriate set of phenophases. If you don’t see the complete message as above (this may happen if you have a lot of plants or animals registered), try resizing the pop up box.

Note that the same thing happens when you use the blue arrows to navigate back and forth in time through changing sets of phenophases. Instead of a pop-up box, you will see a pink message like this:

*The previous observation records were created using a different set of phenophases. To see these observations and their phenophases click the orange back arrow : red maple-1*

In order to proceed, click the orange arrow.

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| [Return to Previous Page](javascript:%20history.go(-1)) | [Nature's Notebook Home](http://mynpn.usanpn.org/npnapps) |

**Site selection**

**What is a representative location?**

We welcome all observations, even if your site is unusual for your area, but we encourage people to select sites that are representative of the local environment when possible. For example, if possible, we recommend that you select a site in a relatively flat or gently sloping area. We also recommend that you avoid areas that are subject to drifting snow or funneled or channeled winds. The site should ideally be neither excessively dry nor wet for your area. In forested areas, the site should be generally similar to the surrounding forest, reflecting the overall canopy composition and stature. If you are observing wild plants, we suggest you avoid locations where plants are watered or fertilized. If your site is unusual for your area, just record the unusual characteristics in the comments section of the Nature's Notebook [Add a New Site](http://mynpn.usanpn.org/npnapps) form when you register your site.

**How do I choose an appropriate size for my site?**

The best size for your site depends on the scale of your landscape and the distance over which you can easily see or walk. It also depends on whether you are observing animals or only plants. For plants, a site is the area that surrounds the individual plants you are observing. For animals, a site is the area where you look for the animals on your checklist. If you are observing both plants and animals, your site(s) can serve in both of these ways.

**If you are observing both plants and animals or only animals:** Because you will be reporting observations of animals you see or hear ***in your site***, your site can include the area that you can see and hear well while standing still or the area that you can walk in a relatively short amount of time. If you are observing in an open grassland or near a body of water, your site might be the maximum recommended size (15 acres), because you may be able to identify animals that are far away. In contrast, if your site is in a dense forest, it might be relatively small, as you may not be able to identify species at great distances.

Even if you can identify animals over a large area, an area should be divided into different sites if it includes habitats that are obviously different. For instance, if you are making observations at a pond in a meadow, the pond and the meadow should be registered as separate sites. In that case, just report your animal observations for the site at which you saw or heard them, for example, at either the pond or the meadow.

**If you are observing only plants:** For plants, the size of your site does not matter much as long as the conditions are pretty similar throughout your site. If you are observing just one plant, your site can simply be the small area immediately around that plant, say within 3 feet of the plant. If you are observing several plants near one another, you can consider them all to be at one site, as long as the site conditions are pretty similar and the site is no larger than 15 acres or 6 hectares.

When selecting the plants to observe at your site, you will want to strike a balance between how much time it will take to walk between plants, while ensuring that the individual plants that you are observing are not too close together (see [How many individual plants of the same species should I observe?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#how_many)). Your observing locations should be divided into different sites if their habitats are obviously different.

**If you are observing a large number of plants or animals:**  If you are observing more than 20 plants and animals at one site we suggest breaking this up into separate sites in Nature’s Notebook, as sites with many species overload the Enter Observations page. For example, if you have 10 animals and 15 plants that you observe in your back yard, you could break this up into “Back Yard Animals” and “Back Yard Plants”.  For people observing more than 20 plants (either as an individual observer or as part of a research project), you can break up large sites into smaller ones based on geographic or environmental features, or sub sites related to your study. For example, you could split up a lake bog site into “Lake bog lowland”, “Lake bog highland” and “Lake highland”.

**Do I need permission to make observations on public land?**

Many public agencies encourage observations of this kind and would be glad to know that you are reporting your observations to Nature’s Notebook. However, you should get permission to make observations from the appropriate department of the federal government, state, or municipality that has responsibility for the property. Land managers often issue written permits for land access, which will help ensure that you can mark your sites and plants and can regularly visit your site.

**How can I best mark my site?**

There are many options, but the most important thing is that you mark your site so that you can find it again in the future. For most sites, it is probably easiest to mark the four corners with colorful flagging, scrap cloth, or something similar. You can also use natural or man-made landmarks, like the edge of a yard, big rocks, a bend in a trail, a road, or something similar, to define the boundaries. You will need to replace your markers periodically as they weather and become unreadable. Also, remember that if you are observing a site on public land, you will need to get permission before marking the site.

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| [Return to Previous Page](javascript:%20history.go(-1)) | [Add a New Site](http://mynpn.usanpn.org/npnapps) |

**Species selection**

**How do I identify my plant and animals?**

Correct plant and animal identification is important when reporting your observations in Nature’s Notebook. We know it can be tricky to identify a plant or animal, and luckily there are many field guides and online resources that can help. Many communities also have gardening, [birding](http://www.audubon.org/states/index.php" \t "_blank), native plant or naturalist groups, [cooperative extension offices](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/" \t "_blank), [nature centers](http://www.audubon.org/states/centers_sanctuaries.php" \t "_blank), local colleges, [herbaria](http://sweetgum.nybg.org/ih/" \t "_blank), state or [national parks](http://www.nps.gov/findapark/index.htm" \t "_blank), or [wildlife refuges](http://www.fws.gov/Refuges/" \t "_blank) where you can find people to help identify plants or animal in your area.

If you are uncertain of your plant’s identity, you can certainly record your observations on a datasheet until you have identified it (see [Can I start observing a plant if I am unsure which species it is?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#species_unknown)). If you are uncertain whether an animal you saw was a species on your list that you are observing, it is best to record your observation of that species as uncertain by filling in the question mark (?) on your data sheet. The USA-NPN National Coordinating Office staff is small, so unfortunately, we cannot visit your site or identify your plant or animal from a photograph, but we will continue to add more information to our website to help make identifying plants and animals easier.

**Online field guides**

* [Discover Life's IDnature guides](http://www.discoverlife.org/mp/20q" \t "_blank)
* [eNature](http://www.enature.com/home/" \t "_blank)
* [Arbor Day Foundation](http://www.arborday.org/trees/whattree/" \t "_blank) (for trees)

**Field guide books**

Look for plant or animal field guides at a local or online book store. Field guides that are particular to your region are often the best choice.

**Other online resources for plants**

* [USDA PLANTS](http://plants.usda.gov/" \t "_blank)
* [Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center](http://www.wildflower.org/explore/" \t "_blank)

**Other online resources for animals**

* [All About Birds](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/" \t "_blank)

**Can I start observing a plant if I am unsure which species it is?**

Yes, you can keep track of observations on a field datasheet, but please do not enter your observations online until you have identified the species with reasonable confidence. When a plant is dormant, it may be difficult to tell which species it is, but you probably have a good idea about whether it is a forb, grass, deciduous tree, evergreen tree, or another kind of plant. The phenophase definitions within these broad groups are fairly standard, so we recommend you find a similar species and use the datasheet and phenophases for that species (see some choices below).

Once you have identified the plant, please check the phenophases for that species to make sure they are consistent with what you had been recording. If they are consistent, you can enter the data online. If they are not consistent, please do not enter your old observations. Instead start fresh now that you have identified your plant. If it turns out your plant is not on the species list, please see [What can I do if the plant or animal I would like to observe is not on the species list?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#not_on_list)

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|  | **Datasheet for:** | **Example species** (check these for phenophases) |
|  | [Deciduous tree or shrub](http://www.usanpn.org/files/shared/observationsheets/USA-NPN_observation_datasheet_2011_deciduous_treeshrub_pollen.pdf" \t "_blank) | [red maple](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/Acer_rubrum) or [white oak](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/Quercus_alba) or [honey mesquite](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/Prosopis_glandulosa) |
|  | [Broadleaf evergreen tree or shrub](http://www.usanpn.org/files/shared/observationsheets/USA-NPN_observation_datasheet_2011_broadleaf_evergreen_pollen.pdf" \t "_blank) | [big sagebrush](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/Artemisia_tridentata) or [live oak](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/Quercus_virginiana) |
|  | [Evergreen conifer](http://www.usanpn.org/files/shared/observationsheets/USA-NPN_observation_datasheet_2011_conifer.pdf" \t "_blank) (except pine) | [Douglas fir](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/Pseudotsuga_menziesii) or [Ashe's juniper](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/Juniperus_ashei) |
|  | [Pine](http://www.usanpn.org/files/shared/observationsheets/USA-NPN_observation_datasheet_2011_conifer_needle_bundles.pdf" \t "_blank) | [ponderosa pine](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/Pinus_ponderosa) |
|  | [Deciduous conifer](http://www.usanpn.org/files/shared/observationsheets/USA-NPN_observation_datasheet_2011_conifer_deciduous.pdf" \t "_blank) | [larch](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/Larix_laricina) |
|  | [Forb](http://www.usanpn.org/files/shared/observationsheets/USA-NPN_observation_datasheet_2011_forbs_pollen.pdf" \t "_blank) | [annual ragweed](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/Ambrosia_artemisiifolia) or [California popppy](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/Eschscholzia_californica) |
|  | [Grass](http://www.usanpn.org/files/shared/observationsheets/USA-NPN_observation_datasheet_2011_grass.pdf" \t "_blank) | [cheatgrass](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/Bromus_tectorum) |
|  | [Sedge](http://www.usanpn.org/files/shared/observationsheets/USA-NPN_observation_datasheet_2011_sedge.pdf" \t "_blank) | [water sedge](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/Carex_aquatilis) |
|  | [Cactus](http://www.usanpn.org/files/shared/observationsheets/USA-NPN_observation_datasheet_2011_cacti.pdf" \t "_blank) | [saguaro](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/Carnegia_gigantea) |

**What can I do if the plant or animal I would like to observe is not on the species list?**

The Nature's Notebook [species list](http://www.usanpn.org/participate/species) includes plants and animals that are important to observe for a variety of reasons, including their ecological and economic importance, conservation value, importance as game species, association with health issues such as allergies, or importance to ecosystem services such as food supply. We are constantly working to revise and expand the list of species and the related materials and welcome your suggestions for additions or other changes.

In the meantime, if you would like to start observing a plant or animal not currently on our species list, you can observe that species using a datasheet appropriate for a similar species, and submit your observations to Nature’s Notebook later. You may also consider participating in one of the many other observation programs that are tracking the phenology of particular groups of plants and animals (see a [list of other observation programs](http://www.usanpn.org/participate/other-programs)).

Please send your comments on our list of plant and animal species to [observe@usanpn.org](mailto:observe@usanpn.org).

**What exactly is a calibration species?**

A Nature’s Notebook plant calibration species is one of 20 plants selected to help "calibrate" phenological measurements across the United States. These species have broad distributions and are ecologically or economically important. Scientists use observations of these species to get "the big picture" of phenology across the nation. We encourage observers to include at least one plant calibration species in their observations. We need many observations of calibration species to understand the changes taking place in the timing of seasonal events across the nation, particularly in relationship to climate change, and to inform decisions that must be made in response to some of these changes.

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| [Return to Previous Page](javascript:%20history.go(-1)) | [View Plant and Animal List](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?q=species_search) |

**Individual plant selection**

**How many individual plants of the same species should I observe?**

For most observers, we recommend observing between one and three individuals of the same plant species at a site. Observers at research sites may wish to choose three to five individuals per site. Observing multiple individuals helps to give scientists an idea of the variation in phenology among individuals at your site. In some years and for some phenophases, multiple individuals will exhibit identical timing in their phenology, and in other years or phenophases they will not. Even if your multiple individuals seem to always exhibit the same timing, that is still interesting to know and valuable data to collect!

When you choose the number of individuals to observe, you should consider the time it will take to make the observations. If you do decide to observe multiple individuals of the same species, try to select plants growing in a similar environment (for example, have similar amounts of sun or shade), but which are not direct neighbors—selected plants should not be closer than two or three times the width of one of the plants. For example, an observer might select three lilacs growing in his or her yard, each growing in full sun and spaced three plant widths apart from each other. If the lilacs are growing as a hedge, this would mean every third lilac plant could be selected. If you are observing the same species at multiple sites but have limited time, you may want to observe multiple individuals of each species at one of the sites, and only observe one of each species at the other sites.

**Are there other things I should consider when selecting my plant(s)?**

Yes. Although we welcome all observations, we encourage observers to avoid selecting plants that are closer than 20 feet to a road or building. Also, please read the “Special Considerations for Observing” section of the species profile to find out if there are other considerations for your plant species. For example, some species grow clonally and form large clumps of stems growing from the same roots. If your plant can be clonal, try to choose individual stems from different clumps. Where it is not possible to follow these guidelines for a specific individual, mention that in the comments section of your Nature’s Notebook [Add or Edit Plants](http://mynpn.usanpn.org/npnapps) form.

**How can I best mark the plant(s) that I am observing?**

*See a* [*training video*](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/training_videos#mark) *on this topic*  
For trees and shrubs, you can attach flagging tape or small, inconspicuous aluminum tags (which you can buy at a hardware store or forestry supply company) to the trunk or a branch on each plant. For grasses and forbs, you can place labeled toothpicks, popsicle sticks, or skewers in the ground next to each plant, or loosely tie colored string around the base of the plant. However you mark your individual plants, you will want to make sure you do not change the growing conditions of the plant. For example, avoid placing a broad stake next to a small plant that would shade it or cause root damage. You will need to replace your markers periodically as they weather and become unreadable. Also, remember that if you are observing at a site on public land, you will need to get permission before marking the plants.

**What if the plant I am observing dies?**

If an individual dies or is obviously declining in health (when others of the same species around it are still healthy), you should select a new individual to observe. However, be sure to mark the old individual as dead on your Nature’s Notebook [Add or Edit Plants](http://mynpn.usanpn.org/npnapps) page and add the replacement as a new plant with a different nickname. If you are observing any annual or biennial species at your site, you will need to select a new plant on a regular basis since the individual plants die after one and two years, respectively.

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| [Return to Previous Page](javascript:%20history.go(-1)) | [Add or Edit Plants](http://mynpn.usanpn.org/npnapps) |

**Cloned plants**

**I requested cloned lilacs but have not received them. What is the status of my request?**

We still have more requests for [cloned lilac plants](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?q=content/lilachoneysuckle-program) than we can immediately satisfy. The number that we can distribute each year is limited by available funds. We are trying to fill requests in a way that will distribute cloned lilacs to all areas across the country, but also send them as soon as possible to those interested in receiving them.

A second option, which can speed the arrival of your cloned lilacs and help us stretch our limited resources, is to purchase cloned lilacs directly from the supplier, [Jung Seed Company](http://www.jungseed.com/dc.asp?c1=USA-NPN+Lilac&c=785" \t "_blank). Orders can be placed through Jung’s web page or by calling their order department at 1-800-247-5864.

As a third option, you may purchase a common purple lilac ([*Syringa vulgaris*](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/Syringa_vulgaris), usually called "old fashioned" or "hedge" lilac) from any nursery and observe it. Common purple lilacs make good "partners" with cloned lilacs, because their phenologies are quite similar. If you have also ordered a cloned lilac you may plant it and observe it along with the common lilac.

**What type of lilac do I have? Aren't the cloned lilacs you sent me common lilacs?**

If you received cloned lilacs from us, they are not common lilacs. Rather, they are specially cultivated Chinese lilacs ([*Syringa x chinensis* 'Red Rothomagensis'](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/Syringa_chinensis)), which have leaves that are about twice as long as they are wide ([much narrower than common purple lilac leaves](http://www.usanpn.org/files/shared/lilac-leaf-comp.png" \t "_blank)). These are the same lilacs that were distributed to people who made phenology observations as a part of the [historical lilac phenology networks](http://www.usanpn.org/?q=node/36) run through the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Most lilacs that you might purchase from a nursery or that are growing in yards or in parks are common lilacs ([*Syringa vulgaris*](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/Syringa_vulgaris), also called "hedge" or "old-fashioned" lilacs).  These plants are NOT clones, and occur in the wild in many areas of the United States, although they are not native here. Common lilacs have leaves that are somewhat "heart" shaped ([much wider than cloned lilac leaves](http://www.usanpn.org/files/shared/lilac-leaf-comp.png" \t "_blank)).

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| [Return to Previous Page](javascript:%20history.go(-1)) | [Cloned Plants Project Page](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?q=content/lilachoneysuckle-program) |

**Making observations**

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| |  | | --- | | Click Images to Enlarge |   [ample Cover Sheet](http://www.usanpn.org/files/shared/images/FAQ_COVER_SHEET_IMAGE.jpg) Sample Cover Sheet |
| [ample Animal Checklist](http://www.usanpn.org/files/shared/images/FAQ_animal_checklist_image.jpg) Sample Animal Checklist |
| [[ample Animal Phenophase Datasheet](http://www.usanpn.org/files/shared/images/FAQ_animal_data_sheet_image.jpg)](http://www.usanpn.org/files/shared/images/FAQ_animal_data_sheet_image.jpg) Sample Animal Phenophase Datasheet |
| [ample Animal Phenophase Definition Sheet](http://www.usanpn.org/files/shared/images/FAQ_phenophase_definition_sheet_image.jpg) Sample Animal Phenophase Definition Sheet |

**How do I print and use the datasheet packet?**

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| When you click “Create Datasheets" from your [Nature’s Notebook Home](http://mynpn.usanpn.org/npnapps) page, a window will appear prompting you to create all or some of the datasheets in your datasheet packet. Once you make a choice, a pdf file will be downloaded (or you will be prompted to download it) on your computer. You can then print the datasheets to use for recording your observations in the field. To start out with, we recommend you choose “Create All Datasheets” and print the entire packet for your site. The packet includes a Cover Sheet, an Animal Checklist (if you have added animals to your checklist), an Animal Phenophase Datasheet & Definition Sheet for each species of animal you are observing, and a Plant Phenophase Datasheet & Definition Sheet for each individual plant you are observing. The purpose of the Cover Sheet is to report information to describe each day you visit the site. The Animal Checklist (if you are observing animals) provides a quick summary of the animal species seen or heard at your site on each date. The subsequent individual plant and animal Phenophase Datasheets are for tracking your phenophases observations for each animal species or each individual plant.   * On the **Cover Sheet**, please record the amount of time you contribute to this project each day in travel to your site and in making observations. Also please record the time you spent specifically looking for animals that day (if you are observing animals), and the method you used to search for them (see instructions on the Cover Sheet). If there is snow at your site, please report whether it is visible on the ground and/or in the treetops, and estimate the percent of ground it covers. (See also [How should I answer the various 'Time spent' questions?](http://www-dev.usanpn.org/participate/faq#time_reporting)) * On the **Animal Checklist**, please list the species of animals you are looking for at the site, and for each day you visit your site, circle "**y**" (yes) if you saw or heard that species and "**n**" (no) if you did not see or hear that species. If you were uncertain whether you saw or heard that species, circle "**?**". * On each of the **Plant and Animal Phenophase Datasheets**, please fill out a column for each visit and indicate whether or not you saw or heard each of the phenophases. For Animal Phenophase Datasheets, you do not need to fill out a column for dates you circled "n" on your Animal Checklist and thus ***did not*** see or hear that species.   As you fill up and need new datasheets for each plant and animal, you can generate them individually by selecting the plant or animal in the “My Plants & Animals” window in your [Nature's Notebook Home](http://mynpn.usanpn.org/npnapps)page and clicking on “Create Single Datasheet (PDF)” under the “Details for this Organism” window. A new Cover Sheet or Animal Checklist can be created by clicking “Create Datasheets” and selecting them from the window that appears. You can also click these links to download a new:   * [Cover Sheet](http://www-dev.usanpn.org/files/shared/observationsheets/USA-NPN_observation_datasheet_cover.pdf" \t "_blank) * [Animal Checklist](http://www-dev.usanpn.org/files/shared/observationsheets/USA-NPN_observation_datasheet_animal_checklist.pdf" \t "_blank)   See [How do I enter observation data recorded on my datasheet packet?](http://www-dev.usanpn.org/participate/faq#enter_datasheet_packet) when you are ready to enter your data online. |

**How should I answer the various 'Time spent' questions?**

On your observation Cover Sheet and in the online interface for entering observations you are asked to report 'Time spent observing', 'Time spent in travel' and 'Time spent looking for animals'. We ask you to report these three things for very different reasons. The purpose of the first two are purely administrative, to estimate the volunteer time contributed to the project. These estimates can be important in securing funding to keep the project going. The purpose of the third, 'Time spent looking for animals', is scientific, to estimate the time that went into animal sampling which will affect how many animals you see or hear. This third estimate is very important to scientists using your data.

Follow these general guidelines in reporting this information:

* **Time spent observing:**For each visit, indicate how much time you spent making observations. You should include the total time you spent getting organized, observing animals, and checking your plants.
* **Time spent in travel:**For each visit, indicate how much time you spent traveling to your site. This includes any time spent in a vehicle as well as time spent walking or hiking to get to your site. However, do not include travel time that you would be taking anyway, even if you were not making observations. For instance, if you make your observations from your regular work location, do not include the time spent driving to work.
* **Time spent looking for animals:**For each visit, indicate how much time you spent actually looking for the animals on your Animal Checklist. You ***should not*** include any time in which you were not aware of the animals around you, for instance, while you were busy organizing datasheets or focused solely on checking your plants.

**Why do you care about snow on the ground or in the treetops at my site?**

Part of the value in your ground observations of phenology, especially leaf phenology, is in helping scientists who study satellite images understand and interpret what these images are showing them. Since sunlight reflected off snow can look the same as bright green leaves in these images, your reports of snow on the ground or in the treetops can eliminate some of the guesswork in interpreting satellite images. By comparing the ground observations you take at your site to a satellite image of the area that includes your site, these scientists can "ground truth" or "validate" the images, and therefore become better at interpreting other images across the globe.

**How often should I make my observations?**

You should make observations as often as is convenient for you. Ideally, we would like observers to make observations once a week or even as frequently as every two or three days, particularly during the spring and fall when plant and animal phenology is changing quickly in many parts of the country. Plants and animals can often be active during the winter, but if you live in a cold region where their activity is reduced, you can lengthen the time between observations during this season. ***Most importantly, you should record all the observations you make—your observations, no matter how often you make them, provide valuable data!***

**At what time of day should I make my observations?**

You should make observations at a time of day that is convenient for you. Because some animal species tend to be more active at certain times of day and plant activity can vary over the course of the day, it will be helpful if you make your observations consistently around the same time. However, if you are observing both species that are active most during the day (like most plant and animal species on our species list) and those that are most active at dusk or at night (like frogs, bats, and some flowers), you may want to make your observations twice a day, once during the day and once at dusk or night.

**What if I never see some of the animals I am observing?**

On most days you will probably not see or hear most of the animals you are observing. You may not see or hear some species all year. Even though it can be frustrating to look for animals that are not there very often, information about when and where a species is and is not is very important to scientists, so ***please continue to record that you DO NOT see phenophases for these animal species on each day you observe***. In some ways the information about when and where a species is not present is more important than information about where it is, because those observations (called negative data) are more rare. This is why we suggest that you observe species from our animal species list that occur in your state, even if you do not see them often, or at all.

**Why should I record my observations when nothing seems to be happening?**

Having a full record of your observation dates allows scientists to more confidently estimate the date a phenophase began or ended. For example, if you first report that you heard wood frog calls on your April 6 visit, and your last visit (when you did not hear them) was April 2, we know that the wood frogs started calling sometime within those four to five days. If you only report the April 6 visit and no previous visit, we only know that the frogs started to call sometime between April 6 and the last time you reported visiting your site, which might have been 3 months earlier! This example also illustrates why more frequent observations are useful when conditions change rapidly, such as in the spring or fall. If you can make observations every two or three days, you improve scientists’ ability to estimate the day a phenophase actually started or ended.

**Why should I report on the intensity or abundance of my plant and animal phenophases?**

By reporting when a phenophase is and is not occurring, we get a sense of the duration of the phenophase at your site, but we do not know how strongly the phenophase is expressed over that time period.  For example, if you report seeing nest building by a bluebird species over a period of three weeks, there is no way for scientists using your data to know whether you saw one pair of bluebirds taking three weeks to build a successful nest, or whether you saw one the first week, ten the second week, and then two the third week. To get an idea of how strongly the phenophase is expressed, and when the peak of activity occurs, we have added the ability for you to report on the intensity or abundance for almost all of the phenophases for your species.  For animals, we generally ask the observer to record the number of individuals seen in a given phenophase, and for plants we generally ask for some measure of the intensity of the phenophase on your individual plant, like an estimate of the number of flowers that are open on each observation visit.

**What if I missed a phenophase?**

If you miss the occurrence of a phenophase entirely, and you see evidence that the phenophase did occur, then make a note of this in the comments section of your Nature’s Notebook [Enter Observations](http://mynpn.usanpn.org/npnapps) form. For example, if your plant flowered while you were away on vacation, and you see dried flowers on the ground below the plant, feel free to note this in the comments section of your data entry form. You can note similar occurrences with animals, for example, if you see chicks in a new bird nest, but never saw nest building.

**Why is it valuable to know that a phenophase did not occur at all in a given year?**

Many phenophases do not occur in every year—birds may not breed in a certain area, trees may not flower or fruit, turtles may not lay eggs. Information about when and where these phenophases did and ***did not*** occur is very important to scientists studying these species and the interactions between species.

**Why should I continue looking for a phenophase even after it has passed?**

Many phenophases may occur two or more times in a year. Many birds lay a second clutch of eggs in the summer after the first clutch has fledged. If a frost or pest kills many of the leaves on a tree, it will often have a second flush of breaking leaf buds and new leaves. In dry climates, some phenophases repeat after multiple rain events. Also, ***climate change is changing the timing and frequency of life cycle events, which is extremely important to capture!*** For example, as temperatures warm and growing seasons get longer, many species are reproducing more frequently—some birds are having more broods, some plants flower more often, and insects like butterflies and dragonflies may go through more generations in a single year.

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**Plant phenophases**

**Can I still report 'Breaking leaf/needle buds' (trees and shrubs), 'Emerging needles' (pines), or 'Initial growth' (forbs and grasses) once I see 'Leaves/Needles' or 'Young leaves/needles' on the plant?**

Yes, you should judge each leaf bud, needle bud, or shoot separately. As long as some buds or shoots on the plant are still breaking or initiating growth and have not yet produced an unfolded leaf or needle, you are seeing ‘Breaking leaf/needle buds’, 'Emerging needles', or ‘Initial growth’. For plants that have more than one bud or shoot, in most cases you will still be seeing ‘Breaking leaf/needle buds’, 'Emerging needles', or ‘Initial growth' in some buds or shoots for many days after you first begin seeing 'Leaves/Needles' or 'Young leaves/needles' from other buds or shoots. It is also possible to see multiple episodes of leaf/needle bud break or initial growth within a season. This might occur after a period of frost, severe drought, or after a plant is defoliated by insects. However, once ALL the active leaf/needle buds or shoots on the plant have at least one unfolded leaf/needle, you should be reporting that you no longer see ‘Breaking leaf/needle buds’, 'Emerging needles', or ‘Initial growth'.

**Why is there a phenophase for ‘Emerging needles’ for pine species but not for other conifer species?**

In most conifers, breaking needle buds reveal new needles unfolding, then lengthening of the stem, and the unfolding of more needles until the stem stops growing for the season. In pines, growth of the stem (or “candle”) occurs first, before the needles appear. Once the stem has grown, the needle bundles begin to emerge and unfold from protective papery sheaths along the newly elongated stem. We have decided that ‘Breaking needle buds’ should be an advanced phenophase for pine species, and thus do not include it in Nature’s Notebook at this time. Instead, observation of pine species begins with the search for emerging needles along the new stem.

**When should I report I no longer see 'Leaves/Needles'?**

You should continue to report seeing ‘Leaves/Needles’ as long as fresh green or colored leaves/needles remain on the plant. Do not include dried, dead leaves or dead, brown needles that remain on the plant, such as occurs with some species throughout the dormant season (e.g. winter or dry season). In some cases, green leaves will remain on the plant in a frozen condition for part or all of the winter. If more than about 5% of the leaves have remained on the plant in this condition, you should continue to report seeing ‘Leaves’ until they fall off or appear wilted.

**How do I judge what proportion of the canopy is full with leaves or needles?**

***(NOTE: this FAQ was not included until October 7, 2011)***

 To be able to do this requires knowing what a full canopy looks like for any given deciduous or semi-deciduous species. We plan to eventually provide photos for each species to help illustrate this, but in the meantime you will need to make note of the fullness of the canopy once the leaves or needles have grown to full size, but before they begin to fall off towards the end of the growing season. This will be what the canopy looks like at 100%. During your first year of observing, you may want to avoid estimating canopy fullness until you know what it looks like at 100% fullness.

Once you know what the canopy looks like at 100% fullness, you should estimate the changing proportion of fullness as the leaves grow larger at the beginning of the growing season (starting at 0% with bare branches before any leaves appear and increasing to 100% when the leaves become full size), and as leaves fall off and the canopy thins at the end of the growing season (starting at 100% and decreasing to 0% once all the leaves have fallen off). One trick is to estimate the proportion of sky seen through the tree canopy. If no sky is visible at 100%, then when you see half sky and half leaves within the area of the canopy, it is 50% full. A similar trick can be used for smaller plants by estimating the amount of ground you see through the canopy while looking down on a plant.

We are aware that estimates of canopy fullness by the human eye is a somewhat subjective measure, but combined with more precise measurements made from camera images, it can provide very useful information about the duration of the year over which a plant is photosynthesizing, which in turn affects the amount of CO2 in the atmosphere.

For semi-deciduous species, the canopy fullness will not necessarily drop to 0% every year, and may not even get up to 100% every year if the environmental conditions have been extreme (for example, an extreme drought that delays leaf bud break). For these species, the extent of the canopy in a good year should be considered 100% fullness, and 0% would be the plant with all leaves dropped off.

If your plant has a dead section that never grows leaves, you can ignore that portion of the plant in estimating canopy fullness so that the plant canopy is 100% full when the live portions of the plant are fully leafed out.

**How can I judge the proportion of full leaf size while leaves are still increasing in size?**

This is a little difficult the first year you try it, but gets easier with practice. If you are in doubt, you can use a ruler to measure full size (length and/or width) of a typical leaf during summer of the first year, and then use that measure to better judge the proportion of full leaf size during the period of leaf growth in subsequent years. We are asking observers to note when leaves are less than 25%, 25-49%, 50-74%, 75-94% or 95% or more of full leaf size in order to create an estimate of the time it takes for leaves to grow to full size. Including this measure allows scientists to keep track of the length of the "green-up" period which is an important aspect of a plant's response to climate change.

**Are you sure the phenophase 'Increasing leaf size' is appropriate for my plant?**

This phenophase is only meant to be tracked during a major flush of leaves, when a plant is changing from a state of having no or relatively few leaves, to a state of having many new full-sized leaves.  For fully deciduous plant species, this generally occurs once a year at the beginning of the growing season. However, it could happen multiple times if, for instance, the plant experiences an insect defoliation event and loses most of its leaves during the summer, triggering a new episode of breaking leaf buds and a second major flush of new leaf growth.  For species that are semi-deciduous and do not consistently lose all or most of their leaves each year, major leaf flushes may only occur rarely. This could happen after a period of extreme drought or frost, when more leaves than usual fall off the tree.  During the years when the plant does not have a major, obvious flush of new leaves, this phenophase can be ignored.  But for the rare year when it does (which might become more frequent with climate change), this is an important and fun phenophase to track!

**For ‘Colored leaves/needles’, why am I asked to report an estimate of the proportion of the plant canopy still full with GREEN leaves?**

***(NOTE: this FAQ was not included until October 7, 2011)***

To answer this question, use the principle explained in [How do I judge what proportion of the canopy is full with leaves or needles?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#canopy_full), but consider only the GREEN portions of leaves and needles that are left on the plant and do not include the colored portions.

The reason you are asked to estimate the proportion of GREEN leaves instead of the proportion of COLORED leaves is to make interpretation easier for the scientists using your data. Leaf color changes often go hand in hand with leaf fall. As leaves turn color and fall off the plant, the proportion of total canopy fullness steadily decreases, the proportion of green leaves left on the plant steadily decreases, but the proportion of colored leaves left on the plant can go up and down. For example, if your plant has a 100% full canopy with 50% of its leaves colored and 50% of its leaves green, and then suddenly loses 25% of the canopy in a leaf fall event, it will now have a 75% full canopy with 25% of its leaves colored and 50% of its leaves green (because it is generally the colored leaves that will fall and not the green leaves). So the proportion of the canopy full with colored leaves gradually increased from 0% during the summer to 50%, then decreased to 25%, and will increase again as more green leaves turn color before falling off. On the other hand, the proportion of the canopy full with green leaves steadily decreased from 100% to 50% and will continue to decrease until all the green leaves have turned color and none are left. It is because this one-way decrease in green leaves is simpler for scientists to use that we ask you for the proportion of the canopy still full with GREEN leaves. The proportion of colored leaves on your plant can always be calculated by subtracting the proportion of canopy full with green leaves from the proportion of canopy full with leaves (green plus colored) from the “Leaves” phenophase.

**Why are there no intensity options provided for ‘Falling leaves/needles’?**

There are no intensity options for this phenophase because the proportion of leaves or needles that have fallen from your deciduous or semi-deciduous plant can be calculated from the proportion of leaves or needles that remain on the plant. This is already captured in the value you reported for "What proportion of the canopy is full with leaves/needles?" for the 'Leaves/needles' phenophase. See [How do I judge what proportion of the canopy is full with leaves or needles?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#canopy_full) for more information.

**How are the phenophases ‘Flowers’, 'Flower heads' (grasses), or 'Pollen cones' (conifers) different from ‘Open flowers’ or 'Open pollen cones’?**

The ‘Flowers’, ‘Flower heads’ (grasses), and ‘Pollen cones’ (conifers) phenophases are new in 2011 and give you the opportunity to report developing flowers, flower heads (inflorescences), or pollen cones before you see any of the flowers or pollen cones open on your plant (flowers are not considered "open" until reproductive parts are visible). Report “Yes” for this phenophase when you see any developing flower heads or fresh (unwithered) flowers or pollen cones on your plant, ***whether they are open or closed***. This means that whenever you report you see ‘Open flowers’ or ‘Open pollen cones’, you should also be reporting that you see ‘Flowers’ or ‘Pollen cones’. For some species, flowers or pollen cones can open on sunny days and stay closed on cloudy days, in which case you should continue to report you see ‘Flowers’ or ‘Pollen cones’ even when you are reporting that you do not see ‘Open flowers’ or ‘Open pollen cones’.   However, once all flowers or pollen cones on the plant have withered, do not report this phenophase even if the dried or withered petals or cones remain on the plant.  Note that any given flowering plant species will either have single flowers that sit directly on a woody twig or at the end of a short or long stalk, or it will have many flowers on a single stalk (called a flower head or inflorescence).  Report “Yes” for ‘Flowers’ as soon as you see something that is recognizable as a flower structure, whether it is a developing flower in the process of emerging from a twig on a tree, or a developing flower stalk emerging from the base of a wildflower.

**When should I choose ‘Peak flower’, ‘Peak opening’, or ‘Peak pollen’ to describe the intensity of 'Open flowers', 'Open pollen cones', or 'Pollen release'?**

Since the intensity options of ‘Peak flower’, ‘Peak opening’, or ‘Peak pollen’ for phenophases 'Open flowers', 'Open pollen cones', and 'Pollen release' overlap with the intensity option of ’10 or more’ flowers or pollen cones, you should choose the intensity option that seems to ***best describe your plant at the time of observation***. For plants that flower multiple times in a year, you may see one flowering episode that seems to have a distinct peak with lots and lots of flowers open at once for a short period of time. In this case, you should choose 'Peak flower'. When the same plant flowers again later in the year, you may see 10 or more flowers on the plant at one time, but nothing that resembles a dramatic peak in flowering. In this case, you should choose '10 or more' flowers. You may also find that even with plant species that flower only once a year and often have a dramatic peak flowering period, in some years your plant may have few flowers and the obvious “peak” does not seem to occur. In this case, you may decide to report seeing ‘10 or more’ flowers on the plant without ever reporting that you see ‘Peak flower’ that year.

**Why do some species have a phenophase for 'Pollen release' and others do not?**

While you should be able to see pollen release from almost all plant species when the mature male or bisexual flowers are shaken or blown, at this time we have only included this phenophase for species that are considered moderate or severe allergens.  ‘Pollen release’ should be reported only if you can actually see pollen dust upon blowing or shaking a flower or pollen cone. Do not try to observe this phenophase if you can not get close enough to a flower or pollen cone to blow or shake it to see if pollen falls into your hand﻿

**How is the phenophase ‘Fruits’ different from ‘Ripe fruits’?**

As with the ‘Flowers’ phenophase, ‘Fruits’ is new in 2011 and gives you the opportunity to report the presence of developing fruits before you see any of them mature or ripen on your plant. Report “Yes” for this phenophase as long as you see fruits on your plant at any stage of maturity, whether unripe and in the process of developing, or mature and ripe. This means that whenever you report you see ‘Ripe fruits’, you should also be reporting that you see ‘Fruits’. Often some fruits will ripen and be eaten or drop from the plant, while unripe fruits still remain, so you may see fruits for a long period of time with ripe fruits present on the plant during some observation days and no ripe fruits present on other observation days. Sometimes it is hard to tell when fruits first appear. Technically they are present as soon as the flower’s ovary is fertilized, but often the ovary does not swell into something resembling a fruit for several weeks. Do not worry about missing this early stage and simply report fruits when you see the fruit as it begins to enlarge. However, once all of the fruits drop all of their seeds, do not report this phenophase even if the pods, capsules, or husks of the fruits remain (or “persist”) on the plant.

**Can I report seeing both ‘Unripe seed cones’ and ‘Ripe seed cones’ on the same plant at the same time?**

Yes, absolutely. There are many times when you will see both unripe and ripe seed cones on the same plant at the same time. In some species, seed cones take more than a full year to mature and you could be seeing ripe seed cones from a previous year’s crop at the same time you see unripe seed cones from this year’s crop. Or you may even see unripe cones from the previous AND current year’s crop at the same time. Just be careful not to count as “ripe” any empty cones that have already dropped all of their seeds but remain on the plant. This occurs quite frequently for some conifer species, but these empty seed cones should be ignored.

**Why should I look for 'Recent fruit drop' or 'Recent seed cone drop' (conifers), and how can I tell if mature fruits or seed cones have dropped from my plant since my last visit?**

Sometimes a fruit or seed cone is not ripe very long before it drops from the plant.  This phenophase allows you to report that one or more fruits or seed cones ripened and dropped from the plant since your last visit. Evidence of ‘Recent fruit drop’ or ‘Recent seed cone drop’ may include mature fruits or seed cones on the ground below the plant that were not there on your last visit, or fruits or seed cones missing from the plant which were present on your last visit. For this phenophase, do not include the dropping of fruits or seed cones that are clearly immature and unripe, as often happens in a heavy rain or wind storm. You should also not include fruit pods, capsules, husks, or empty seed cones that long ago dropped all of their seeds and are only now falling from the plant.

**When should I stop reporting ‘Yes’ to seeing phenophases with an unclear endpoint?**

For common lilac, cloned lilac and cloned honeysuckle, the phenophase definitions have carried over from an historical monitoring project. Two of the phenophases, ‘All leaf buds broken’ and ‘End of flowering’, have no distinct endpoint when it would be logical to report you do not see the phenophase occurring. For these two phenophases, you can stop reporting observations after you have made your first report of seeing that the phenophase ***did*** occur. After this point, do not report ”No” you do not see the phenophase occurring, but rather leave all the choices uncircled as though you were not checking for the phenophase.

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**Animal phenophases**

**Can I still report seeing ‘Active individuals/adults’ or ‘Individuals/adults on land/water’ if I also report seeing another more specific phenophase?**

Yes, you should report “Yes” for ALL the phenophases you see occurring on a given date. For animals, if you see a specific activity, like nest building, you are also seeing one or more active individuals, and should be reporting “Yes” to both of those phenophases for that species.

**How can I estimate the number of individuals in a large group of animals?**

If you are looking at large groups of animals, such as a colony of black-tailed prairie dogs, a migrating flock of robins, or a school of salmon, you may have a hard time estimating the total number of individuals you are seeing. Here are two ways to make an estimate of the total number of individual animals:

* **If you can see the whole group at once**(such as a far away flock, or a relatively stationary herd of animals), try counting a small section of the total group (anywhere from 10 to 50 individuals). Then estimate the space those individuals take up. For example, 30 robins in a far away flock take up an area the size of my fist when I hold it in front of my face. I will then see how many of these fist-sized areas (or blocks) it takes to visually cover the whole flock. Let's say there are 22 blocks. My estimate is then 30 individuals per block, multiplied by 22 blocks, for a total of 660 individuals. You might also consider taking a picture of the group of animals, and estimating or counting the number of individuals later.
* I**f you are watching a large group of animals pass by**(such as a herd of elk, a school of fish, or a swarm of insects), you will not be able to use the spatial method above to estimate the total number. Instead you will need to calculate a rate and the time is takes the group to pass. To do this, select a landmark, like a fencepost or a rock in a stream, and count how many animals pass by the landmark in a given amount of time. Then time how long it takes for the whole group to pass completely. For example, if I am watching a monarch migration and I see 30 individuals pass by a fencepost in one minute, and the butterflies continue passing for 11 minutes, then my estimate would be 330 individuals.

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**Entering your data online**

**How frequently should I enter my observation data?**

You can enter your data immediately after each observation visit, or you can wait to enter several visits at once. However, the sooner you enter your data the sooner it is available for you and for others to see in our [phenology visualization tool](http://www.usanpn.org/results/visualizations)!

**What is the best way to enter the observation data recorded on my datasheets?**

For each visit, input the date and time at the top of a column in your Nature’s Notebook [Enter Observations](http://mynpn.usanpn.org/npnapps) page. Enter the information you recorded on your Cover Sheet for the visit, then enter your observations for each of your plants and animal species. For plants, simply enter the information written on each Plant Phenophase Datasheet. For animals, refer to your Animal Checklist datasheet. For the visits where 'n' is circled for a species, click 'Circle all no' at the top of the column for that visit and all phenophases will be set to "n". If there was a particular phenophase for which you did not bother to look or listen (for instance, you were ignoring bird calls at your site because you do not know how to recognize them), please click the circled 'n' for that phenophase so it becomes uncircled and no selection is made for the phenophase. For the visits where 'y' or '?' is circled for a species, refer to the Animal Phenophase Datasheet for that species and enter the information recorded there for each phenophase for that visit.

**How do I change observation data once I have entered it?**

If you wish to correct your observation data for a particular visit, navigate to that column using the arrows at the top or bottom of your Nature’s Notebook [Enter Observations](http://mynpn.usanpn.org/npnapps) page. Then change the 'y', 'n', and '?' responses to the correct ones for that visit. If you entered the wrong date or time and need to change it, click 'Delete' at the top of each species' column for that visit to remove those records.  Then create a new column with the correct date and time and reenter your observation data. If you wish to deselect a circled 'y', 'n', or '?' to leave all choices uncircled for a phenophase (meaning you did not check for that phenophase on that visit), you will need to delete that visit's column for the species and reenter the data.

**How do I get rid of a plant or animal once I have added it to my site?**

If you are no longer observing a plant or animal, or if you added it accidentally, you can prevent it from appearing in your Nature's Notebook pages.  For plants, go to the [Add or Edit Plants](http://mynpn.usanpn.org/npnapps) page and select the plant in the "Your plants" window of the left.  You should see the plant's information appear in the window on the right. Click the box next to "Delete?" and a popup window will appear, asking why you want to delete the plant. Make the appropriate choice and click "Delete". If you are no longer observing the plant, all the observation data you entered for the plant will be preserved in the database, but it will no longer appear in your Nature's Notebook pages.  If you added the plant accidentally or as a test, the plant and all of its data will be deleted from the database. If you misidentified the plant species, you will be prompted to contact us for more information. If the plant died, you will be prompted to record it as dead before indicating you are no longer observing it. All observation data for a plant that died will be preserved.

For animals, go to the [Animal Checklist](http://mynpn.usanpn.org/npnapps) page and simply remove the animal species from your checklist. All observation data you entered for the animal species will be preserved in the database. If you entered fake or incorrect data for an animal species, please delete those records before removing the animal from your checklist. See [How do I change observation data once I have entered it?](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?InstanceName=edit-body&Toolbar=DrupalFull#correct_data) for more information.

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**Thank you for participating in Nature's Notebook!**

*We appreciate your* [*feedback*](http://www.usanpn.org/sites/all/modules/fckeditor/fckeditor/editor/fckeditor.html?q=contact)*.*