

The City Nature Challenge

About the City Nature Challenge

Started in 2016 as a competition between San Francisco and Los Angeles, the City Nature Challenge (CNC) has grown into an international event, motivating people around the world to find and document wildlife in and around their cities, using biodiversity recording apps and platforms like iNaturalist. Run by the Community Science teams at the California Academy of Sciences and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, the CNC is an annual four-day global urban bioblitz at the end of April, where cities are in a collaboration-meets-friendly-competition to see not only what can be accomplished when we all work toward a common goal, but also which city can gather the most observations of nature, find the most species, and engage the most people in the event. In 2023, 482 cities participated, with more than 66,000 people making 1.9 million observations of nature in the four days of the challenge. The 2024 City Nature Challenge (**April 26 - 29**) is gearing up to be the biggest one yet!



Los Angeles, California, USA – Deniz Durmus

Goals of the City Nature Challenge

- Connect people in urban/metro areas to their local nature
- Connect people to each other: build community in person and online around local nature
- Collect urban biodiversity data available to use for science, management, and conservation
- Grow volunteer biodiversity documentation globally
- Have fun through some friendly competition and global collaboration!



Cedral, San Luis Potosí, México – Jessica López

City Nature Challenge Through the Years

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cities	2	16	68	159	244	419	445	482
Countries	1	1	17	28	40	44	47	46
Observations	19.8K	125K	441K	963K	815K	1.27M	1.7M	1.9M
Species	2,500	8,600	18K	31K	32.6K	45.3K	50.1K	57.2K
Observers	1,000	4,000	17K	32K	41K	52K	67K	66.4K

K = thousand M = million



Ishikawa, Japan – Sayako Koyama

How is the City Nature Challenge Organized?

While the City Nature Challenge is coordinated by the Community Science teams at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (NHM) and the California Academy of Sciences (CAS), the success of the CNC is really due to the local organizers. Every official CNC city or metro area has a person or multiple people from that region who have taken on the role as local organizer, often times as part of their job in an organization that is mission-aligned with the goals for the CNC, but many organizers also volunteer their time. NHM and CAS start meeting regularly with organizers six months prior to the CNC, and provide support, training, and tools, and the local organizers then promote and implement the CNC in the ways that work best in their communities. Many organizers have formed local partnerships with organizations such as city/regional governments, parks departments, science/nature centers, scouts, schools and universities, and nature groups to help spread the word, organize local events, and build community for the City Nature Challenge.



Hyderabad, India – Ram Dayal Vaishnav

Impact of the CNC



Since 2017, the CNC has been the largest annual observation recording event on iNaturalist, and resets the both the "baseline" of observations coming into and the number active users on iNaturalist after each CNC. Not only does the CNC engage new people in observing nature during the event itself, it highlights the value of this work and inspires some participants to become biodiversity observers year-round.

Snapshots from the CNC

1: Copenhagen, Denmark – Jonas C. Larsen | 2: La Paz, Bolivia – Rob Wallace | 3: Bergamo, Italy – Alessandro Mazzoleni | 4: Brusque, SC, Brazil – Tamily Roedel | 5: Overstrand, South Africa – Sandy Immelman | 6: Salt Lake City, UT, USA – Natural History Museum of Utah | 7: Kyiv, Ukraine – Luna Kosolap | 8: Greater Melbourne, Australia – Taya Gerstel | 9: Bangkok, Thailand – Satita Taratis



26–29 April: making observations | **30 April – 5 May:** uploading & IDing | **6 May:** results announced
For more information visit citynaturechallenge.org



NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY