

What is iNaturalist?

iNaturalist is a website and smart-phone application that curates observations people make of the natural world – mammals, insects, vegetation, etc. – along with the observation's GPS location. iNaturalist allows for a community of naturalists – casual observers, as well as expert and novice identifiers, to share observations and aid in identifying the observations. This community contributes to a large, expansive, multifaceted data source that is accessible to anyone.

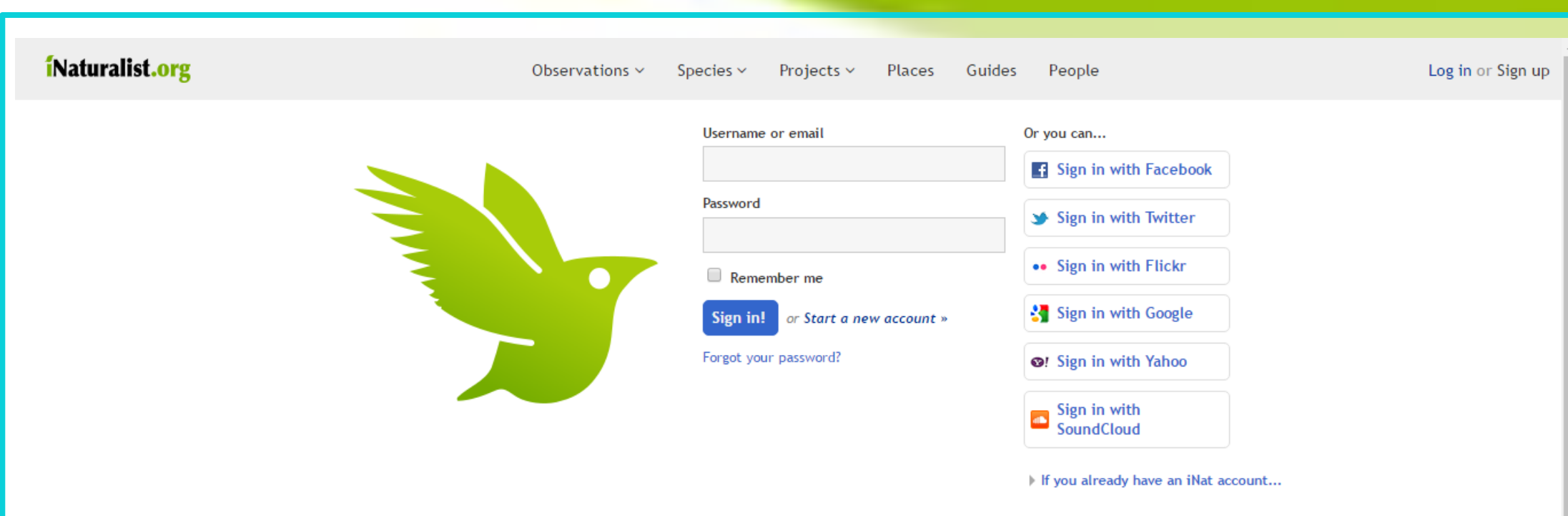


Figure 1: Screenshot of the login page of iNaturalist. Users must first create a free account online.

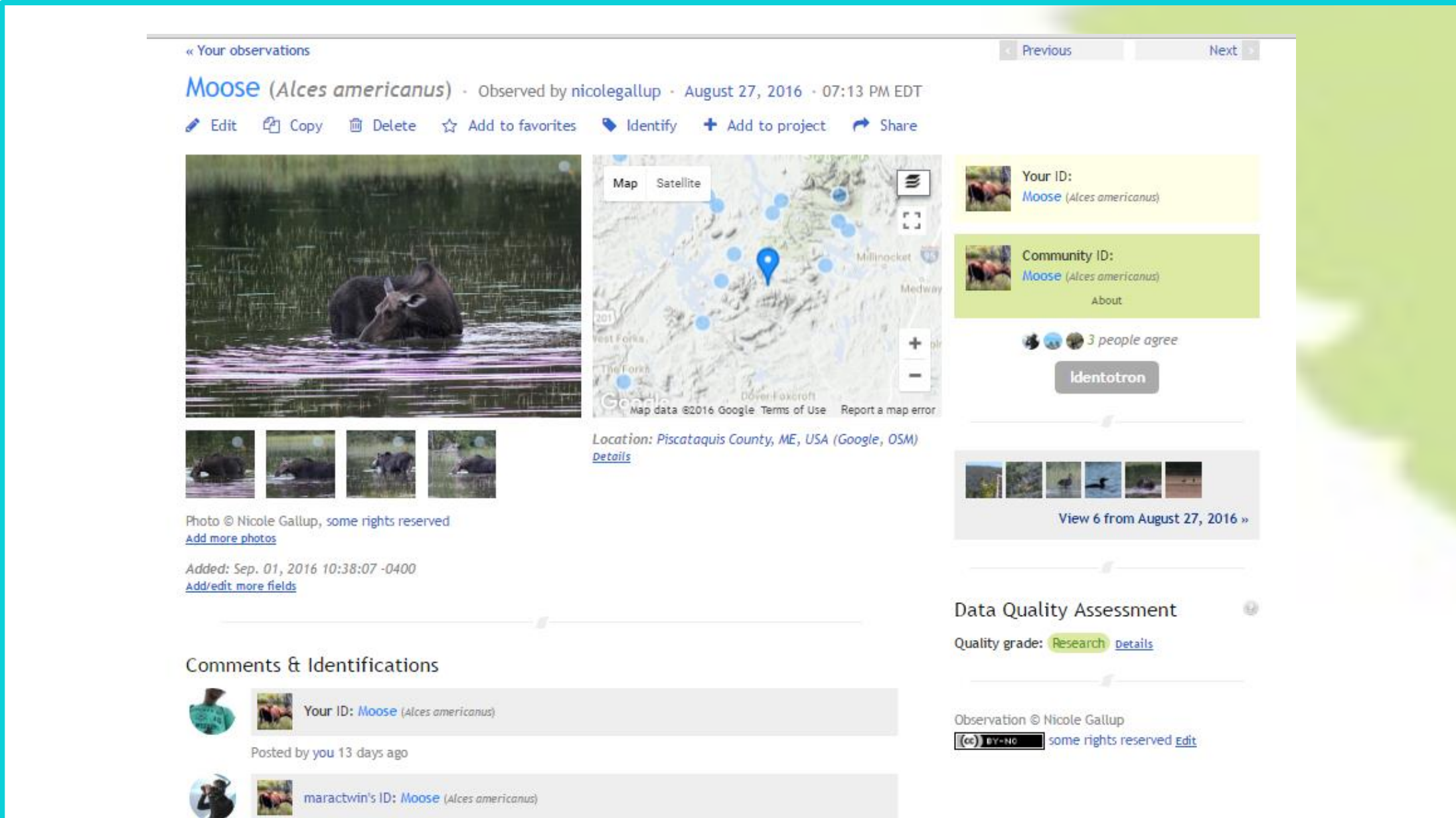


Figure 2: Example of an observation viewed on the website. Users upload and share images of organisms they've photographed or recorded.

How to Make an Observation

Using the online platform and a camera

1. Go out and take a photograph of an organism
2. Get the GPS location and the date/time of the observation.
3. Download images from camera to laptop. And log into iNatratlist.org.
4. Go to the Observation tab (under username). Click the add observation button.
5. Upload photos. IF there are multiple photograph for one organism, simply drag each photograph over the first to create an observation with multiple photographs.
6. Fill in known information: name, location, data and time (if necessary), etc.
7. Hit the Green submit observation button in the right corner.

Welcome to Acadia National Park

The park is split between three areas, the major part of the park on Mount Desert Island, and the smaller parts of the park on Schoodic Peninsula and Isle au Haut. The park is comprised of over 47,000 acres of land, covering a variety of habitats from rocky intertidal to mountain balds. The park had well over 2 million visitors in 2015, and it expects to have even more this season.

How iNaturalist can help National Parks

For National Parks, knowing which plants, animals, or fungi are present within their borders is important. The knowledge allows parks to manage their resources better. With limited park employees, it would be impossible to survey every part of the park. But with a team of naturalists or citizen scientists, a camera or smart phone, and the iNaturalist platform, there can be more eyes in the field, leading to more areas covered and more species located and identified.

Focus Questions

- Are all categories represented equally in Acadia?
- Is there a variety of species being covered for each category?

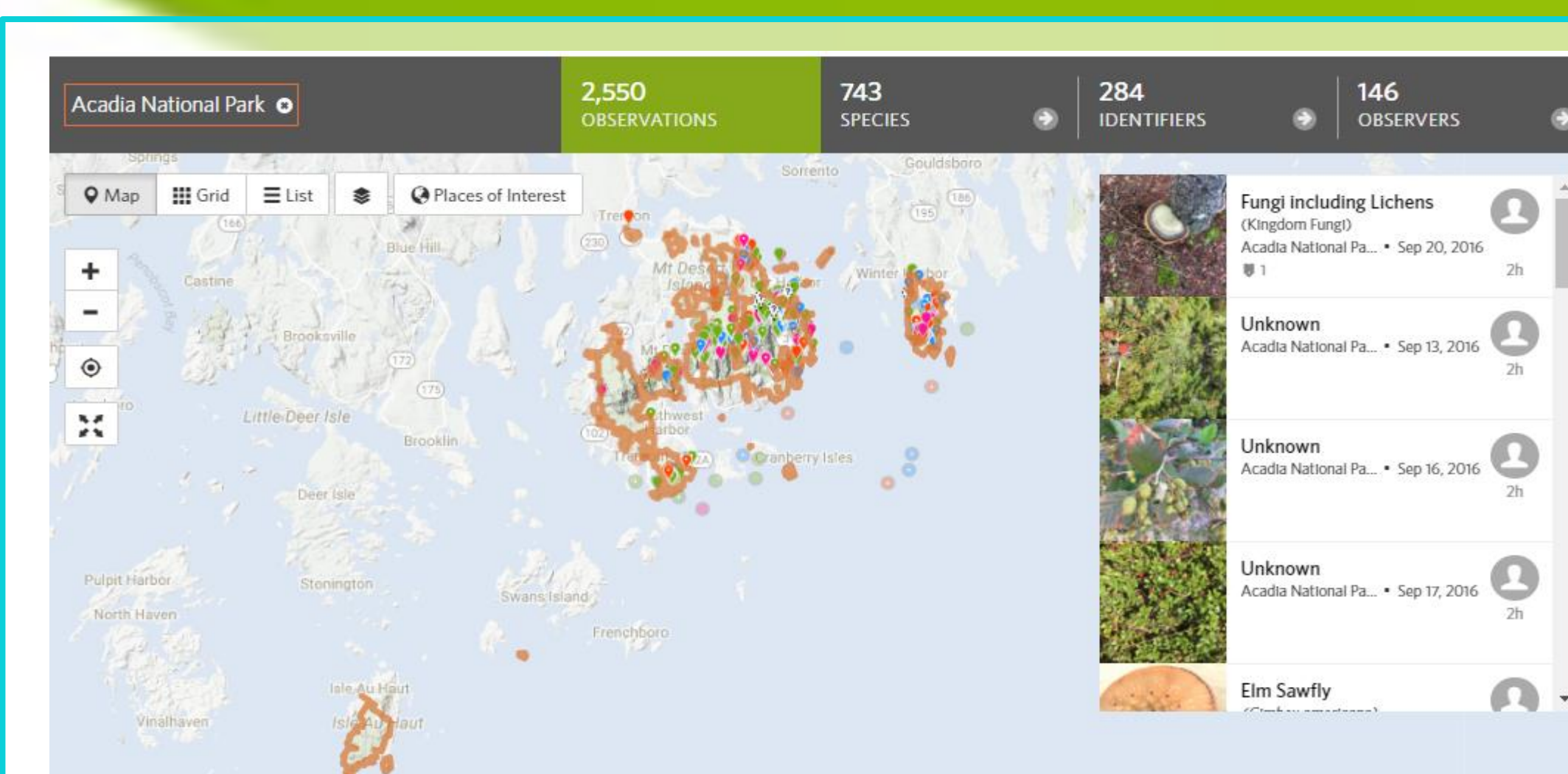


Figure 3: Observation page in iNaturalist, showing the boundary of Acadia National Park in iNaturalist, with the number of observations, and a few recent observations. Other iNaturalist users help with identifications.

Methods

The Observation page of iNaturalist was used (figure 3). The filtering option was then used to search for observations in Acadia National Park, for each taxa

Taxa Covered in Acadia

As of September 27th, 2016 there were 2622 observations in Acadia National Park 2516 of which are found in 12 select categories. These observations number 722 species. The categories include: Birds, Amphibians, Reptiles, Mammals, Ray Finned Fishes, Mollusks, Arachnids, Insects, Plants, Fungi including Lichens, Protozoans, and Unknown.

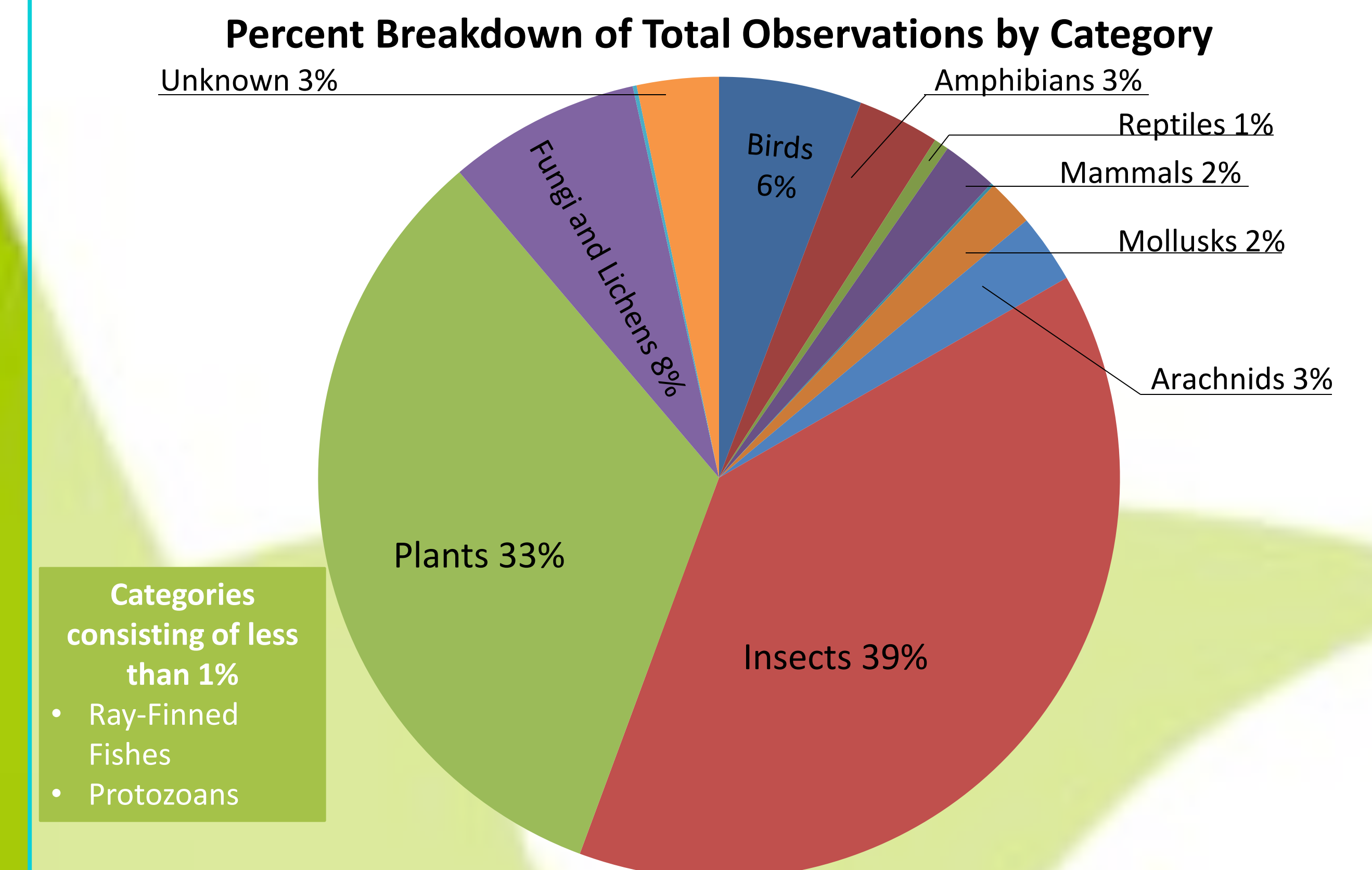


Figure 4: Break down of the 2516 observations in Acadia National Park by category.

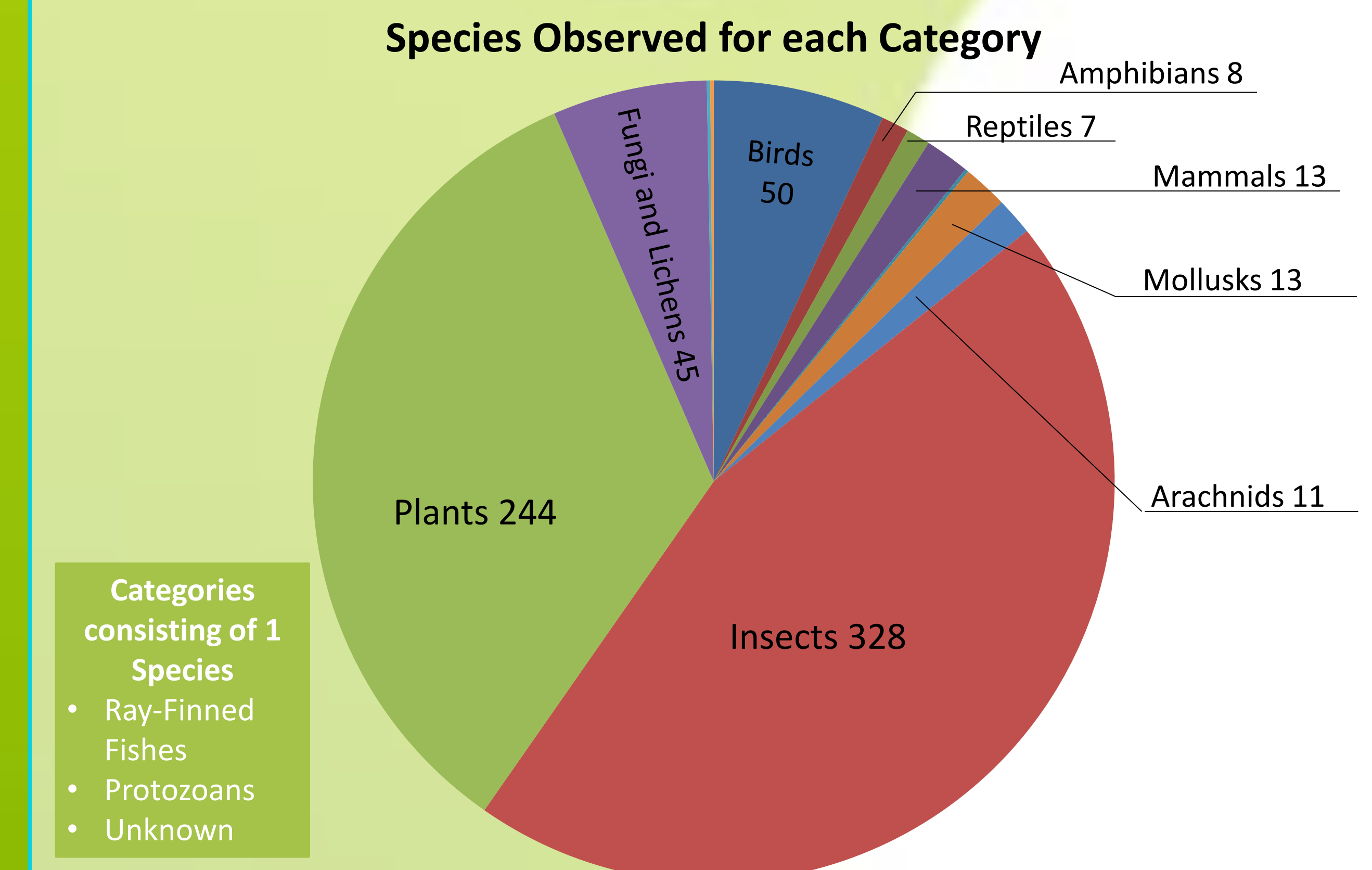


Figure 5: Break down of the 722 species observed in Acadia National Park.

How Can iNaturalist Help Acadia

Results indicate that plants and insects are the most observed and have the widest species diversity in Acadia National Park, yet there are some some major gaps. To help the park better manage and protect its biodiversity, moving forward it is recommended that visitors and employees be introduced to iNaturalist. Deficient categories of observation could be targeted to more evenly survey different taxa. This cumulative data will help resource managers to better understand changes in biodiversity within the expanse of habitats in the park.