How to use BowerBird. March 2015

BowerBird is a socially interactive scientific website. Most scientific websites are not interactive – the user cannot ask a question. BowerBird allow someone to post an image and ask a question and for someone else to answer that question. These interactions form a community of people willing to share their finds, for others to appreciate the shared knowledge and some to contribute to the finds of others by providing an identification or a comment.

BowerBird is dedicated to citizen science – a new wave of “observational science” rarely practiced now by professional scientists.

BowerBird’s development was funded by the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) – Australia’s National Biodiversity Legacy dataset. ALA’s datasets comes mainly from Museums and Herbaria; however, biodiversity tracks species in time and space and Museum and Herbaria have substantially reduced their collecting efforts now so ALA was missing “current” data on animals and plants. Citizen science is now filling this gap. All identified BowerBird data is uploaded to ALA. Here is the BowerBird dataset on ALA as of 26 March 2015 – 17, 507 records:
Here in a nutshell is **How to use BowerBird:**

- Register and Join BowerBird

- Login

- If this is your first login to BowerBird, you must either Join Projects or Follow People to see or do anything.

- What you personally see on BowerBird is completely determined by yourself – you only see records from the Projects you have joined or the People you are following.

- On BowerBird, you can simply watch shared records appear on your screen or you can interact with any record you can see - such as make a comment or a tag or an identification. Of course, you can upload your own new records to share and you can even create your own Project where you can store your own records.

- The “Power” of BowerBird is sharing. The smallest Project on BowerBird is called “My Quarter Acre Block” which has 3 members and 6 records while the largest Project is called “Insects and Inverts” with over 300 members and over 10,000 records. If a person adds a new record to just the “My Quarter Acre Block” then only 3 people will see that record. Whereas, if the “My Quarter Acre Block” record is added to both the “My Quarter Acre Block” and the “Insects and Inverts” projects, then over 300 people will see the record and be able to help. Even the smallest BowerBird project can be successful if the records are shared with other projects – **this is the secret to a successful BowerBird.**

The BowerBird website URL is:

[www.bowerbird.org.au](http://www.bowerbird.org.au)

For BowerBird, we recommend you use a modern web browser such as Chrome or FireFox. Microsoft recently announced they will discontinue producing their web browser Microsoft IE (Internet Explorer). I recommend that you do not use Microsoft IE for BowerBird. Chrome and FireFox are free downloads:

Chrome: [https://support.google.com/chrome/answer/95346?hl=en](https://support.google.com/chrome/answer/95346?hl=en)

Joining BowerBird:
Put the BowerBird URL into your web browser and click the “Join” button in the top, right corner.

You then provide a name (real or false), an email address (real or false) and a password and click JOIN.

This is how BowerBird will recognise you when you login and return.
How to Login to BowerBird:

Having Joined BowerBird, you then click the “Login” button to open BowerBird.

You provide an email address and your password then click LOGIN.
What to do then:

When you first join and open BowerBird – **YOU SEE NOTHING !!**
That’s because you have not Joined and Projects or Followed and People.

Let’s start Joining some Projects.

Let’s say that I am interested in helping the survey of the recently arrived exotic African Carder Bee.

There are now over 3,000 different BowerBird projects so you are best to SEARCH for project names.

Let’s find and join the South African Carder bee project.
You begin by clicking the “Projects” button on the top line:

Then you click the SEARCH button:

Then you type in the word “Carder” and click “GO”
The African Carder Bee monitoring project will appear and to Join it you simply click the Join button.

When you click the join button, the project will appear in your left column Project List and the “Join” button under the Project has changed to “Joined”.

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The African Carder bee (Afranthidium repetitum) was first observed in Australia in...
Click the left column “African Carder Bee monitoring Project” and you will see all of the uploaded records for this Project. The first view is called the “Timeline” view (arrowed). This view shows you one record per screen.

Click the “Sightings” mode and you will see about 9 records per screen.
In the Sightings view mode, you can see that 3 different authors have uploaded 3 different records: Kim Earl, Christine and Jessica Baumann

If you click on the TITLE name for any record, then you will open and see the entire record:

Kim Earl
25 March 2015

South African Carder bee

Sighted 22 March 2015

African Carder Bee. Afranthidium Immanthidium repetitum
(species)


Common Names: Bees, Megachilids, Megachild bees

Kim Earl says
This now the most northerly record for this invasive species.
I went back and joined a few more Projects – some big and some small.

The Australian Bees, Mammals, Plants, Insects and Reptiles are all big projects while the Montmorency Sugar Glider project is small. Now, I will see any records uploaded to any of the below Projects I have joined.

You can create your own project by Click the “leaf” like button on the top left corner.
Below is all the information you need to add to create a new Project. (This is just a fake one!)

Add a project by filling in the details below.

**Avatar**

**Name** Required

Ken's Backyard

**Categories** Required

Amphibians, Birds, Inv...

Select the categories of sightings your project will contain

**Website**

Add a link to your project's existing website

**Description**

Animals that occur in Ken's Backyard

Describe your project so that others can easily find it and (hopefully) join.

**Heading Background Image**

Give your project some character by customising the heading background image.
Adding a new record.

To add a new record, click the camera button in the top left corner:

This will open the below template in which there are 6 items to fill.
Here is the first image I was to upload. It is a caterpillar that was photographed at Pie Creek, Queensland on 10 March 2015.

This is all the information I need to add a new record to BowerBird.

The name of the image file is: Olene.jpg
Step 1. Find the image file I was to upload.

Click the “Add Media” line and

Click “My Files”

The file occurs in my “Entomology” folder and arrowed is the file name: Olene.jpg.

You can highlight it and click Open or simply double click the file.
The image file gets uploaded into BowerBird:

TIP:

You can upload multiple images at the same time by highlighting the images you want to upload. BowerBird will allow you to upload 20 images per single record.

Here are some of the above highlighted images now loaded into BowerBird.
If you click the blue arrow button on each image, you can:

- If you have uploaded multiple images, you can select which single image you want to show as the main image. Click the blue arrow on the image and click the “Show This Media first” button
- Add text to the file – see below where I have add “Moth caterpillar” text
- Remove image

Here is some text I have added to the image file
The uploaded image now shows -

- Added text – Moth caterpillar
- Copyright statement – default is the Creative Commons 3.0 license
- This image will be shown as the main record image

**Step 2. Add a title**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moth caterpillar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 3. **Add a GPS.** There are several ways you can do this:

A. **Search for an address.** Type in the address and you will be offered options. Select the option that best suits your address

Here is an example of me searching for my home address at 44 Kirwana Grove Montmorency 3094. I have only typed in “44 Kirwana” and I was offered the below options to select from.
After I select the “Pie Creek QLD 4570, Australia” option, a blue marker is added to the map and the GPS coordinates are shown below the map.

If I click the “Edit Coordinates” blue button, then I can add the GPS manually.

I could have typed in the decimal degree coordinates.
Or typed in the Degrees, Minutes and Seconds

Or, I could have typed in the UTM coordinates.

Any of these options will work.
On the map itself, you can manually move the marker pin. Click the “Satellite” option and “Expand Map” option:

Which open the map up like this. You can then increase the scale of the map by using the slide bar in the top left corner of the map or using your mouse scroll wheel.
When increasing the scale of the map, the blue pin marker will disappear. However, you can re-centre the map at any time by clicking the “Centre Pin” option.
This scaled up map now shows where the blue marker has been placed.

You can put your mouse on the blue marker, click and hold down the mouse button and drag the blue marker to anywhere on the map then release the mouse button.
Step 4. **Add a Category.** Select the appropriate animal or plant category. In this case, the moth is an “Invertebrate”

![Category Selection](image)

Step 5. **Add a date:** You can change the day, month or year.

![Date Sighted](image)
Step 6. I want to add this record to two BowerBird projects: Insects and Moths.

Added to Insects & Inverts Project

Then added to Moths Project
Before Clicking the Save button, just recheck all 6 items have been completed.

Then click the Save button:
Initially, the record is added to any new items that have been added to your project list while you were adding your new record. When you click this blue bar, all 5 new records will be shown:

Here is the new record. Note it has:

- An image
- The image has the text “Moth caterpillar”
- A title
- A date
- A location
- Added to two projects

Congratulations !! You have added a new record.
In the Sightings view mode, you can see that some of the additional 4 records added while we were adding our moth record included a Red-rumped parrot record (added because we joined the “Bird” project) and a Labdia moth record (added because we joined the “Moth” project) had also been added about the same time as the moth caterpillar. Notice all three records have different authors.
To identity your record or anyone else’s record just click the “Identify” blue button.

And then click the “Identify the Sighting blue bar”
The moth’s scientific name is *Olene mendosa*. There are two ways to identify this moth.

**Method 1.** Simply type in the scientific name. If the name appears in the box below, then click it.

The name will then appear in the box above the name typed in but now it has its full classification and common names.
If you just type in the genus name, you will be offered a selection of all species names associated with the generic name. If you want to identify to species, then select the appropriate species:
Method 2. Using the classification system provided:

I selected:

- Animalia then
- Arthropoda then
- Insecta then
- Lepidoptera then
- Lymantriidae then
- Olene then
- mendosa finally!

I could have stopped at any one of those stages such as “Lepidoptera”, if I was not sure of the Family or Genus or Species. Someone else may come along an add the remainder of the identification.

This identification is then added to the record as:
I now also want to add this “Comment” to the record:

This rather large and attractive tussock moth caterpillar was eating one of the local Red Ash (*Alphitonia excelsa*). It seems to be a larva of the Brown Tussock Moth *Olene mendoza* Hubner, 1823. Pie Creek, Qld, 10 March 2015.

To add a comment, you click the “Describe” button:

After you click the “Describe” button, below the image will appear two new boxes:

- Tags
- Comments

You add a tag (e.g. comment) and you add a Comment. NOTE: You must add a Tag to save your comment.
This is then added to the record.

So, the record now contains:

- An image
- A title
- A date
- A category
- A GPS
- Is assigned to two projects
- Is identified
- Has a tag and a comment

What a rich and informative image !!
Here is a TIP:

No matter where you are in BowerBird, you can always “start again” or return to the “Home page” by clicking the BowerBird button in the top left corner of every page:
Searching on BowerBird

Only when in the “Sightings” view mode, can you do a search of BowerBird records.

If you are on the “Home” page, then the search will be across ALL BowerBird records.

If you are within a Project, then the search will be only across that Project’s records.

When in the Sightings view mode, click the “Search” button and Type in a Common or Scientific name. You can also use the Classification method or ask for a scientific name:

Below, I have asked across all BowerBird records for the genus Olene which returned 3 records.
Here I asked for any common name that has the word “Red” anywhere in the name.

Many records were returned.
Finally, Voting on BowerBird.

Anyone can Vote for any record. The BowerBird records with the top 20 number of Votes are the images shown on the homepage. The snake image remain the top most voted record.
Soon after I uploaded the hairy caterpillar record, Ken Harris identified it as the Painted Apple Moth.

The Painted Apple Moth is close but as you can see, it is missing the white tuft of hair near the front of the body so it is a different species.

I added (under the name of David Evans Walter) the correct name. Note: Another person added the correct family name Lymantriidae.

You cannot remove an identification but you can Vote up or down for an identification.

When ALA uploads this record, it will take the identification with the most number of votes.
Hopefully, this introduction to BowerBird will provide you with enough information to get you using BowerBird and adding records from your local area and from your travels.

Don’t be afraid to add an image that you have no idea what it is.

Here is an example of a black and white pupal case.

I later identified it as an ichneumonid wasp pupal case and everyone learnt something new.

Ken Walker 24 March 2015

Hyposoter (genus)
If you have any questions or problems or suggestion, please email me at:

kwalker@museum.vic.gov.au

Good luck and Happy BowerBirding ............

Ken Walker
26 March 2015