

Frequently Asked Questions



Note: Additional details on many of the questions are found in the volunteer manual and training slides. Please review them if you need additional information.

Monitoring

Do I need to complete the training in order to monitor?

No. However, the project was designed to be completed by trained volunteers, and you will find it easier to participate if you go through the training. If you are not able to attend a training, we recommend carefully reading the volunteer manual, training slides, and other volunteer resources before participating.

How frequently should I monitor for bumble bees?

You can monitor for bumble bees as often as you would like. You might find that the species present at a location change from day to day, depending on the flowers that are in bloom.

Is it better to monitor the same site over and over again, or to monitor many sites one time each?

We encourage you to monitor wherever and whenever you are able. Monitoring the same site multiple times will provide data on the phenology of the bees and increase the chances of seeing all bees that are present at that location. Monitoring many sites will help us build an accurate distribution map for our bumble bee species.

What if I don't see any bees when conducting a small area survey?

We still want your results, even if you didn't see any bees! Please enter your small area survey as normal, and select "none" from the species list.

Selecting Photos to Submit

How do I choose which photos to submit?

For each morph, choose the photos that best show the head, back, and side views for one individual bee. Occasionally, you might need to submit one or two extra photos, but there should be no more than 5 photos per morph.

Do I need to crop my photos before submitting them?

Yes. Please crop your photo so that the bee takes up most of the frame.

My photos are blurry. Should I submit them anyway?

If the best photos you have for a morph are blurry, you should submit them if they still show important identifying features, such as color patterns or a corbicula. If the photo is so blurry that nothing can be distinguished, do not submit it.

Entering Data

What should I put for the “Directions to site” field?

If your site is located at a street address or intersection, enter that. Otherwise, provide directions for how someone can locate and access the site.

What should I put for the “Details on how to find survey location” field?

Provide sufficient directions for relocating the survey location. This could be “northwest corner of garden,” “20m east of the visitor center,” or for a remote location, it could involve detailed directions for driving, hiking, or boating to the survey location.

I noticed something about the bee, like a corbicula or color pattern, that I wasn’t able to photograph.

What should I do?

Submit your observations, and place any details about the bee’s appearance that are not shown in the photographs in the “Comments about observation” field.

Verification Process

Are bumble bee identifications verified by project staff?

Yes, all observations that you submit will be verified by project staff and partners. If you identify a species or sex incorrectly, we will correct it.

My observation says “unverified” or “verified” next to it. What does that mean?

All observations are verified by project staff and partners. If we have not yet had a chance to verify an observation, it will show up as “unverified.” Once we have verified the identification of your observations (including correcting any mistakes), you will see “verified” next to your observation.

The identify of my bumble bee observation was changed; how do I know why?

If we changed the sex or species of your observation, you can view our explanation by clicking on the hyperlinked species name in the observation. This will take you to the observation details page, where you can view comments from verifiers.