



Science Monthly

District NGSS and Science News

SPRING EDITION

MARCH 2019



Website of the Month:
Birdsleuth K-12

Free App Of the Month:
iNaturalist

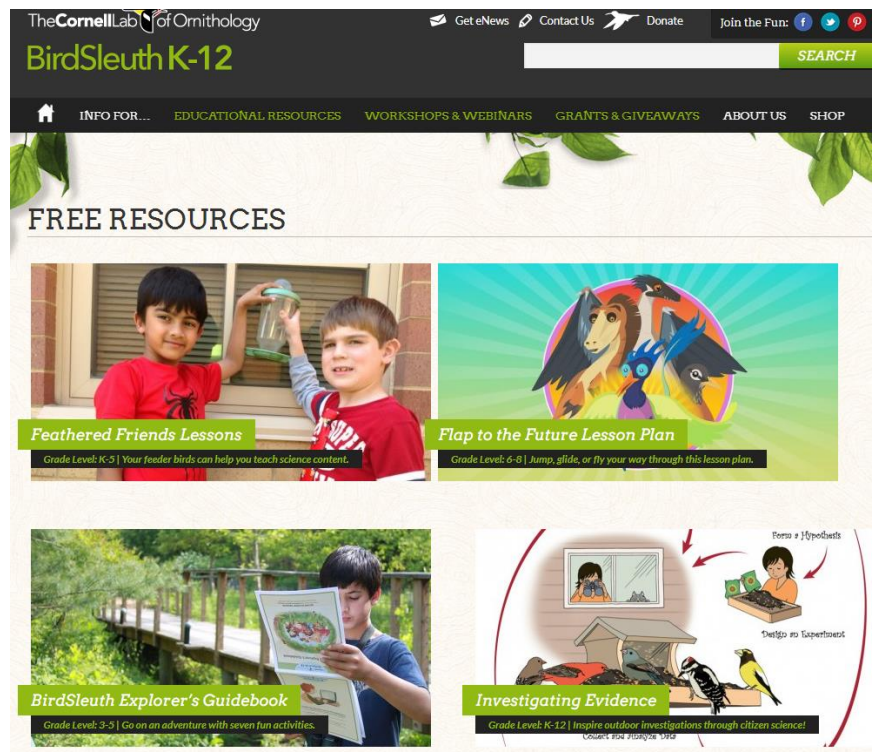
Superbloom:
Rain, Flowers & other Local Phenomena

Website of the Month: BirdSleuth K-12

<http://www.birdsleuth.org/>

All around birds are chirping and making their springtime nests. While we may not be able to take our students to wildlife preserves and zoos as often as we would like, there are many species of birds that can be observed on our school campuses and in the surrounding areas. An offshoot of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, BirdSleuth K-12 is a website dedicated to providing resources for educators to get students out birdwatching.

More than just lessons, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology also hosts webinars and grant opportunities to educators who want to incorporate naturalism into their curriculum. Having students outside identifying bird species not only encourages students to keep an eye out for local species, but also local wildlife habitats and how to be respectful of the species we share a community with. Grow your students' appreciation and respect for our local habitats by having students explore what lives and relies on those environments to survive.



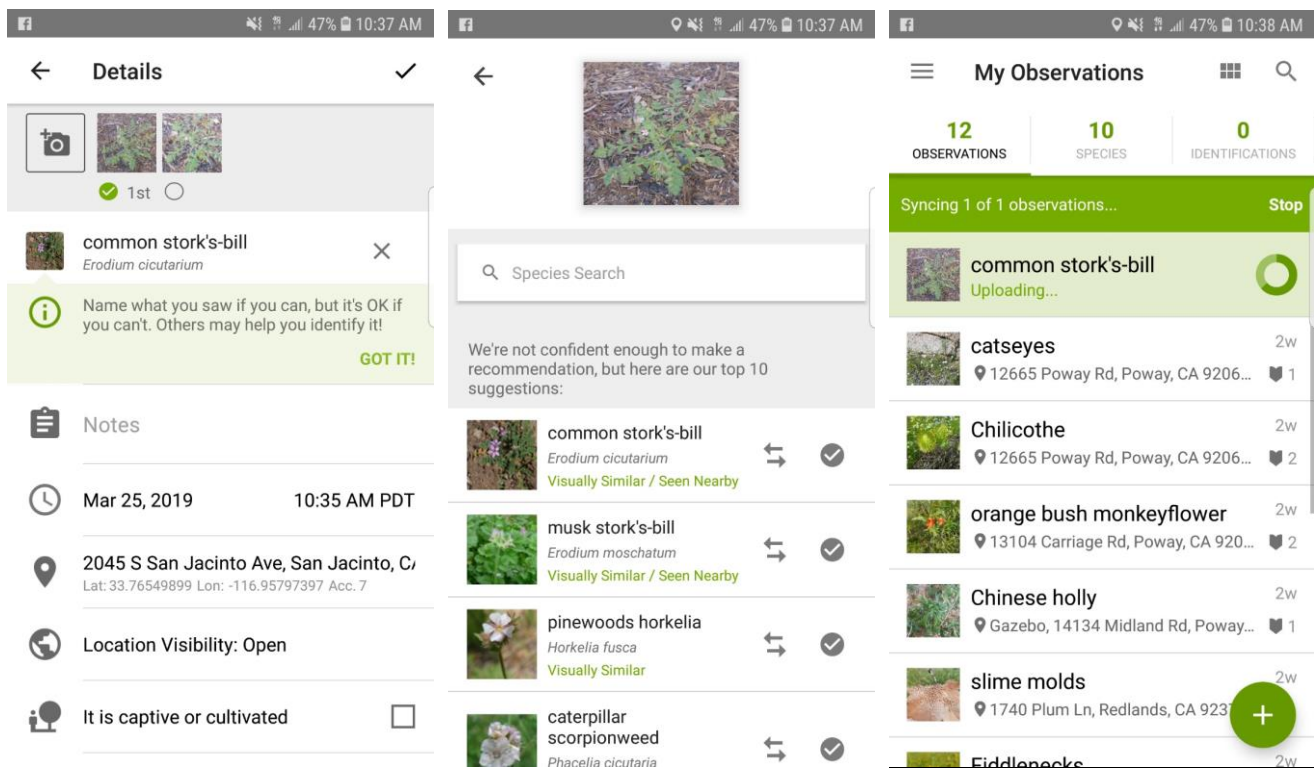
Free App of the Month: iNaturalist

<https://www.inaturalist.org/>



Have you ever wondered what that bug was crawling around or what that weed was called growing in the yard? The app iNaturalist is a great new tool for anyone to share out and identify species in the community. Developed as a way for citizen scientists to contribute to location based studies, the app encourages users to upload photos of plant and animal species they observe around them. A user uploads a photo while the app notes the location, date, and time of the observation. Then, using photo identifying technology, the app make suggestions as to what species it might be. Not sure which species it is still? Let other naturalists and researchers identify it for you.

Users can also log on and help identify species for other observations. The more positive identifications made for an observation, the higher the research-grade observation becomes. This digital community helps real scientists and researchers track species migrations and population growth by using the observations provided by app users.



Superbloom: Rain, Flowers & other Local Phenomena

If it's not in your social media newsfeed, you surely have heard that folks from all over are flocking to our neck of the woods to see these beautiful flowers painting our hillsides. The recent rains have helped thousands of acres of land pop with poppies among other native flowers such as mustard, lupine, mallow and so much more. Nature's gift to our neighborhood also provides a fantastic phenomenon to discuss with our students and use as a teachable moment.



Examining the timeline of the phenomenon begins as far back as the Holy Fire clearing brush on the hillsides of Lake Elsinore, however many flowers have bloomed in more than just the burn scarred areas. Then we get unusual amounts



of seasonal rain, so much so that California can say it has for now exited its drought stage. From there we have mild temperatures and sunshine to nurture the seedlings until they have bloomed into a magnificent menagerie of wildflowers. Spring has sprung with more rabbits, lizards, and birds in the fields giving our classes a great example of how resources such as water directly impact plant and animal populations.

Science

Superbloom turns Southern California city into a #PoppyNightmare

By Jason Daley, Smithsonian.com
03/24/2019

Text Level **12**
Word Count **750**



Image 1. The superbloom creates a traffic jam along the 15 Freeway as wildflower enthusiasts wait to exit toward Walker Canyon on March 9, 2019, in Lake Elsinore, California. Photo by: Gina Ferazzi/Los Angeles Times via Getty Images

Cities face all kinds of natural disasters — floods, droughts, windstorms and earthquakes. But the City of Lake Elsinore in Southern California is experiencing something less expected: a dangerous outbreak of flowers. A rare "superbloom" currently taking place in

Another interesting and possibly unexpected impact of the superbloom is the increase in tourism and the human impact on the local environment. News articles in Los Angeles and San Diego Counties were happy to report the superbloom a few weeks ago and recommended day trips to see the flowers. Now the news articles, such as the one found on NewsELA that you can read with your students, are reporting all of the traffic, safety hazards, and damage caused by the tourists. Consider talking to your students about respectful viewing and appreciation of the natural

habitats. There is nothing wrong with wanting to view the flowers but perhaps you could start a conversation about safe and respectful viewing guidelines and how our students could set an example for others. By ensuring we treat our local environment with respect, we also ensure that we can sustain the natural beauty as long as possible for the health and safety of our native species.

#TrashTag: Social Media is Cleaning Up



Along the Potomac River south of Washington, DC [#trashtag](#)



A great new social media challenge is the [#trashtag](#) and it encourages young people to clean up litter in their local areas. The challenge is simple, take a picture of somewhere covered in litter, then clean it all up and post an after picture to see the dramatic difference. Challenge your students to try out their own [#trashtag](#) campaigns and see who can make the biggest impact on their clean up sites. They can post to their personal social media accounts or have them send in pictures to share with the school twitter accounts. Try encouraging your students to sort out recyclables and even compostable litter to reduce landfill waste.

California Science Test Updates:

CAST Testing Preparations for All Grades- <http://bit.ly/2JYQP3h>

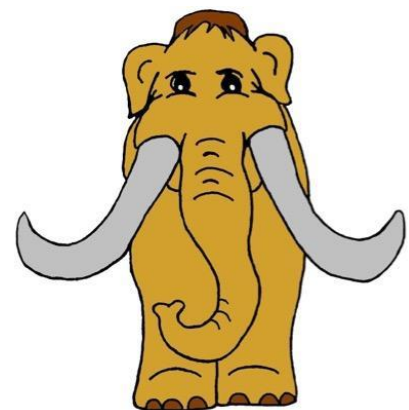
The testing window is fast approaching for 5th, 8th, and High School science classes. While the science test is only given in these grades, that does not mean that only those grades are responsible for teaching the science content and skills being evaluated. Try out some of these tips and tricks to get ALL students read for CAST testing:

- Try out the practice tests at www.caaspp.org
- Have students write CER's to practice supporting their own claims.
- Read current event articles and have students explain what is happening based on their science knowledge.
- Notice and Wonder Conversations
- Design your exams in Illuminate so that students can practice taking digital tests.

Local Celebrity Max the Mastodon

New Species of Mastodon Confirmed at Western Science Center

Straight out of Hemet, introducing the new taxon *Mammuthus pacificus* or the Pacific Mastodon! Max the Mastodon is the mascot for the Western Science Center and as it turns out also the mascot for the newly identified species. After studying the mastodon remains on display in the museum, researchers thought some of his features seemed a little different than the typical skeletons they had previously studied. Read up on their research and head on over to the WSC to see Max and other local Pleistocene specimens on display.



Contact and Support

Jackie Gardner: SJUSD NGSS TOSA jgardner@sanjacinto.k12.ca.us
Website: <https://thefishnerd.weebly.com> Phone: (951) 929 - 7700 ext. 4252
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