[Learn about the ALA](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/) > [How you can use the ALA](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/)

**Knowledge base**

**How you can use the ALA**

**How you can Find species information**

The ALA species pages display text descriptions, images, location information, taxonomic details and links to academic literature for every species in our database.

**Download our user guides:**

* [Download Species information](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/) .PDF
* [Download Finding species in your area](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/) .PDF

**How you can explore your area**

By bringing together species information alongside location information, the ALA enables you to explore the biodiversity in your own area or region.

**Download our user guides:**

* [Does a species occur in my area](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/) .PDF
* [Finding the species in your area](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/) .PDF

**How you can download data**

Data available on the ALA is used for many different purposes ranging from environmental impact assessments, urban development applications, field guides and school projects.

[**Download data sets**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/)

**How you can record a sighting**

If you have seen an interesting plant, animal or fungus in your area, why not record your sighting? You will need the date, the location, and the name of the species (If you don’t know the name, the Species Selection Tool can help). The more information you can provide, the more useful the record of your sighting will be.

[**Record a sighting**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/)

**Download our user guides:**

* [How to log a sighting](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/) .PDF

**How you can submit a data set**

If you already have a collection of species sightings, they can be submitted to the ALA as a data set rather than one at a time.

To submit a data set, your data needs to be in a structured format suitable for loading into the ALA. The ALA uses the Darwin Core data standard.

If your data is in a spreadsheet, create a file with Darwin Core column headings or use one of our templates. If your data is in a database, you will need to export a data file (e.g. spreadsheet). When your data is in a suitable file format, test it in Sandbox, our data check tool. Sandbox will run a trial upload of your data to test whether it displays correctly. If you are happy with how Sandbox displays the data, you can submit your data set to the ALA.

If you have a large or complex data set please contact the ALA Data Management Team.

**Download a template:**

* [ALA occurrence data template – simple](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/) .XLS
* [ALA occurrence data template – high quality](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/) .XLS
* [ALA species list template](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/) .XLS
* [ALA multimedia template](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/) .XLS
* [ALA species profile template](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/) .XLS

**Test data in the sandbox**

[**Sandbox – Occurrence data**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/) [**Species list upload**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/)

**Get in touch**

[**Contact Data Management**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/)

**How you can join a Citizen Science project**

BioCollect is the ALA’s citizen science portal. Our citizen science project finder lets you search biodiversity related citizen projects across Australia and directs you to the host organisation.

If you are a scientist (or citizen scientist) wanting to harness the power of the citizen science community, BioCollect enables you to set up a citizen science project, facilitates data collection and helps manage your data.

[**Join a citizen science project**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/) [**Create a BioCollect project**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/)

**How you can digitise museum collections**

DigiVol is a crowdsourcing platform that enables volunteers to digitise museum collection records. Anyone can become a DigiVol volunteer, all you need is a computer, internet access and an email address.

Digivol was developed by the Australian Museum in collaboration with the ALA.

[**Find out how to become a DigiVol volunteer**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/) [**Find out more About DigiVol**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/)

**Use our API**

The ALA Application Programming Interface (API) allows third party websites and developers to access many of the features of the ALA site.

The API is a collection of web services that provide HTTP access to JSON, XML, CSV and WMS data types.

[**Visit our API page**](https://wpprod2017.ala.org.au/how-you-can/)