

# The City Nature Challenge

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 2021, over 400 cities participated, with more than 52,000 people making over 1.2 million observations of nature in the four days of the challenge. The 2022 City Nature Challenge (**April 29 - May 2**) is gearing up to be the biggest one yet!



Milazzo, Italy – Carolyn Berger

## 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!



Berlin, Germany – Athanasia Tsavalas

## Growth of the City Nature Challenge

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Cities</b>	2	16	68	159	244	419
<b>Countries</b>	1	1	17	28	40	44
<b>Observations</b>	19,800	125,000	441,000	963,000	815,000	1,270,000
<b>Species</b>	2,500	8,600	18,000	31,000	32,600	45,300
<b>Observers</b>	1,000	4,000	17,000	32,000	41,000	52,000



La Libertad, Perú – Roberto Melgar

# 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. NHMLAC 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.



Veracruz, México – Birds&Nature



CNC SNAPSHOTS: 1. Boise, ID, USA– GEAS | 2. Regina, SK, Canada– Carey Shaw | 3. Bucaramanga, Columbia– Beatriz Mojica | 4. GAM, Costa Rica– M. Monge | 5. Smolensk, Russia– Marina Rogacheva | 6. Albuquerque, NM, USA– John Wehner | 7. Hsinchu, Taiwan– Hsi Ting Chui | 8. Guimarães, Portugal– Ana Pinheira | 9. Davao City, Philippines– J. Valdez | 10. Garden Route, South Africa– Evie Bowen | 11. Washington D.C., USA– The Nature Conservancy | 12. Hardegg, Austria– Christoph Milek | 13. Prague, Czech Republic– Petra Caltova | 14. Madrid, Spain– Fernando Fernandez | 15. Nanakmatta, India– Kamlesh | 16. Angel R Cabada, México– Obed Palagot | 17. Maroondah, Australia– Doug Evans

## 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.

