Habitat Network - mapping 101

THE TUTORIAL
JACOB JOHNSTON
BECCA RODOMSKY-BISH

CORNELL LAB OF ORNITHOLOGY
Log into HabitatNetwork

From the Homepage:

1. Sign-up as a NEW USER

OR

2. Sign-in using an existing account from another Lab Citizen Science Project.

http://habitat.network
Sign-in Page

If you’ve participated in any of these Citizen Science programs before, use the same username and password.

If not, **Create an Account** here.

If you had an account but cannot remember your password, use these help features.
At First Glance

Once logged in, you will see a satellite map and two informational sidebars.

This is the Site Explorer Window. It will show you information about the map you are creating or viewing.

Since you haven’t created a map yet, this column tells you the first step: Find Your Site.

The right column guides you to various resources on the webpage. If you’d like a bigger view of the map, close/open this by clicking this arrow.
Getting Started

You can use this drop down menu to explore other sites, see amazing Featured Sites, or view a list of your own map, once you’ve created one.

To begin, find your location! Type your address into this search bar. Include: Street number, street name, city, state, and zip code.

Habitat Network uses Google Maps as a template, so the image you see is from their database. We have no control over the quality of the image.
Use your zoom

On the map is a +/- zoom feature. Once you have entered your location, zoom in to confirm that the map shows your property.

The hand that appears works like the one on Google Maps. It will move the image that you are looking at. Click and hold to drag the map around. Move it slowly for the most control over your image.

Zooming and dragging will be helpful for creating and perfecting your habitat map!
Start mapping!

Click on the **Tool Shed** and select **First**.

A tool-bar will open at the bottom of your screen. Pick the site outline tool that best matches your site.

If you are unsure, pause your mouse over each site image and a description will appear.
Outline your Site

After selecting the correct site type, the mouse cursor will turn into crosshairs. Move the crosshairs to a start point and click. Move to the next point and click again. White dots will appear as points.

Continue clicking at every corner to place dots all the way around, then re-click on the first white dot to complete the outline. The website will save automatically.

Each dot can be moved so if you are not 100% accurate on your first try, you can go back and adjust them.

Outline EVERYTHING you intend to Map! Any mapping outside this line will not be saved! Include buildings in the site outline.
Outline your Site

At this point, the **Site Explorer Window** activates and displays your site’s information. It will be quite empty at first so let’s work on filling it in with data!

The Explorer window will show you all the information about your map as you add habitats, objects, bird sightings and more!

The next step will be to fill in your site line with habitat and land-use information. Read on to learn more.
Mapping Habitats

Return to the Tool Shed and select **Second**. This will change the different tool types at the bottom.

Select the tool that fits the land-use/habitat you want to outline. We recommend starting with **buildings** as they are easy to see.

Again, there are descriptions for each habitat if you hover your mouse over them.

Once you have selected the correct tool, begin mapping habitats just like you did with the Site Line.

Zoom in to the area to be more accurate.
**Editing Lines**

If you finish drawing a site line or habitat and need to make adjustments, look for the WHITE DOTS.

If there are no white dots on the item you want to edit, click the item on the map then uncheck the box to get the white dots to appear. When you are done editing, click the box again to lock.

Each dot can be moved individually. Grab a dot and move it to the correct place. Grab inside the line to move the whole shape.

Moving a dim dot will add more bright dots to work with for greater detail.

Right click on a bright dot to delete it, connecting the bright dots on either side.
Mapping Habitats

Continue to outline the different land-use and habitat types throughout the property using the appropriate tools. Fill in the entire site line with habitat.

As each habitat is mapped, it will be automatically saved and added to the list of Habitats and Objects in the Site Explorer column.

You can use the dropdown menu to filter which types of items appear in the Explorer Window.

Clicking on any item will automatically bring up its information in the Explorer Window.

Next, we’ll add objects to the map.
Adding Objects

In the Tool Shed, choose **Third** to open the Object tools.

There are a variety of shapes for trees, shrubs and flowers. Pick those you like or those that are the most representative.

To place, click on the object you want to add. Click the cursor on the map and open the box of white dots to the size you want, then click again.

Explore the list of objects with the arrows. There are many to choose from.
Edit and Delete

When white dots are around the object, it is **unlocked** and can be reshaped or moved.

Move it around by grabbing and dragging. Change its shape or make it bigger/smaller by clicking and holding onto a dot and dragging in or out.

The **Site Explorer Window** will display information about each object once it is added. Select the Info button to open the Info-Window and add data.

You can **delete** the object using the **trashcan icon** if you don’t want to keep it.

To make or lock edits, toggle "lock from editing" here.
Info-Window

Click the Info button or double-click an Object, Habitat, or Site Line to open the Info-Window.

**Overview:** provides you with a summary and a pie chart of aggregate data about your site.

**Basic Information:** provide a name of your choice or species information for the item.

**Characteristics:** provide specific information about each Object, Habitat or Site. Data input varies by item.

**Birds:** Link your site to eBird and report bird sightings in your yard.

**Comments:** Share more information about your site. These comments appear in the Forum Pages!

**Photos:** add photos of your site; plants, gardens, or anything else.
Info-Window

Set the **Basic information**.

Give the item a name or title to help you identify it or help organize. This can be anything you like. Be sure to hit **submit** to save the name.

If the item is a tree, shrub, or flower, vine, or other plant be sure to identify the species. The database links to the USDA.

Start typing in the common or scientific name and a drop down menu will open. Make your selection from there to set the species.
Info-Window

Set the **Characteristics**.

This is some of the most important data we collect!

Each type of item in Habitat Network has its own list of Characteristics to set.

Go through the list and select the answer to the inquiries by clicking the appropriate response on the wheel.

If you do not know, select ‘Not Known’. This is still a valid answer that provides useful information.

**Save and Close** before exiting the Info-Window!
Cleaning it Up!

A good quality map has clean lines between the habitats to provide accurate data on the Overview page.

Zoom in to see the gaps.

Remember, you must unlock the habitats or objects you want to manipulate before you can adjust the dots.

Bring the lines as close together as possible without overlapping.
Explore Pages

Click the Explore tab to find a wealth of resources at your fingertips!

Check out some of the “Best of the Best” with our Featured Sites for inspiration and motivation.

Explore the photo gallery for ideas and inspiration!

Enter your Zip Code here for location-based resources like, Eco-region, plant hardiness zone, and native plant lists and suppliers.
Learn Pages

Visit the Learn Pages for informative and entertaining articles.

Use the tags at the top to pull select articles of interest.

The most popular articles are here

Or you can search for titles, concepts, or keywords by entering them here.
Forum Pages

Click on the Forum Tab to access the community discussion.

Enter a comment, ask a question, or let everyone know what you’re working on.

All mapping comments show up here as well.

Comment, respond, Like and Share on social media, or use the links to explore each other’s sites.
Group Pages

Click the Group Tab to start working together!

Use these tabs to view the groups you belong to, explore the largest and most recent groups, and manage groups you’ve created.

To create a group, click the Create a Group tab, fill in the information about the group you want to create and submit it.

View a group to see its comparative data and all the maps and comments.
Group Pages

From the Overview, click on a group to see its Information.

This is a group’s comparative data. You can see how much Habitat this group provides for wildlife and how it compares to the national average.

To join your map to this group, click here or the JOIN GROUP button in the top right corner.
Return to your Map

As you modify your home, add feeders or gardens, and plant more plants…

Log-in to add those changes to your Habitat Map!

An updated map is a high quality map!

Questions?

Email us: help@habitat.network