

Neophytes in London: New Vice County Records From iNaturalist

Henry Miller, London Natural History Society (Botany Section) Co-recorder

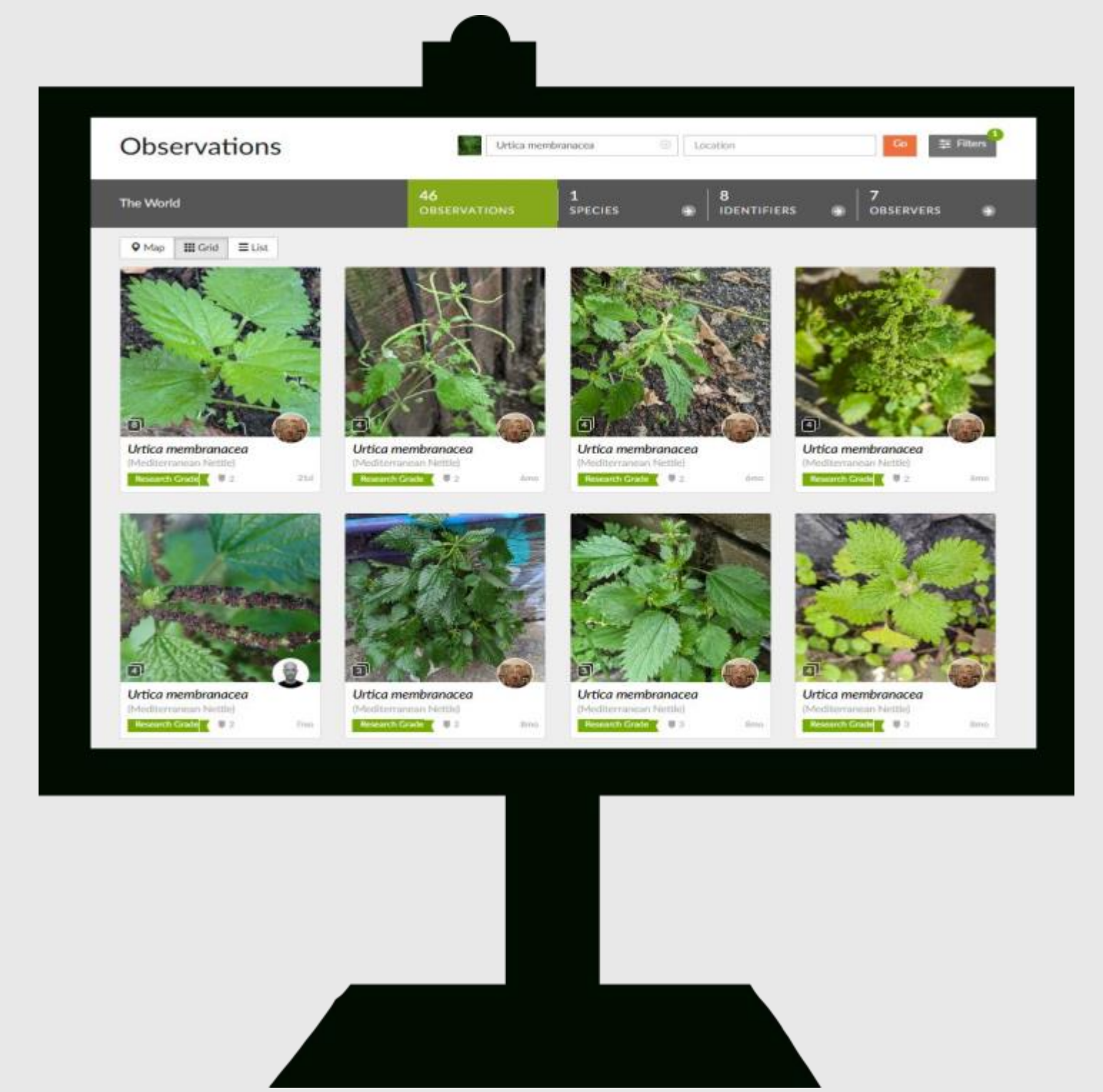
henrythemiller@gmail.com

Introduction

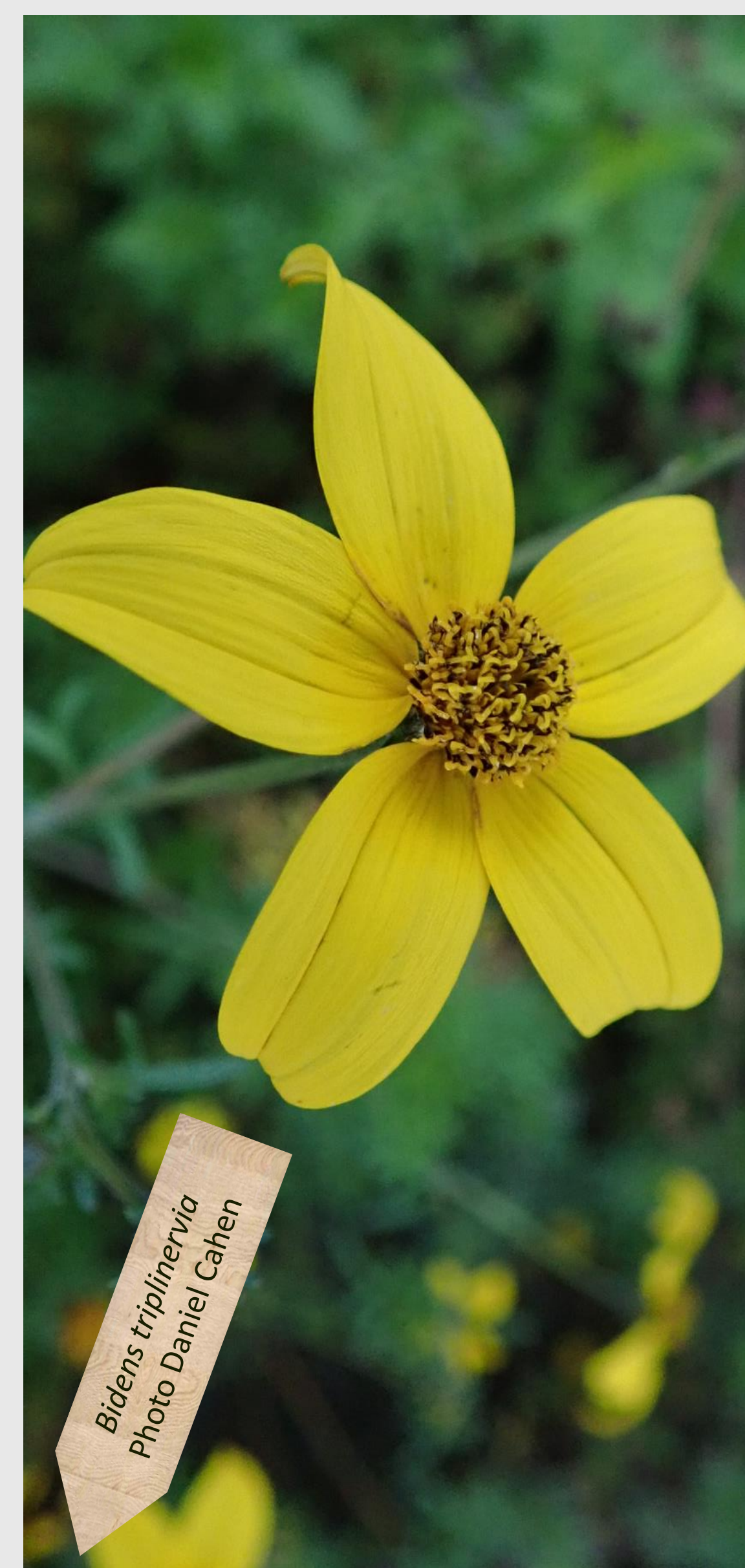
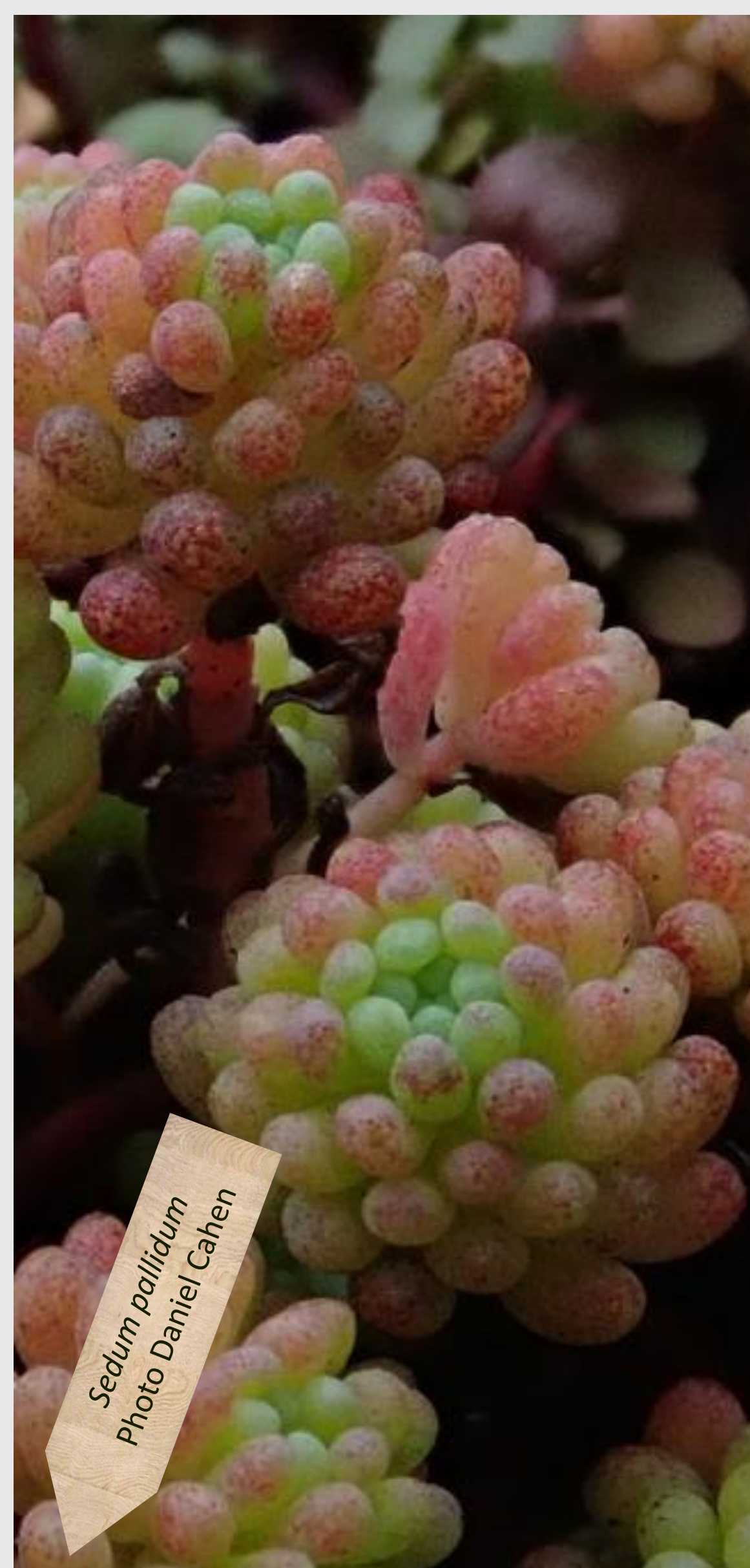
- iNaturalist is the single largest dataset of biological records on GBIF. Though time constraints and quality issues have restricted use of these records, the platform holds numerous first records at national and vice county levels. This work examines the contributions of iNaturalist data for identification of new vice county records in VC21 (Middlesex).

Methods

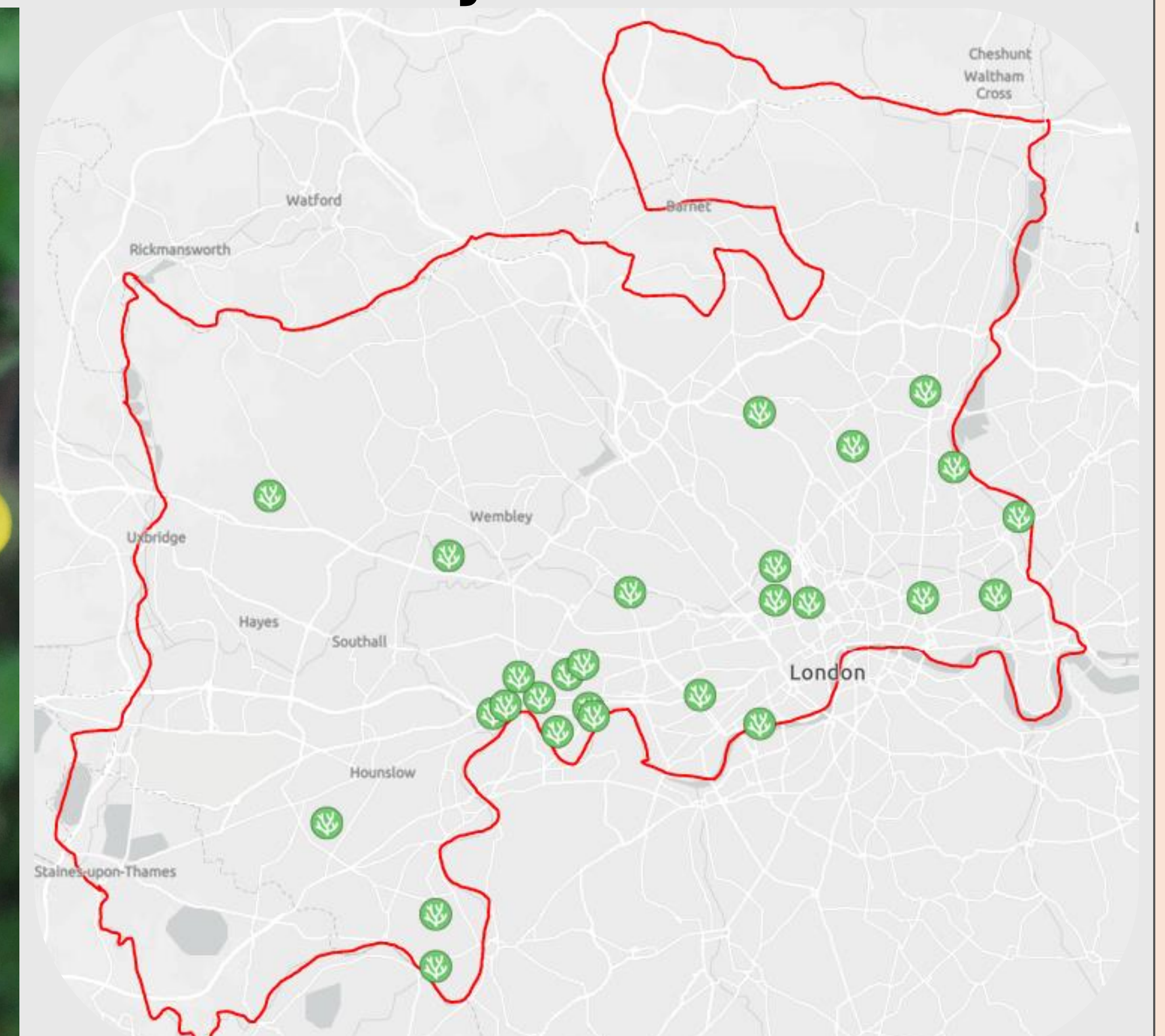
- Observations of over 1,200 species from the VC21 iNaturalist dataset verified and checked against the DDb.
- Potential new records verified with BSBI taxon referees.
- Number of observers of new taxa calculated.
- Distribution of records across VC21 visualised.



Some of the new records submitted to and identified on the iNaturalist platform



New VC21 records from iNaturalist data within the vice county of Middlesex

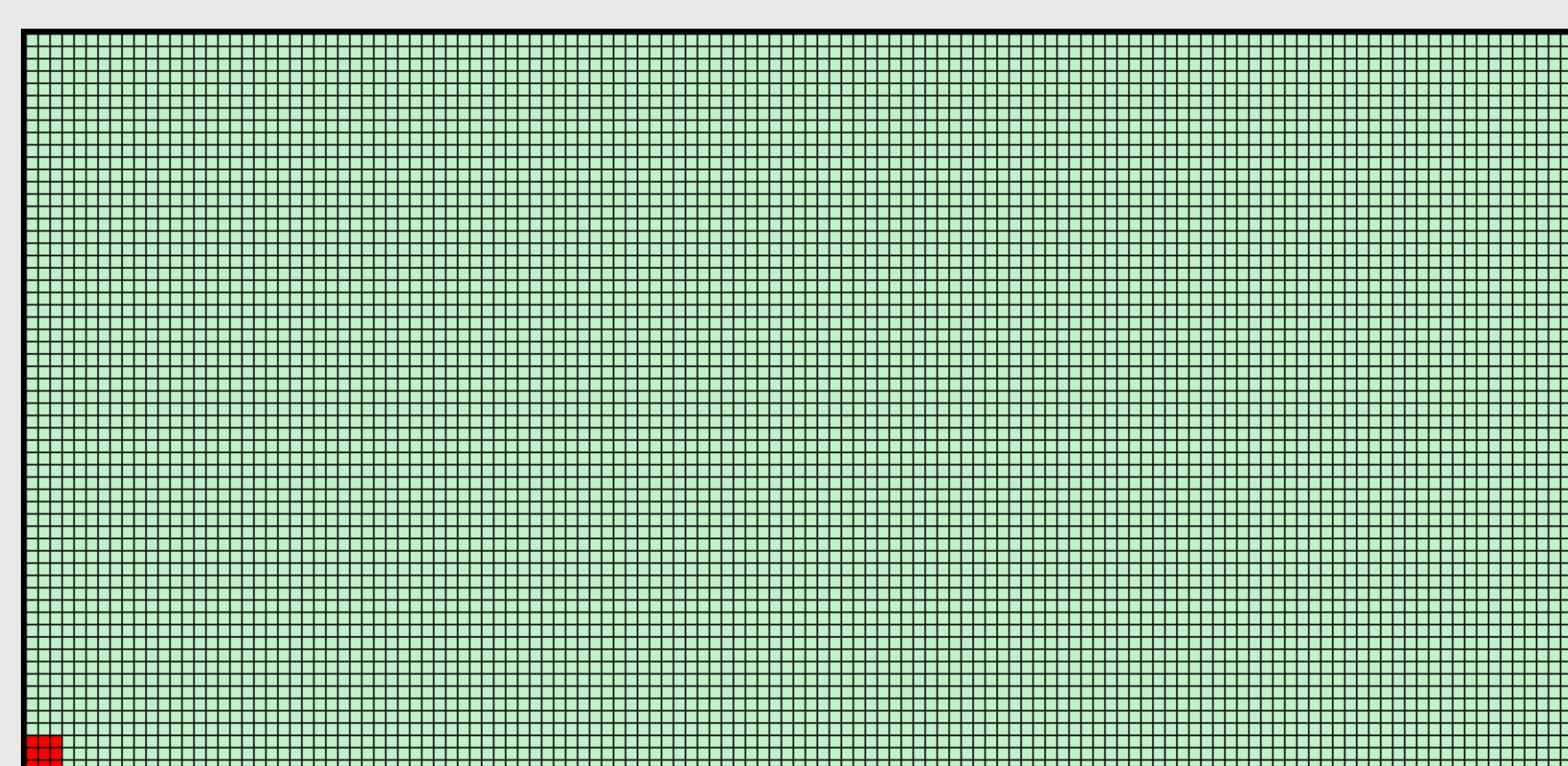


- Records are concentrated around RBG Kew due to botanists living in that area.
- The higher concentration of records nearer to the centre of London is likely a combination of a high diversity of plants in horticulture, many observers and potentially a heat island effect.

Results

- In Middlesex the number of new vice county records from iNaturalist has steadily increased since the first record in 2007. iNaturalist is a significant source of new records.
- Despite the high number of observers (over 8,000 in total), only 9 observers have made a new vice county record and over 50% of records come from the top observer.

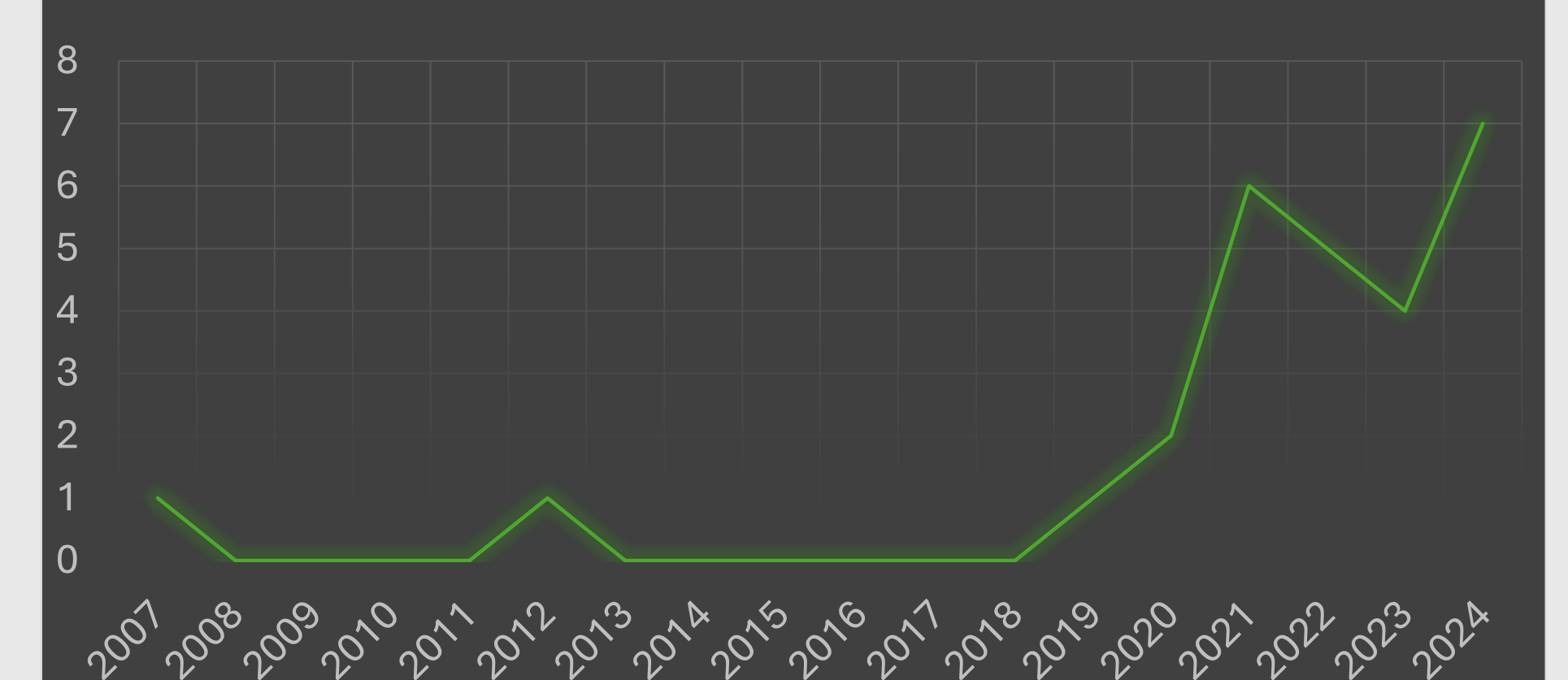
Waffle chart showing the number of users with new records for VC21 (red) vs the total number of tracheophyte observers (green)



Conclusions

- Validating iNaturalist data is scientifically useful as well as beneficial for engaging with diverse audiences. Including iNaturalist verifiers to vice-county recording teams will help achieve this aim.

Number of New Vice County Records in iNaturalist Per Year



Important links

- iNaturalist: <https://www.inaturalist.org/>
- BSBI Plant Atlas: <https://plantatlas2020.org/>

Thanks to

- Mark Spencer, BSBI referees