

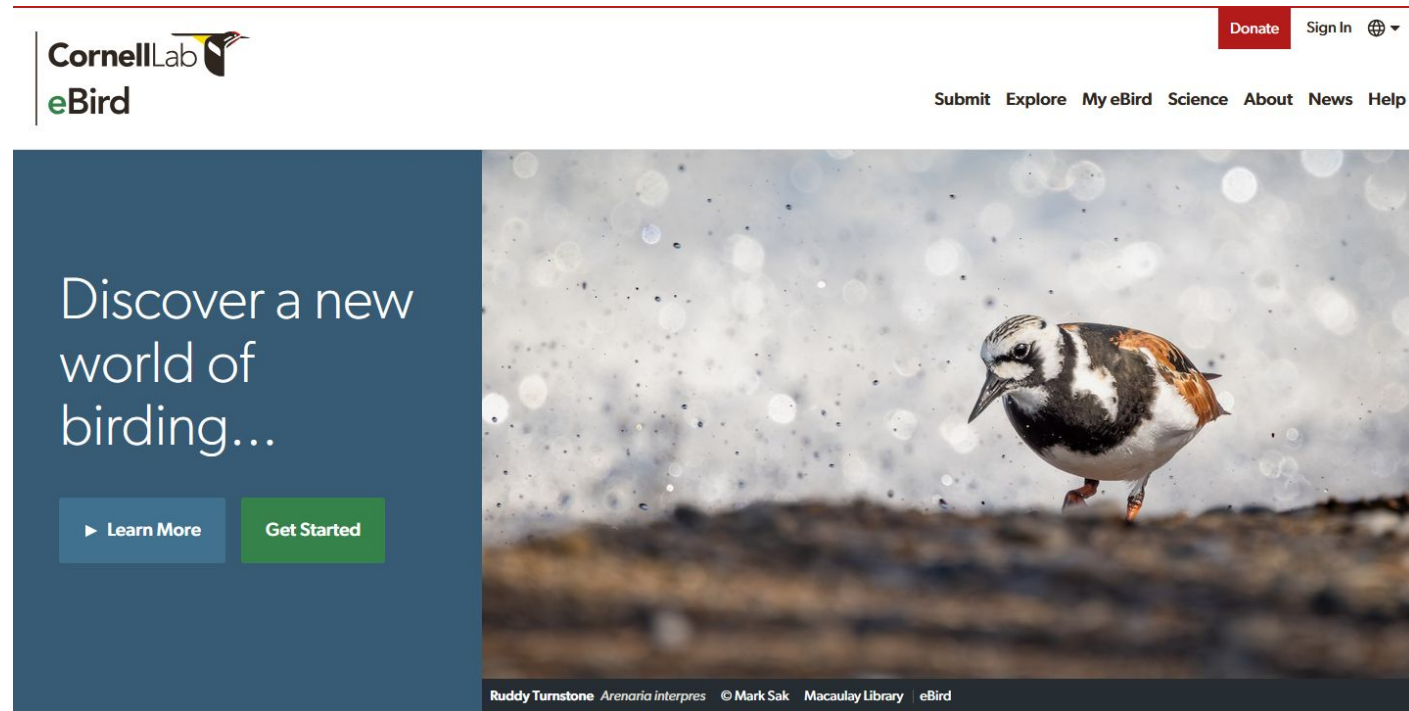
Getting Started with eBird: Track Your Bird Sightings Like a Pro

Sarah Preston



What is eBird?

- World's largest biodiversity-related citizen-science project
- Provides a way for anyone around the world to store their birding observations, photos, and sound recordings
- eBird data is used by birders, educators, researchers, and conservationists
- Free open access system that is easy to use, fun, and rewarding
- Benefits birders and birds themselves



Why should you use eBird?

For conservation and science

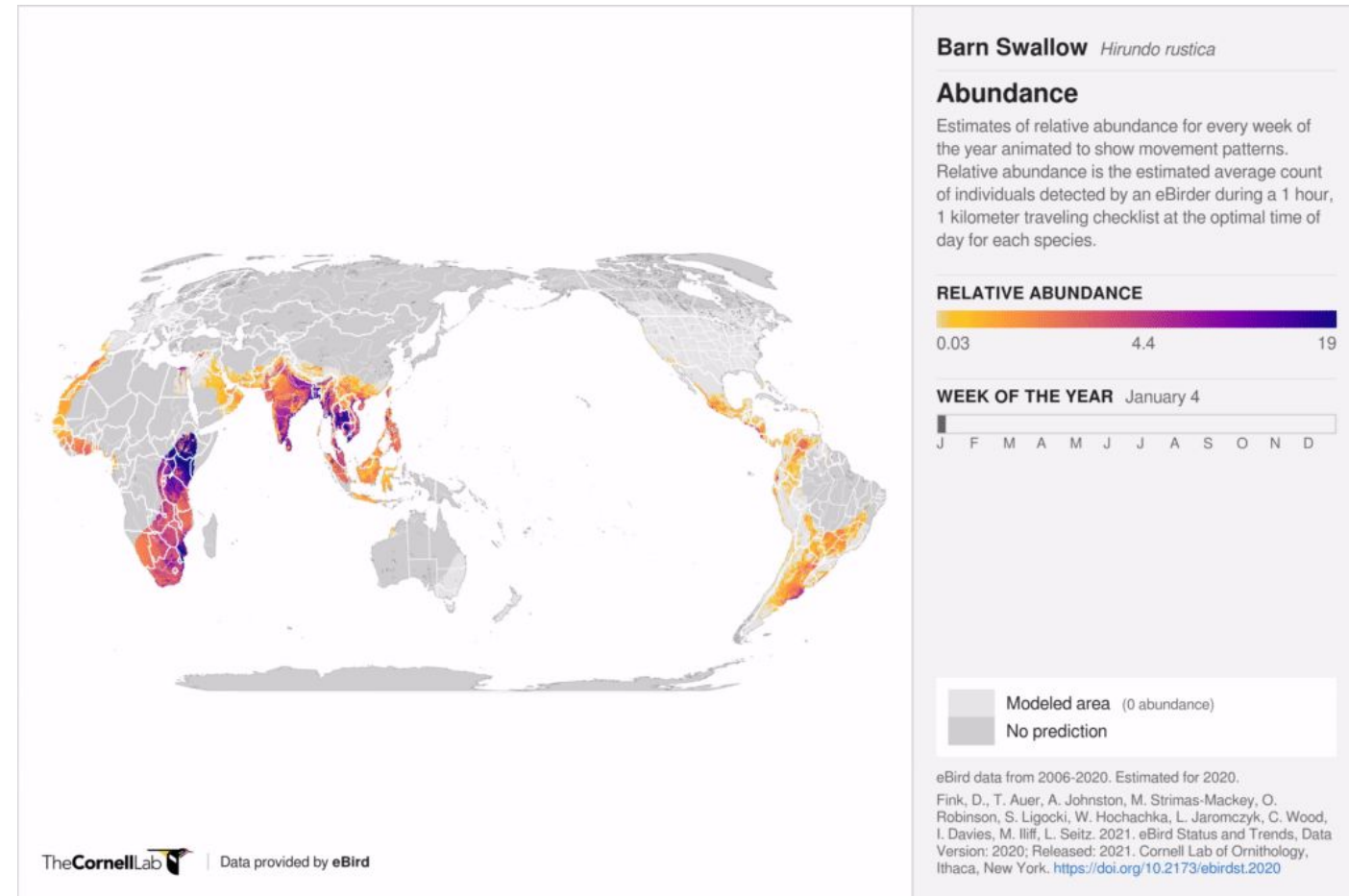
- Every sighting can make a real difference

For your personal birding

- Track lists, discover new birds, get alerts, and plan outings

For community and learning

- Connect with birders, learn, and improve



eBird Lingo

Sighting

Any observation or detection of a bird by sight or sound

Checklist

List of all species found while birding

Life list

All the species seen in your life

eBird Hotspot

Publicly shared, named location on the eBird website where multiple birders can submit checklists to create an aggregated view of bird sightings for that spot

Target species

A specific bird you are hoping to find

Find Birds Near You: Explore Species

eBird species maps

- Heat maps of observations, more frequent observations are in a deeper color
- Zoom in to change to a map of points
- Clicking the points shows sightings and checklists at that location
- Refine your search to a specific date and location

DATE: Year-round, Past 10 years ▾ LOCATION:

Year-Round, All Years
Year-Round, Past 10 Years
Year-Round, Current Year

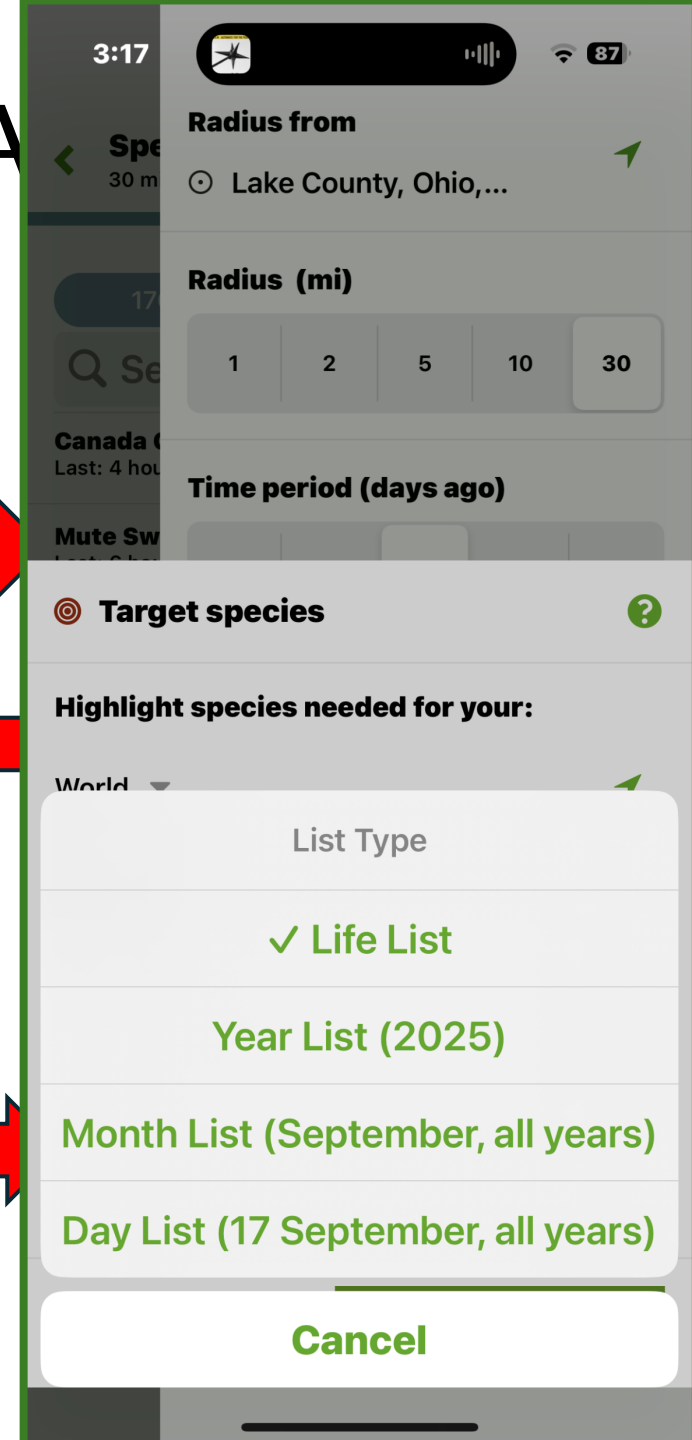
CUSTOM DATE RANGE

☐ Year-round	☐ All years
☐ Mar-May	☒ Past 10 years
☐ Jun-Jul	☐ Current year
☐ Aug-Nov	☐ 2015 ▾ - 2025 ▾
☐ Dec-Feb	☒ Sep ▾ - Sep ▾

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Find Birds Near You: eBird Mobile App

- Tap “Explore” for recent observations near you
- Tap to see “Targets”
 - Or click species and scroll and look for the bullseye symbol
- Tap “Edit” to change the date range or radius of your search
- Tap “Target Species to adjust settings for:
 - Region
 - Type of list



eBird Checklist Time!

eBird's Three Simple Steps

- Where did you go birding?
- How did you go birding?
- What did you find?

The screenshot shows the eBird app's checklist setup screen. At the top, the status bar displays the time 3:14, a compass icon, signal strength bars, and a battery level of 88%. Below the status bar is the 'The Cornell Lab' logo. The main content area has three sections: 'DATE' with the value 'Sep 17, 2025', 'START TIME' with the value '3:14 PM' and two circular buttons with minus and plus signs, and 'RECORD TRACK' with a green toggle switch and an information icon. At the bottom is a green button labeled 'Start Checklist'. The bottom navigation bar contains five icons: 'Submit' (a green circle), 'Checklists' (a document icon), 'Explore' (a magnifying glass), 'My eBird' (a person icon), and 'More' (three dots).

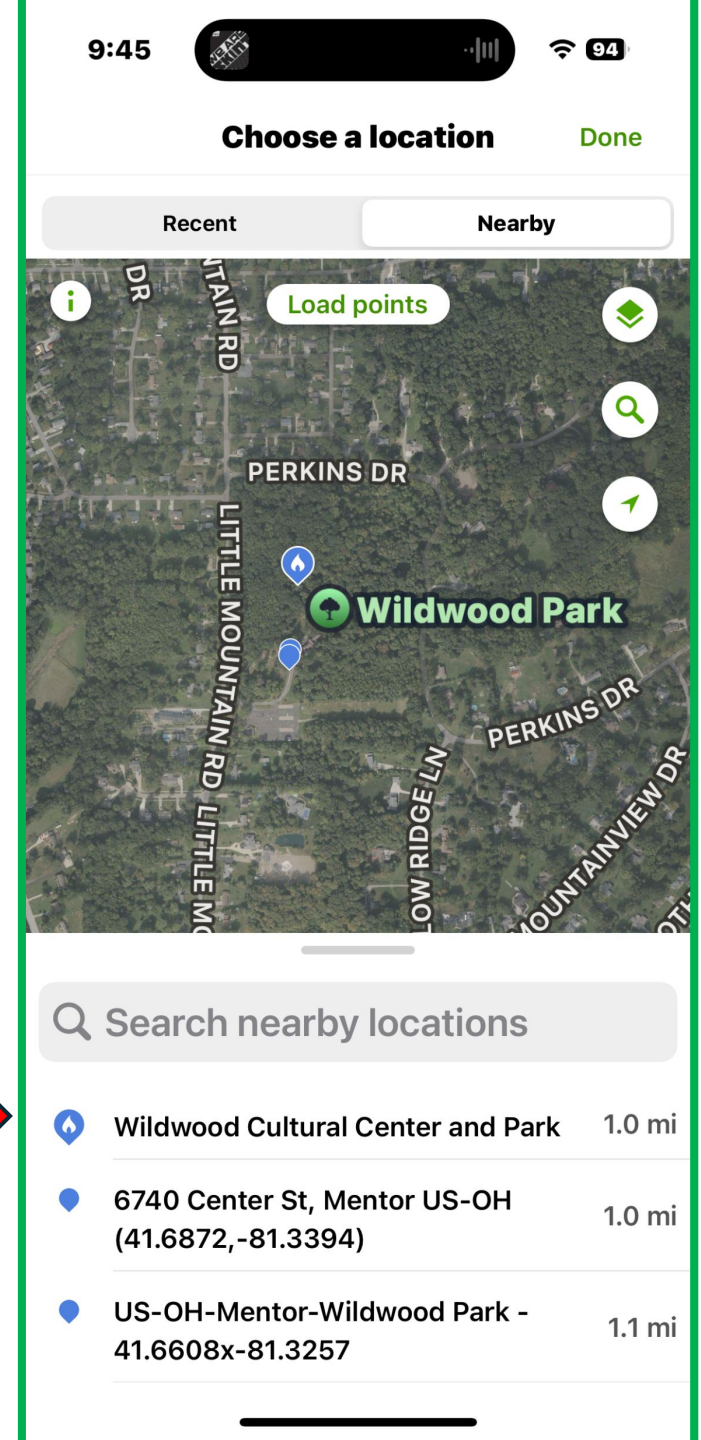
Share Your Observations: Where did you go birding?

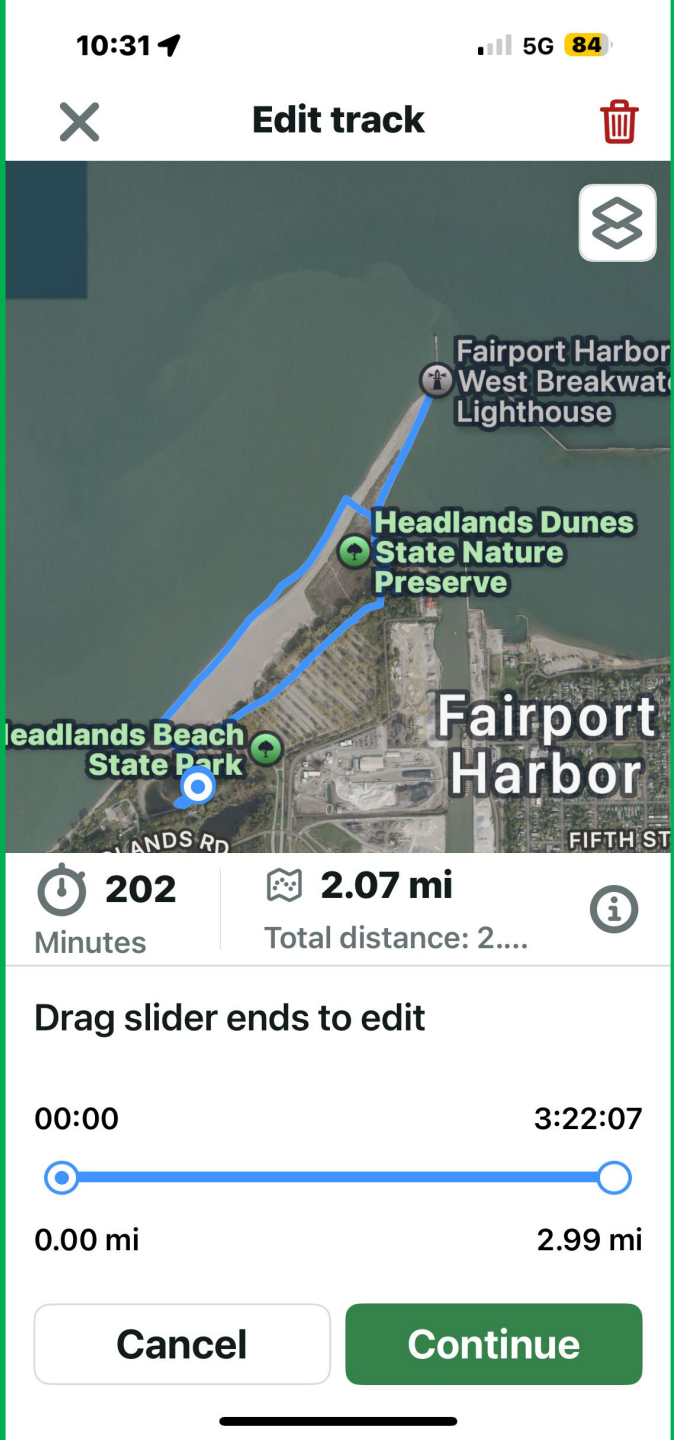
When to Start and Stop

- Several short checklists are better than one long one

Choosing the Location

- Location where you were birding
- eBird hotspot
- Personal location





Share Your Observations: Where did you go birding?

Travel Distance

- eBird Mobile tracking feature
 - Can edit your track if you forget to stop the checklist
- Start a new list when you enter a new habitat
- Keep distances to 5 miles or less
- If not tracking, report the unique distance traveled

Share Your Observations: How did you go birding?

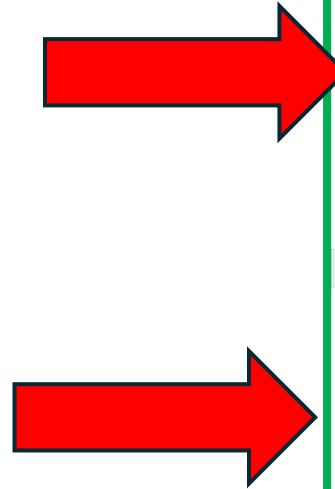
Types of Checklists

- Traveling
- Stationary
- Incidental
- Historical

Are you reporting all species?

Did you bird with others?

- Submit only one list and share with the group



10:41 88%

FRI 19 Sep 2025 10:41 AM ×

Preston Patch

INCIDENTAL ▼ i

Observers	Minutes	Miles
2 👤	🕒	📍

👥 Share checklist with...

Is this a complete checklist of the birds you were able to identify?

☐ Yes ☒ No

ADD CHECKLIST COMMENTS

0 Species +

Share Your Observations: What Birds Did You Find?

- Submit sightings using eBird Mobile or the eBird website
- **eBird Mobile**
 - Install a bird pack
 - Enter checklist in real time
 - Provides a list of expected species based on GPS location, your bird packs, and time of year



Share Your Observations: What Birds Did You Find?

Type Birds in the Quick Entry Bar

- Quickest way: **# species name or abbreviation**, then tap name in list
- Alternate way: **species**, then click + to the left of name in list
- Add details: click species name to bring up window with space for comments, breeding info
- Toggle between checked view and full checklist view



Share Your Observations

What Birds Did You Find

Counting Birds

- Count birds individually when possible
- Estimate large flocks
- Use “X” to indicate a species was present, not a “1”
 - X is appropriate in some cases
- Some high counts require comments
 - “Please add information how you identified the birds and how you arrived at the count”

11:25    70%

 **Canada Goose** Done

Branta canadensis

Number Observed




BIRD ID

Heard only flock

BREEDING CODE 

 Add breeding code

Share Your Observations Reporting unusual birds

Bird Entries Flagged as “Rare”

- Species is rare for that location and/or date
- You will not be able to submit your list until you add comments to document any flagged species
- Describe what you observed in as much detail as possible
 - Add photo(s) or sound recording(s) if possible
- An eBird reviewer may follow-up

11:33    70

 00:00 0.43mi  Mentor Marsh State Nature Preserve-- 

Likely species based on 497 checklists in 20x20km area

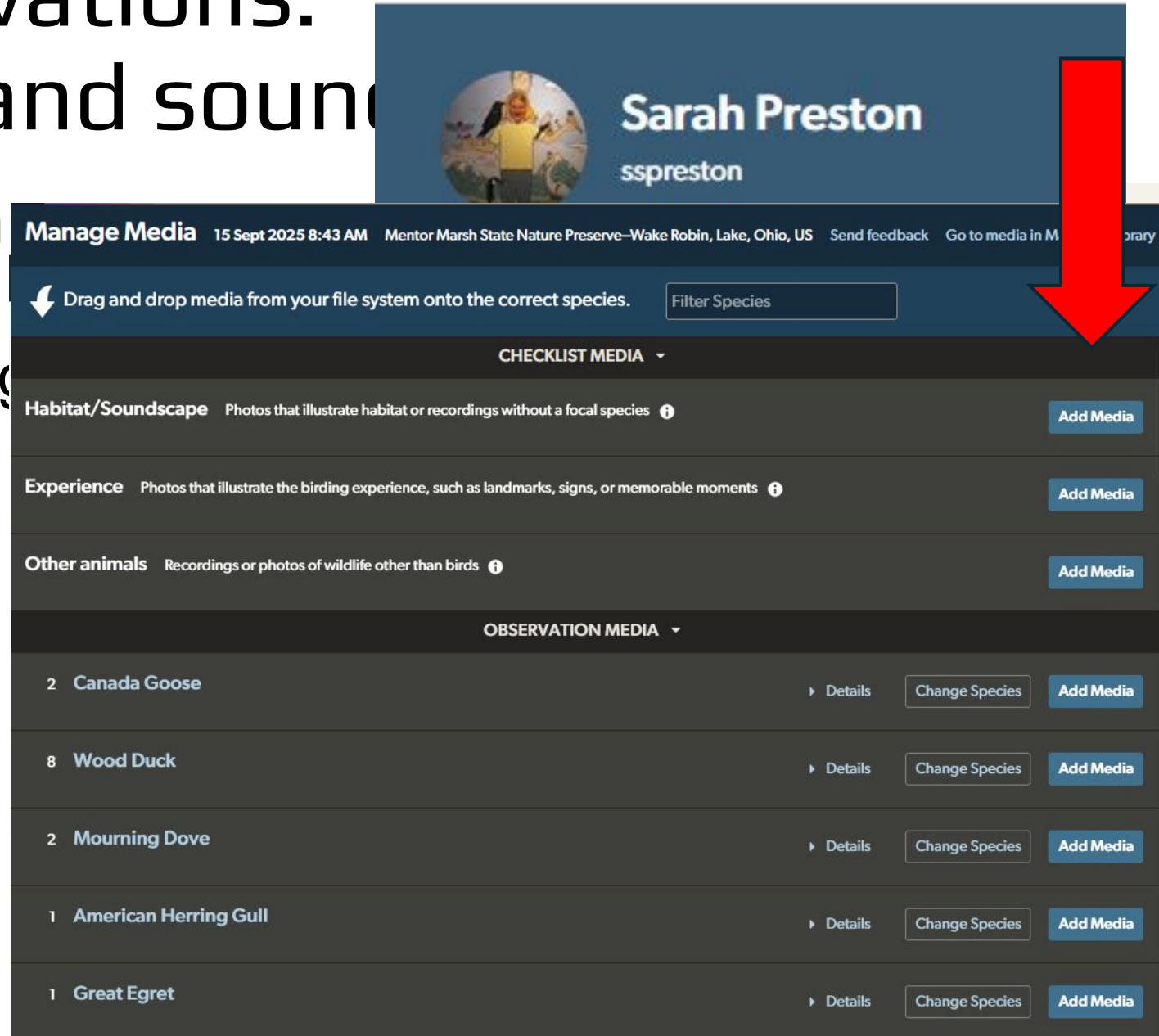
 Add observation or find species

2	Song Sparrow	
1	Lincoln's Sparrow	
10	Bobolink 	
2	Black-and-white Warbler	
1	Tennessee Warbler 	
1	Nashville Warbler	
1	Connecticut Warbler 	 
2	Common Yellowthroat	
3	Magnolia Warbler	

Share Your Observations: Add your photos and sound

To Add a Photo or Sound to an eBird Checklist

- Open your checklist on ebird.org
- Click the “Add Media” button
- Find the species by scrolling or typing in the filter species box
- Click “Add Media” next to the species
- Upload your files
 - Add notes and details



The screenshot shows the eBird 'Manage Media' interface. At the top, there's a header with the eBird logo, a user profile for Sarah Preston (sspreston), and a navigation bar. Below the header, there's a section for 'Manage Media' with a timestamp '15 Sept 2025 8:43 AM' and location 'Mentor Marsh State Nature Preserve—Wake Robin, Lake, Ohio, US'. A red arrow points to the 'Add Media' button for the 'Canada Goose' species. The interface is divided into 'CHECKLIST MEDIA' and 'OBSERVATION MEDIA' sections. The 'CHECKLIST MEDIA' section includes 'Habitat/Soundscape', 'Experience', and 'Other animals'. The 'OBSERVATION MEDIA' section lists species with their counts and 'Add Media' buttons.

CHECKLIST MEDIA			
Habitat/Soundscape	Photos that illustrate habitat or recordings without a focal species		Add Media
Experience	Photos that illustrate the birding experience, such as landmarks, signs, or memorable moments		Add Media
Other animals	Recordings or photos of wildlife other than birds		Add Media

OBSERVATION MEDIA			
2	Canada Goose	Details Change Species	Add Media
8	Wood Duck	Details Change Species	Add Media
2	Mourning Dove	Details Change Species	Add Media
1	American Herring Gull	Details Change Species	Add Media
1	Great Egret	Details Change Species	Add Media

Additional Resources

- Cornell Lab Bird Academy's eBird Essentials course – FREE
- You Tube Videos
 - Introduction to eBird by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
 - Submit Your Sightings on eBird Mobile – eBird Essentials by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
 - eBird Essentials – Bird Academy by Cornell Lab of Ornithology



Any
Questions
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