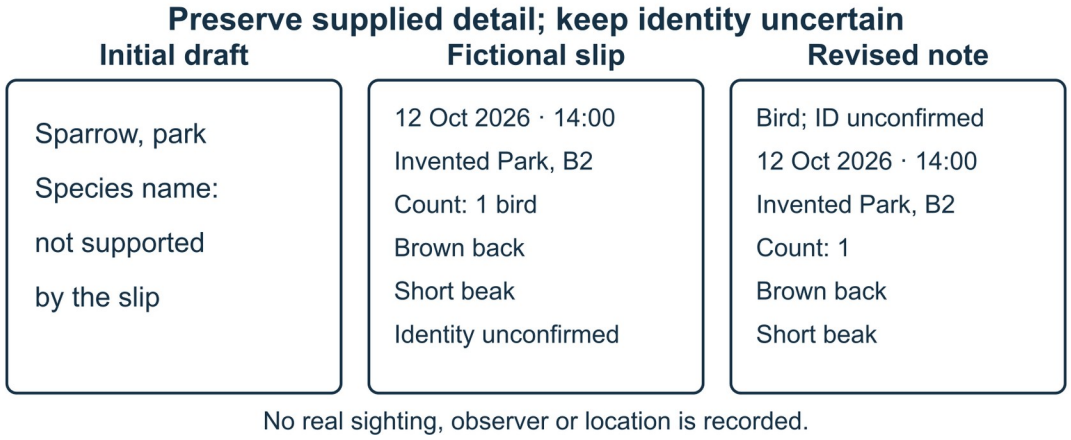
What makes a useful species record

Which details turn an invented sighting note into a clearer record without guessing an identity?

Improve a fictional sighting note using only a supplied field slip, retaining an uncertain identity rather than inventing detail.

Investigate | 10–20 minutes, or one correction | The supplied example, read or heard, Optional scrap paper and a pen or pencil

Start here Compare a draft note ‘Sparrow, park’ with a supplied fictional slip: 12 October 2026, 14:00, Invented Park, B2, one bird, brown back, short beak, no identification confirmed.



Improve the record without guessing the species

1 Separate source from guess

The slip supports an observation of one bird with two described features. It does not support the draft’s species name sparrow. Mark that identity as unconfirmed.

2 Carry over supplied details

Make a clearer note with the supplied date, time, fictional location, count and visible features. Do not add a photograph, observer name or exact real-world coordinates.

3 Keep provenance and uncertainty

Label the new note as transcribed from the supplied fictional slip. Use bird, identity unconfirmed, so the correction does not silently become a new confident identification.

4 Choose a useful next check

Suggest checking the original record or suitable identification information. Do not submit the exercise to a real species database or fill missing details from imagination.

Constructed records correct without inventing

The original slip and incomplete draft are both fictional practice material. No real bird sighting or person is recorded.

• Slip: 12 October 2026 at 14:00; Invented Park, B2; count 1.

• Features: brown back, short beak; identity unconfirmed.

• Revised note keeps those details and replaces the unsupported sparrow label with bird, identity unconfirmed.

What this example can show Two visible features do not identify a species. A clearer record preserves useful detail and uncertainty; it does not manufacture missing evidence.

A different way

Correct only the species label, or compare the notes aloud. No photograph, online account, wildlife contact or real location is needed.

If you want to go further

Remove the time from a copy of the source slip. Show how the revised record should mark it unknown rather than retain an unsupported 14:00.

Something to notice

Did my revision improve clarity without increasing unsupported certainty?

Read or explore more

Horizon topic Species Records

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/species-records/

Horizon topic Biodiversity Conservation

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/biodiversity-conservation/

Horizon topic Knowledge Evidence

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/knowledge-evidence/

Atlas of Living Australia Flagging an issue with a record

https://support.ala.org.au/support/solutions/articles/6000262125-flagging-an-issue-with-a-record

Science Learning Hub, University of Waikato Making and using a quadrat

https://www.sciencelearn.org.nz/resources/2318-making-and-using-a-quadrat