2024 Calgary City Nature Challenge Teacher Information

The sixth annual Calgary CNC runs April 26-29! This our chance to put Calgary’s biodiversity on the map by taking photos of plants and animals and sharing them to the iNaturalist app. Observations from our community help us to learn about the nature within our city and how our built environment influences natural processes. We hope this resource assists you with getting your students engaged with nature while helping to support research, conservation, and urban development!

There are several ways students can participate during the challenge! Please find an attached “Urban Bioblitz Challenge” (scavenger hunt sheet) which can be used by students to help guide them through what types of observations we want to see during the challenge.

**City Nature Challenge Intro and "rules":**

There are 700 cities participating around the world to document nature within their cities. Calgary is competing and collaborating with them to help researchers study urban biodiversity. To assist with the research, people take photos of plants and animals and submit them to the iNaturalist app.

There are 3 categories which cities "compete" in this friendly event:

* The total number of observations made
* The total number of species observed
* The total number of participants (iNaturalist accounts which shared observations in each city)

**Photos must be taken April 26-29, 2024 and shared to iNaturalist before May 5.**

We encourage everyone to document WILD organisms including plants, animals, tracks, scat, insects, moss, lichens, and fungi.

IF you are struggling to find wild organisms in your area, you can upload observations but please mark them as "Captive/Cultivated" before you post them. These include things such as street trees, garden plants (pretty much anything that is in a place because people put it there and maintain them).

Please Do NOT upload photos of people or of pets.

iNaturalist is a community of like-minded and polite individuals. Profanity is not acceptable using the app. (I only mention this as we have had some issues in the past).

**Options for Classes and Students:**

Students can download the iNaturalist app to their personal phones and create an account. It is recommended that students do this with their parents' permission so they can review the terms and conditions for their children. On the day of your school event (or during the entire weekend April 26-29) they can make observations on their own or with their parents helping to document their neighborhoods and schoolyard.

Students can pair up in groups and share a device (for example, students may have access to tablets or cameras through the school). A unique account should be created for each student group to help us have some idea for the number of participants during the CNC.

An entire class can go out and a teacher or parent volunteers can take photos and upload the observations to the iNaturalist account on behalf of the students. The scavenger hunt sheet could also be "assigned" as homework or as a task for students to complete during the challenge with their families or friends.

**Other Tips:**

It is best to review iNaturalist with students prior to going outside:

* Visit iNaturalist.ca and use the explore tab to see what other people are observing in the area.
* Click on an observation to see what they look like.
* Do a run-through on [how to make an observation.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xENz1xRu0wI) The most important things are "Date, Time, Location, and species" Click the "what did you see?" button an iNaturalist will make suggestions automatically. If you don't know what it is you are looking at you can enter a place holder such as "Plants" so that us plant experts can find the post and help to identify it.
* If students are in pairs, one can submit the photos on iNaturalist and the other can complete the scavenger hunt list.
* The more observations the better so if students find similar things (2 dandelions upload each one as an individual post).

Please let me know if there is anything else I can help with! Best of luck with the students and I would love to hear about your experience and any suggestions you may have.

Please feel free to reach out.

Naturally,

Matt

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