NH Audubon Bald Eagle Monitoring with NestStory:

User Guide

February 2026, Version 1

Questions?

Contact Mickayla Johnston, Avian Biologist at NH Audubon:

MJohnston@nhaudubon.org

Glossary

Adults – Applicable to the Nest Pair ONLY

F= the adult female of the nest pair.

M= the adult male of the nest pair.

U= an eagle from the nest pair that is of unknown sex. Select this descriptor when you observe a single adult at the nest and are unsure or unable to determine its sex.

Chicks

0 = No chicks. This will apply during Courtship/Nest Building, Incubation.

1, 2, 3, or 4 = Number of chicks observed. You can select "1" when you know at least one chick is present. Enter number of chicks you see during any nest visit, even though it may change in later nest visits.

Eggs

Unknown (–): When the number of eggs present is undetermined. This is what you will use most of the time, except when you use INC.

INC: Adult eagle is clearly incubating at least one egg.

0 (zero): When you know there are no eggs, like in the period before incubation.

Field Day

A Field Day is your day afield observing eagle nest(s) (i.e. when you select "Begin Day" on the page shown below). Time is recorded throughout your travels during the Field Day. Mileage is recorded by you at the beginning and the end. *Recording mileage in NestStory is optional, as this information still needs to be recorded in Volunteer Impact. However, we encourage you to do so to help you keep track for Volunteer Impact.*

Site Visit (also called a "Mission")

After beginning your day, you will select which site you are visiting. If you are visiting multiple nests in one day, you will launch a new Mission for each site visited.

Nest Status

Unknown: Nest checked, but the status of nest is unknown (example: no activity, no eagles observed near the nest).

Courtship & Nest Building: Adult(s) adding or moving sticks/grass in the nest. Courtship includes courting behavior and pair bonding between two adult eagles (example: vocalizing, soaring together, talon locking/cartwheeling, copulation).

Incubating: An adult is sitting down in the nest in incubating position.

Brooding: Adult tending to chick(s) (example: keeping them warm, feeding, looking down in the nest, moving around as chick(s) move below).

Nestling: Chick(s) in the nest. Includes pre-fledged and branching nestlings.

Fledged: Chick(s) have left the nest at least one time by flying.

Suspected Failure: Nest is empty OR incubation/brooding/nesting has ended prematurely. Also applies to nest tree fallen or nest fallen.

Observations
Bird

Unknown Adult: a member of the nest pair of undetermined sex

Adult Pair: the pair of adult eagles associated with the nest you are observing

Adult Male: the adult male of the nest pair

Adult Female: the adult female of the nest pair

Nestling: a nestling in the nest

Fledgling: a fledgling of the nest.

Aggressive Interloper: an eagle (adult or immature) that is not a member of the nest pair, but aggressively approaches and/or interacts with the nest pair or its offspring.

Friendly Interloper: an eagle (adult or immature) that is not a member of the nest pair, but approaches or interacts with the nest pair or its offspring in a friendly manner.

Behavior

Flying: adult(s) flying to, from or near the nest.

Breeding: adults copulating at or near the nest.

Nest Construction: adult(s) adding sticks/other nesting material or tending the nest.

Sitting on Nest: adult(s) sitting on/in the nest.

Perched Nearby: adult(s) perched in nest tree or in nearby tree.

Territorial Dispute: any aggressive interaction between one or both of the mated eagles and an intruding eagle(s).

Brooding: adult(s) tending to chick(s), by feeding, looking down in the nest, keeping chicks warm, or moving around as chick(s) move below.

Courtship: courting behavior/pair bonding between two adult eagles (example: vocalizing, soaring together, talon locking/cartwheeling, copulation).

Incubation: an adult sitting down in the nest in incubating position.

Incubation Exchange: when one adult replaces another in incubation position

Adults Feeding: one or both adults eating at the nest.

Distraught: one or both adults acting very upset, not tending to nest/chick, may fly off nest in reaction to a threat.

Somewhat Nervous: one or both adults acting nervous by constantly looking around, vocalizing. Bird may or may not remain on nest.

Adults Feeding Eaglets: adult eagle(s) feeding the chick/nestling.

Sibling Rivalry: aggressive interaction between two or more nestlings.

Wing Flapping: older nestlings flapping hard to exercise and strengthen flight muscles. This behavior precedes or coincides with branching (pre-fledging).

Branching: nestlings walking or jumping to branches very near the nest and in the nest tree. This stage is the step before fledging.

Report Nest Failure

Probable Cause definitions:

Predated: the nest has been raided by a predator (raccoon, Great Horned Owl, etc.). This is often difficult to ascertain, and should be used only with some supporting evidence.

Nest Tree Fallen: the tree that supported the nest is no longer standing.

Nest Destroyed: the nest is no longer in the tree. Often the result of high wind events.

Unknown: it is unclear why the nest has failed.

Other: any other reason for nest failure that is not listed above.

Note: at any time, you can visit the "help center" on NestStory by clicking the menu button in the top left corner of your screen (the three purple lines), then selecting "help center" at the bottom of the menu. There, you will find video tutorials and the glossary of terms listed above.
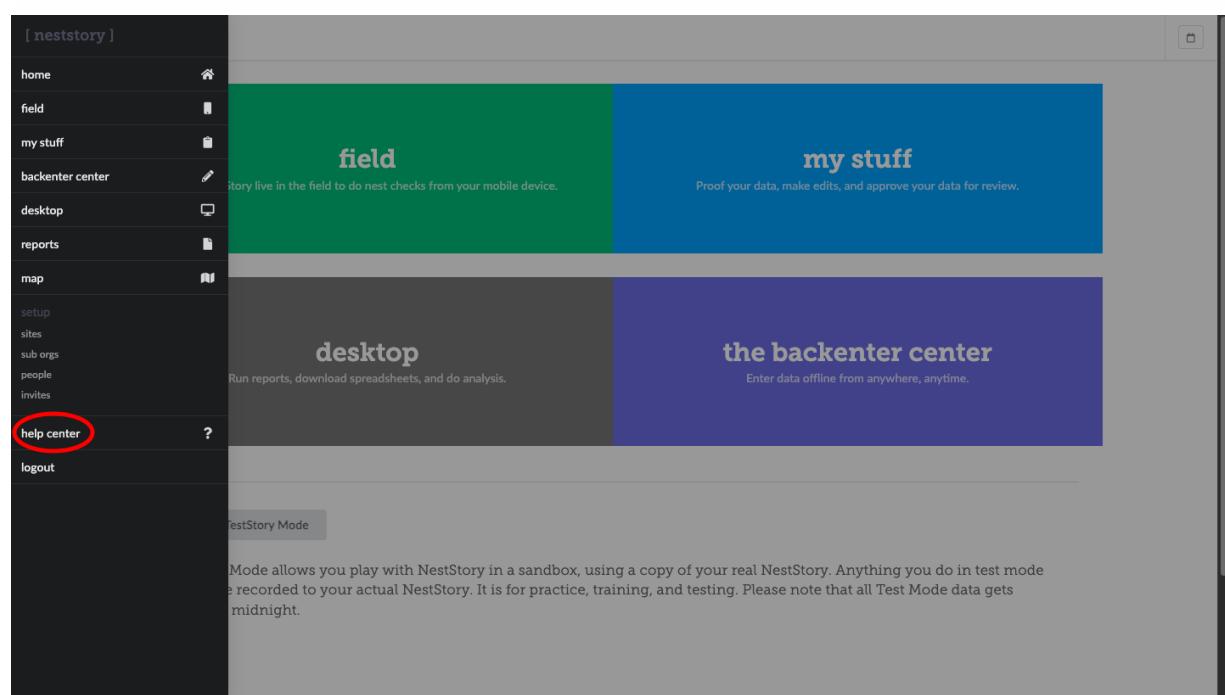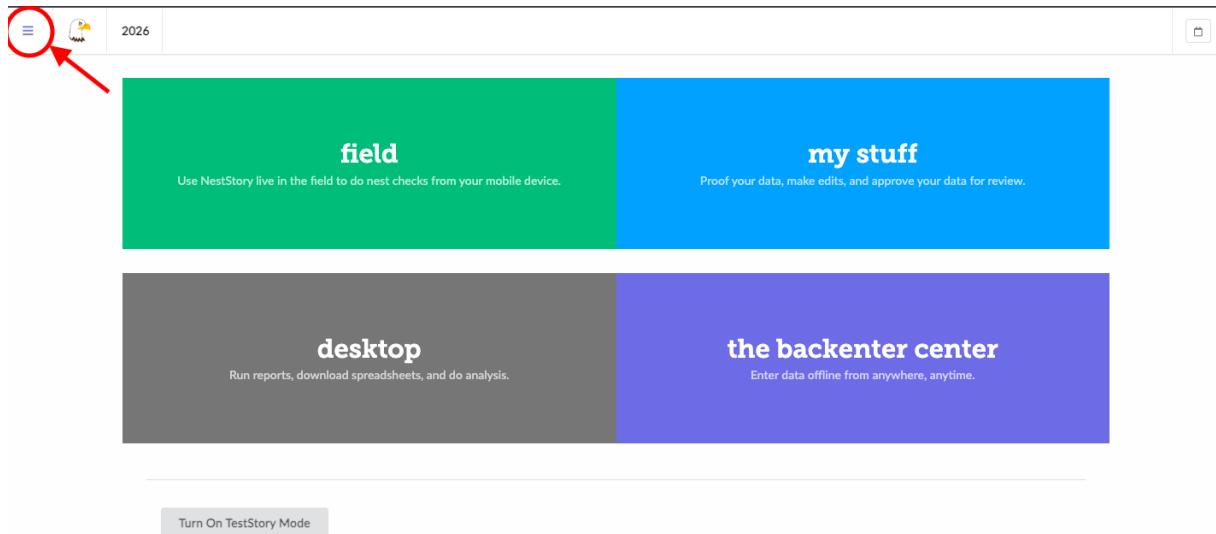
A Typical Day in the Field: Step-by-Step

To begin your day in the field, login to your NestStory account at
https://nh.neststory.org/.

*If you do not have login credentials, please email Mickayla Johnston
(mjohnston@nhaudubon.org) to be added to our NestStory. All monitors need to be
manually added to our NestStory by NH Audubon. Once added, you will receive an
email invitation from NestStory to join.*

Once logged in, you will see the NH Audubon NestStory home page:
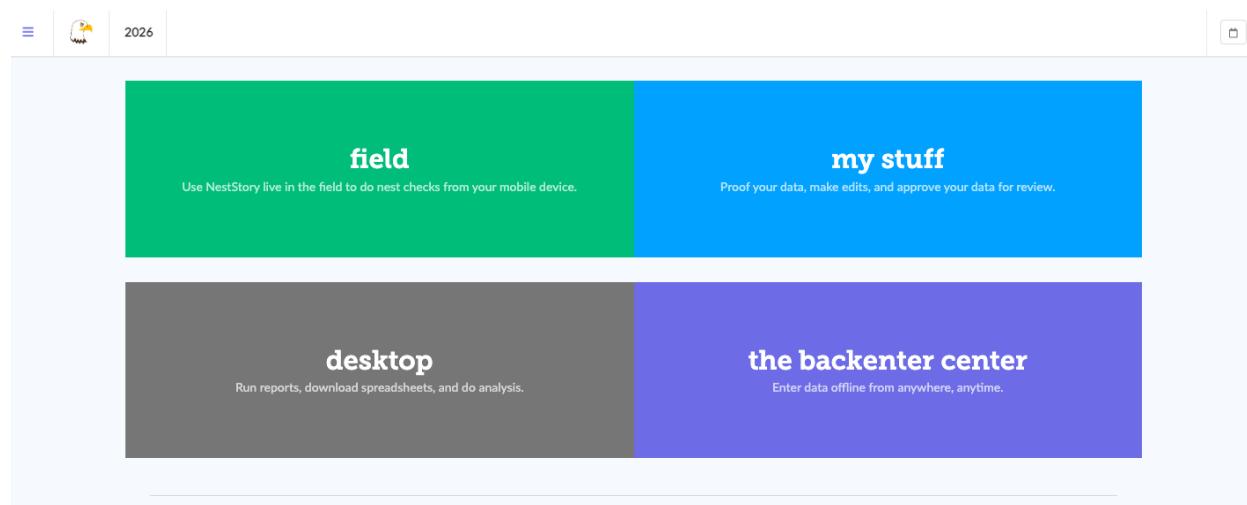
Home Page Walk-Through

Let's walk through what we see on the home page. We'll start from left to right along the
very top of the page.

In the top left corner, you will see the menu button (three horizontal purple lines). Click
this at any time to view the site menu. This will help you navigate to the home page, the
field, the help center, etc.

Next to the menu button, you will see a small Bald Eagle icon which lets you know that
you are on the NH Audubon Bald Eagle NestStory page.

To the right of the Bald Eagle icon, you will see the year. We are starting our Bald Eagle
NestStory in 2026, but in 2027 and beyond, you can use this button to navigate to
previous years' data.

Lastly, in the top right corner of the page, you will see a small calendar icon. You can
use this to adjust the date. This will only be used when you need to backenter data for a
previous date. This can also be done in the "Backenter Center" (see NestStory Help
Center video "Backenter Center: Enter Data Anytime".

Now, looking at the four squares in the center of the home page, we have "field", "my stuff", "desktop", and "the backenter center". Here, we are going to focus on the "field" section, as this is where you will be going to record your monitoring observations.

Field
Getting started

To start your day in the field, click on the "**field**" button on the home page. You will be prompted to enter information on your starting time and starting odometer reading to help you keep track of your mileage. ***Note that entering mileage information in NestStory is optional but may help you track information for Volunteer Impact (NH Audubon's volunteer management platform). Mileage still needs to be entered into Volunteer Impact.*** Once this information is entered, select "Begin Day".

You have now begun your "**Field Day**" (see the glossary above). You will notice that there is a blue bar across the top of the page with the "Active Date" and "Began" time, as well as an "End" button on the far right. In your "**Field Day**", NestStory will keep track of your total hours and mileage while monitoring.

Site Visit (or "Mission")

After beginning your day, you will select which site you are visiting—this is called a "**Site Visit**" (or "**Mission**"). If you are visiting multiple nests in one day, you will launch a new **Site Visit** for each site visited. This means that within one "**Field Day**", you can have multiple **Site Visits**.

Once you have selected your site, be sure that the starting time of your visit is correct. If other volunteers are monitoring with you, you can add their names on this screen as well. Next, click "begin visit".

You have now started a "**Site Visit**". Now, you will see a blue bar across the top of your page that tells you your "**Active Site**" and the time you began your site visit.

Based on which site you selected on the previous page, the nest(s) that is present at that site will be shown. If you are at a site without a known nest, no nests will be listed. You will make your observations by adding Notes and Photos at the bottom of the page.

Below the nest names (if present), you will see an area to add attachments to your site visit, such as notes and photos. For nest-specific notes and photos, you may add attachments after selecting a nest from the list at the top of the page.

Nest Checks

Once you are ready to start monitoring a nest, click on the nest code/name. This will open the **Nest Check** page. You will see the current status of the nest and how many eggs, chicks, and adults were last seen (by whomever performed the most recent nest check) at the top of the page.

It is very important that you fill out each section of the nest check page fully. For example, if you do not see any chicks, do not leave the "Chicks Observed" section blank—select the "0" option.

On this page, you will fill in your nest observation data. You may edit your observations as you are conducting the nest check as new information becomes available.

Now we will go through each section on the **Nest Check** page:

Nest Status

The Nest Status will be retained from the previous Nest Check. For example, if the last monitor observed incubation and set the Nest Status to "Incubating", the next Nest Check will reflect that status here.

In general (with the exception of the "Unknown" Nest Status option), the Nest Status is meant to move linearly – for example, once it has been updated to "Incubating", it should not be put back to "Courtship & Nest Building", even if you observe courtship or nest building...Think of the Nest Status as a timeline that we're progressing down – the timeline of Bald Eagle breeding!

Select from one of the options below:

- **Unknown**: Nest checked, but the status of nest is unknown (example: no activity, no eagles observed near the nest).

- **Courtship & Nest Building**: Adult(s) adding or moving sticks/grass in the nest. Courtship includes courting behavior and pair bonding between two adult eagles (example: vocalizing, soaring together, talon locking/cartwheeling, copulation).

- **Incubating**: An adult is sitting down in the nest in incubating position.

- **Brooding**: Adult tending to chick(s) (example: keeping them warm, feeding, looking down in the nest, moving around as chick(s) move below).

- **Nestling**: Chick(s) in the nest. Includes pre-fledged and branching nestlings.

- **Fledged**: Chick(s) have left the nest at least one time by flying. *Please do not select this option until you have either observed the chick(s) flying or you are able to use your best judgement based on the chick's distance from the nest to assume that it has flown.*

- **Suspected Failure**: Nest is empty OR incubation/brooding/nesting has ended prematurely. Also applies to nest tree fallen or nest fallen.

Eggs Observed:

- **Unknown (–)**: When the number of eggs present is undetermined. This is what you will use most of the time, except when you use INC.

- **INC**: Adult eagle is clearly incubating at least one egg.

- **0 (zero)**: When you know there are no eggs, like in the period before incubation.

Oftentimes, it will not be possible to see how many eggs are in a nest. In this case, when you do not know how many eggs there are, you should select "-", **NOT** "0". The "zero" option should only be selected when you know *for certain* that there are *zero eggs* (for example, before an adult begins incubating). The same goes for options 1-4 in this section—only select a number in this section if you are able to *actually see and count* the number of eggs in the nest. If you know that an adult is incubating eggs, you will just select the "INC" option.

Chicks Observed:

Remember, do not leave any sections blank! Even if egg laying has not begun, if you see zero chicks, select "0" in this section!

- **0** = No chicks. This will apply during Courtship/Nest Building and Incubation.

- **1, 2, 3, or 4** = Number of chicks observed. You can select "1" when you know at least one chick is present.

Adults Observed

Remember, this section is for recording the breeding pair associated with this nest. Observations of interloping adults should be made in the Nest Check notes section.

- **F**= the adult female of the nest pair.

- **M**= the adult male of the nest pair.

- **U**= an eagle from the nest pair that is of unknown sex. Select this descriptor when you observe a single adult at the nest and are unsure or unable to determine its sex.

Add Observations

In this section, you can add observations on bird behavior by selecting from the dropdown menus ("Subject" and "Behavior"). **Don't forget to click "Add" after selecting a new behavior.**

Bird – *who are you observing?*

Unknown Adult: a member of the nest pair of undetermined sex

Adult Pair: the pair of adult eagles associated with the nest you are observing

Adult Male: the adult male of the nest pair

Adult Female: the adult female of the nest pair

Nestling: a nestling in the nest

Fledgling: a fledgling of the nest.

Aggressive Interloper: an eagle (adult or immature) that is not a member of the nest pair, but aggressively approaches and/or interacts with the nest pair or its offspring.

Friendly Interloper: an eagle (adult or immature) that is not a member of the nest pair, but approaches or interacts with the nest pair or its offspring in a friendly manner.

Behavior – *what are they doing?*

Flying: adult(s) flying to, from or near the nest.

Breeding: adults copulating at or near the nest.

Nest Construction: adult(s) adding sticks/other nesting material or tending the nest.

Sitting on Nest: adult(s) sitting on/in the nest.

Perched Nearby: adult(s) perched in nest tree or in nearby tree.

Territorial Dispute: any aggressive interaction between one or both of the mated eagles and an intruding eagle(s).

Brooding: adult(s) tending to chick(s), by feeding, looking down in the nest, keeping chicks warm, or moving around as chick(s) move below.

Courtship: courting behavior/pair bonding between two adult eagles (example: vocalizing, soaring together, talon locking/cartwheeling, copulation).

Incubation: an adult sitting down in the nest in incubating position.

Incubation Exchange: when one adult replaces another in incubation position

Adults Feeding: one or both adults eating at the nest.

Distraught: one or both adults acting very upset, not tending to nest/chick, may fly off nest in reaction to a threat.

Somewhat Nervous: one or both adults acting nervous by constantly looking around, vocalizing. Bird may or may not remain on nest.

Adults Feeding Eaglets: adult eagle(s) feeding the chick/nestling.

Sibling Rivalry: aggressive interaction between two or more nestlings.

Wing Flapping: older nestlings flapping hard to exercise and strengthen flight muscles. This behavior precedes or coincides with branching (pre-fledging).

Branching: nestlings walking or jumping to branches very near the nest and in the nest tree. This stage is the step before fledging.

After adding observations for a nest check, don't forget to click the green "Record It" button. If you will be monitoring a nest for a while, it is good practice to enter your observations and click "Record It" each time you observe something new. This way, you won't lose any of your data. You can always go back into a **Nest Check**

and update your observations later on during your visit (for example, if you observe a new behavior or see another chick). Think of the "Record It" button as clicking "Save" in the Word document.

Record Bands

If you observe any banded birds, enter the band type, color, and code here. You can make additional notes about banded birds in the "notes" section at the bottom of the **Nest Check** page. If the band you observed is not listed in the menu, make note of it in the "notes" section and email Mickayla Johnston (mjohnston@nhaudubon.org).

Attachments: Add Notes and Photos

Along with your behavioral observations (above) you can also add written notes to your nest check explaining what you're seeing in more detail. This is not required, but is very helpful for helping to understand exactly what is going on at a nest throughout the season. Information here can help to give us clues should a nest fail. For veteran volunteers, this is where you can put the text that you would normally email to Chris!

You can add additional data to your notes, such as latitude and longitude coordinates. After recording a note, click on the gear icon on the right, then select the green pin icon (second icon from the left). See below for how to use the Location feature. ***To edit a note, click on the gear icon, and then click on the gray paper icon (the first icon on the left).***

You can also add photos to your Nest Checks. This can either be done in the field by selecting photos from your phone, or on your computer at home afterwards.

This Notes and Photos section is for adding notes and photos specific to the nest you are checking. If you have general **Site Visit** notes and photos to add, do so on the **Site Visit** page.

If adding photos from your phone in the field, follow these steps:

1. Click "Add Photo" at the bottom of the page
2. Select the photo you'd like to upload from your phone's photo library
3. Add any additional data (notes, latitude and longitude coordinates) by clicking the gear icon on the right. See below for how to use the Location feature
4. To delete your photo, click the gear icon on the right and then click the red X

5. To edit a note, click on the gear icon, and then click on the gray paper icon (the first icon on the left).

If adding photos at home after your field visit, log in to NestStory on your computer at home, follow these steps:

1. Click on "my stuff" on the home page
2. Scroll down to the section that says "Recent Checks"
3. Find and click the Nest Check you'd like to add photos for
4. Click "View Report"
5. Scroll to the bottom of the page and under "Nest/Pair Check Photos", click "Add Photo"
6. Select the photo you'd like to upload. You can only upload one photo at a time.
7. Add any additional data (notes, latitude and longitude coordinates) by clicking the gear icon on the right. See below for how to use the Location feature
8. To delete your photo, click the gear icon on the right and then click the red X
9. To edit the note associated with the photo, click the gear icon on the right and then click the gray paper icon

Ending a Site Visit

When you are done with a **Site Visit**, you will click "End" in the top right corner. This will open an "End Site Visit" window. Here, you will add the time that you completed your **Site Visit**. Click "End Visit" to close the window and end your visit.

After ending your **Site Visit**, you will be brought back to the site visit starting page. You will notice that there is still a blue bar across the top of the page with the "Active Date" and "Began" time, as well as another "End" button on the far right—this is for your "**Field Day**". Remember, you can have multiple **Site Visits** (or "**Missions**") within your "**Field Day**".

If you will be traveling to another site for a nest check next, you can leave your "**Field Day**" open to ensure you are accurately recording your time and mileage. Otherwise, you can end your "**Field Day**" by clicking the "End" button in the top right corner of the page. You will then be prompted to enter the end time of your "**Field Day**" and your total mileage. Click "End day" to close the window and end your day.

Other Features

Reviewing & Editing Site Visits & Nest Checks

If you would like to make any edits to your site visit, including adding additional photos (see "Attachments: Add Notes and Photos", above), you can do so by visiting the "my stuff" page on NestStory.

From the NestStory Home Page, click on "my stuff" (or, click on the menu bar in the top left corner of the page – the three purple horizontal lines – and then click "my stuff").

You will see "my stuff" at the top of your page. You can make edits to a specific **Nest Check** or to an entire **Site Visit.**

To edit a **Site Visit:**

1. Find the **Site Visit** you would like to edit from the list under "Recent Activity"
2. Here, you can edit information for your **Site Visit** (add notes, photos, update times, etc.). Click on the gray pencil icon to make a change.
3. You can also edit a **Nest Check** from this **Site Visit** by finding the nest name under "Checks" and clicking on it. This will bring you to the **Nest Check** page. See step 3 below.

To edit a specific **Nest Check**, you can also do the following (starting on the "my stuff" page):

1. Scroll down until you see the section that says "Recent Checks"
2. Find the **Nest Check** you'd like to edit, and click "View Report" on the right
3. Here, you can edit your **Nest Check** observations by clicking the gray pencil icon next to the section you'd like to edit

To edit past Site Visits & Nest Checks, click on "my stuff" on the NestStory Home Page.
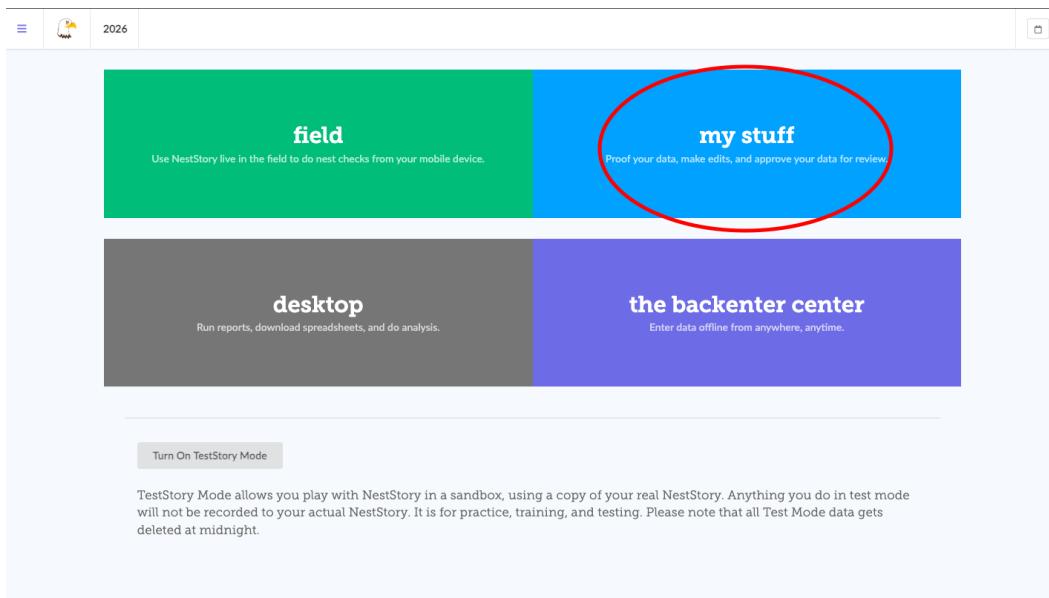
Under "Recent Activity" find the Site Visit you'd like to edit and click "View".

You may edit information such as the start and end time, add Site Visit photos and notes, or make edits to a specific Nest Check by clicking on the nest name under "Checks".

Another way to edit a Nest Check is from the "my stuff" page, scroll down to "Recent Checks", then click "View Report" for the Nest Check you'd like to edit.

Location Feature

After adding a photo or note to a **Nest or Site Check**, you can add additional data, such as the latitude and longitude coordinates that the note or photo references. To do this, first add your **Nest or Site Check** note or photo (see instructions above under "Attachments: Add Notes and Photos").

On the top right corner of your note or photo, a gear icon will appear:

1. Click on the gear icon, and a menu of icons will appear
2. Click the green pin icon, second from left
3. Click on the "power" button
4. Click on the "heartbeat" button (middle icon)
5. Allow the GPS to zero in on your location for a moment
6. Turn off the "heartbeat" by clicking it again (**this is important – you will not be able to add a GPS "pin" until you do this!**)
7. Click "Add a Marker X"
8. Move the GPS pin to where you'd like it on the map
9. Click "Set Location" - **Don't forget this step! This will update the Lat/Long at the top of the window**
10. Click "Update" in the bottom right
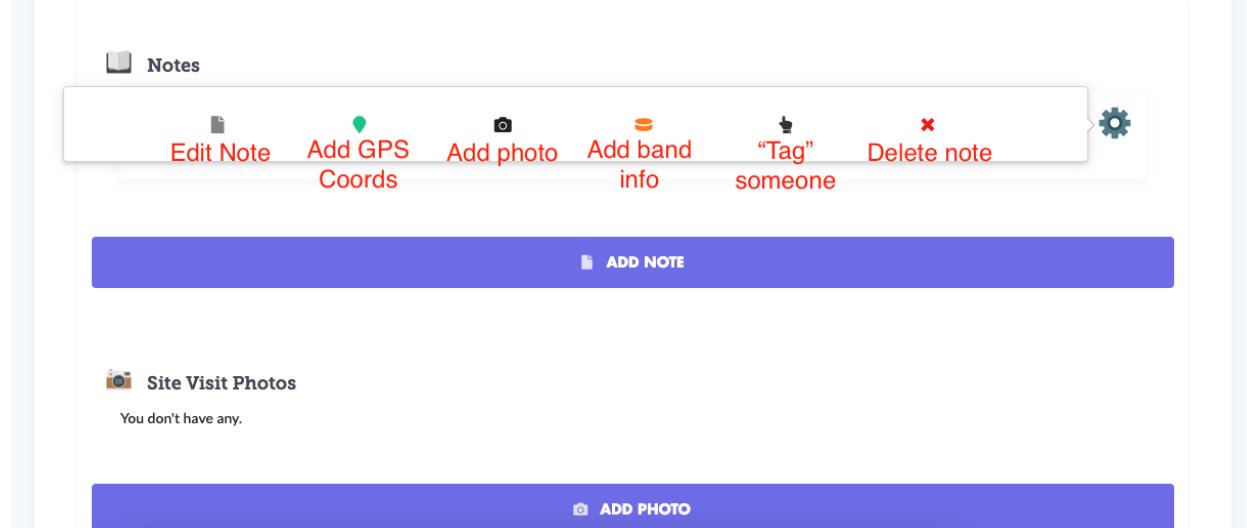
⏻ ♥ ▁▃▅ ▸ Location

latitude   longitude

1.   ⏻   2.   ♥   ⟳

\+
−

Add marker X

✖   UPDATE

⏻ ♥ ▁▃▅ ▸ Location

3. Turn off "heartbeat" by clicking it a second time to add a GPS "pin"

43.17948039088309   -71.57303544627344

⏻   ♥   ⟳

\+
−

Add marker X   4. Add a GPS "pin" to the map

✖   UPDATE
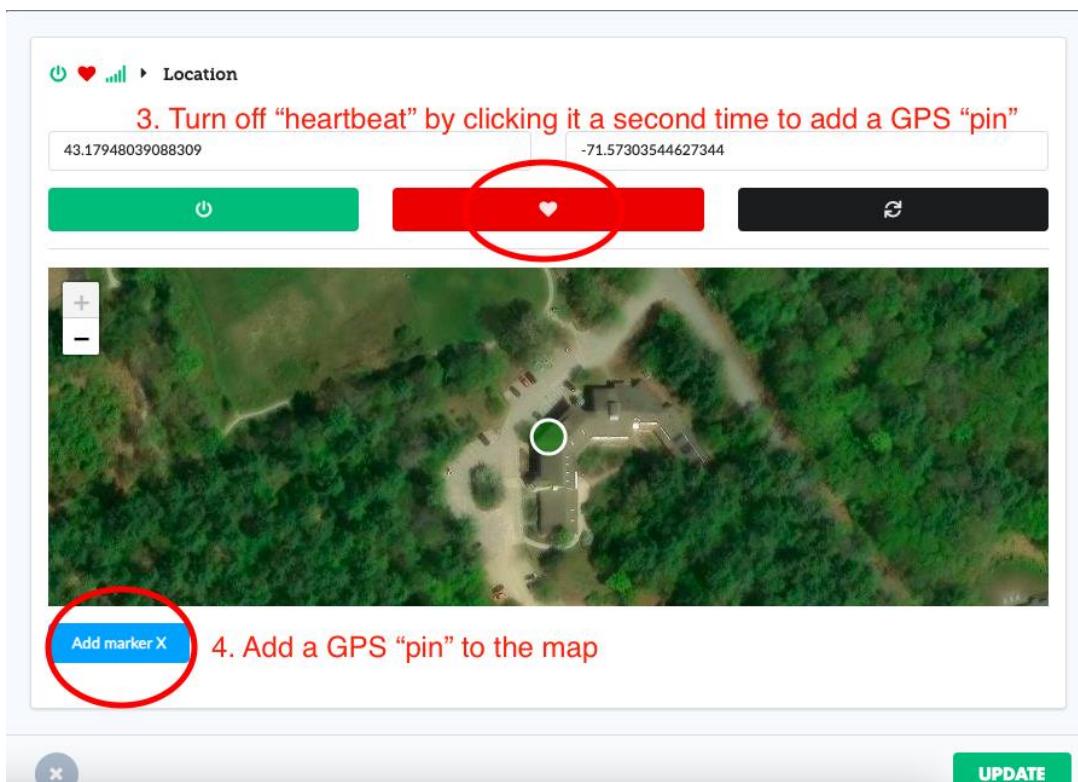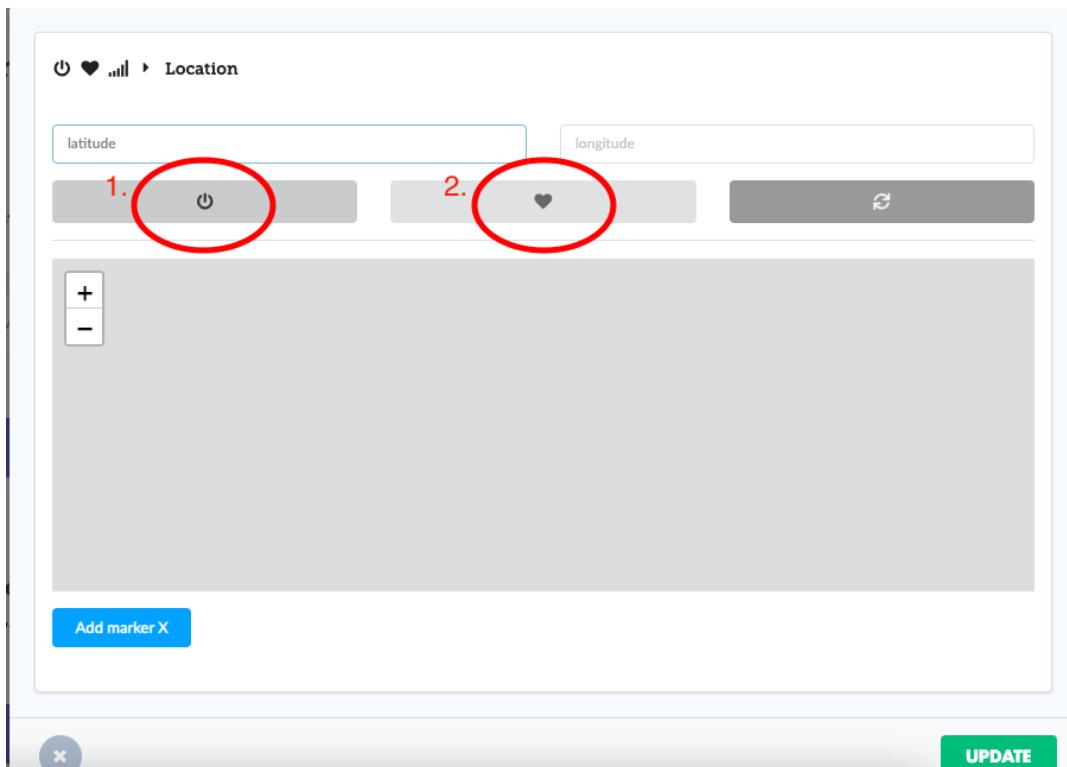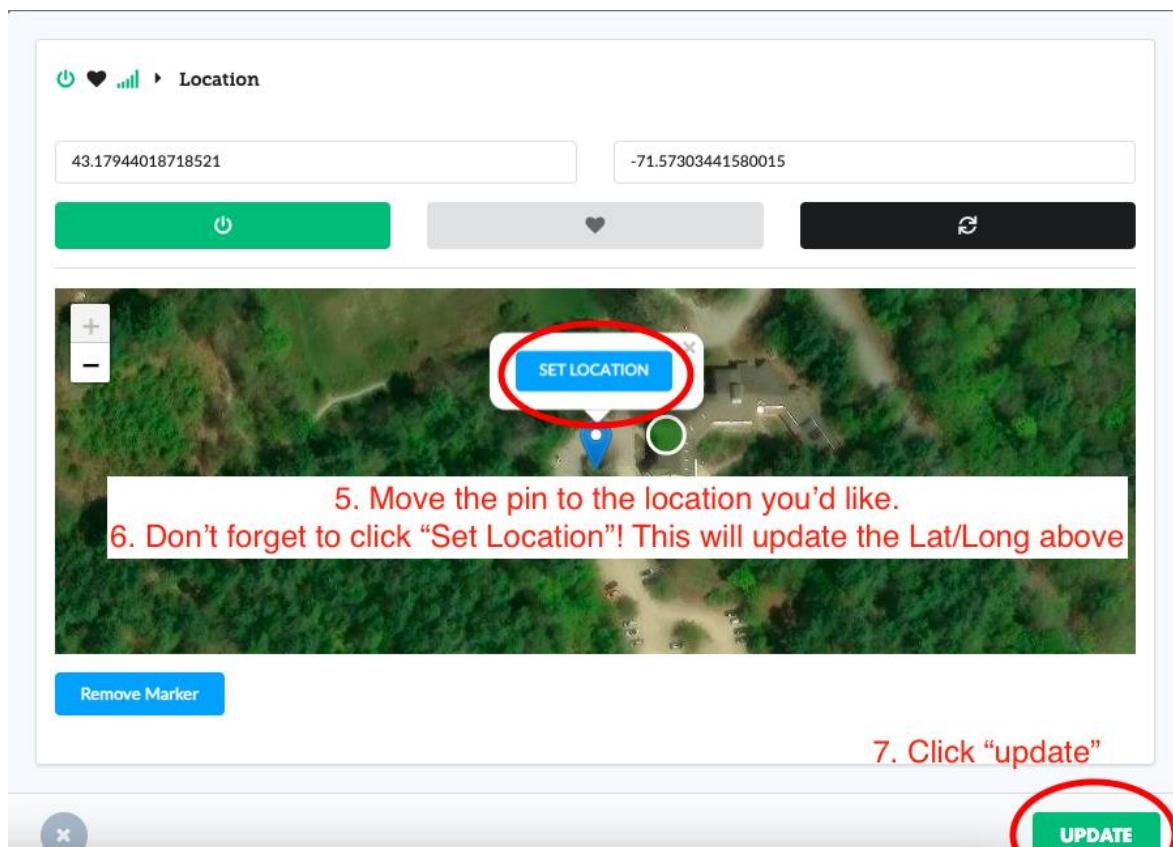
TestStory Mode

At anytime, you can log in to your NestStory account and practice using it by turning on **TestStory Mode**. **TestStory Mode** allows you to go into the field, make observations, and play around on the site without anything *actually* saving to our real NestStory. This is a great way to practice and get comfortable with NestStory before heading out into the field. *Remember, if you are in TestStory Mode anything you enter will not be saved!*

To turn on **TestStory Mode**, go to the Nest Story Home Page, and click on "Turn on TestStory Mode" at the bottom of the page. A red bar will appear across the top of your screen, reminding you that you are in **TestStory Mode.**
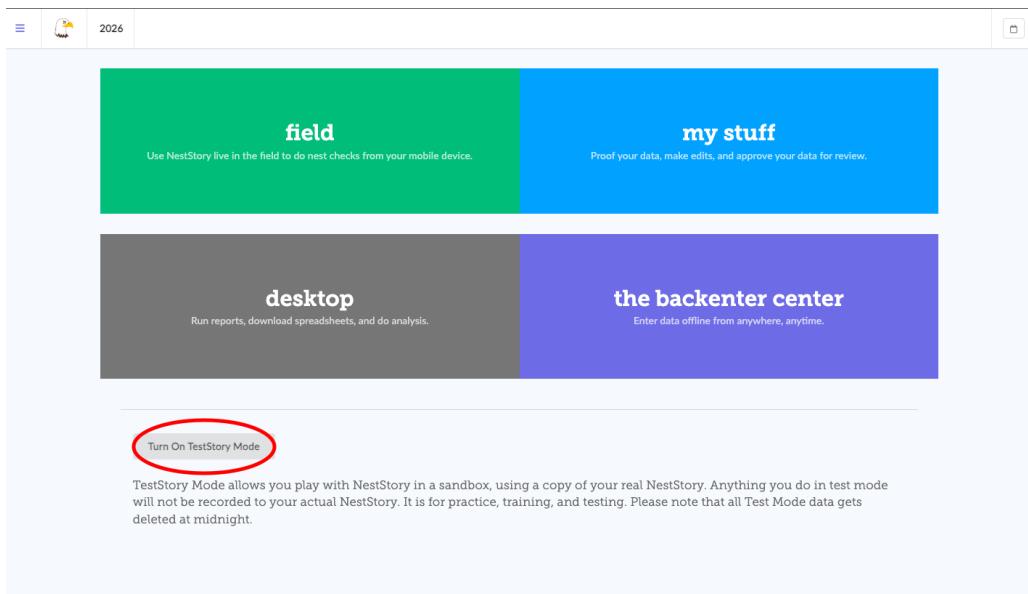
Date Faker

If you were unable to record your observations on NestStory while out in the field, you have the option to use the **Date Faker** feature to enter in your data under the correct date.

On the NestStory Home Page, click on the calendar icon in the top right corner. This will open the **Date Faker**. Here, you can select the date for which you want to enter field data for. Then, you can begin a **Field Day** as you normally would out in the field!