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MEMPHIANS JOIN COMMUNITY SCIENTISTS ACROSS THE GLOBE TO COMPETE IN CITY NATURE CHALLENGE APRIL 26-29, 2024

Ninth annual community science event grows to over 675 participating cities on six continents; results announced on May 6

MEMPHIS, TN – As community science initiatives build momentum around the world, this year’s ninth annual [City Nature Challenge](#) (CNC) will take place in more than 675 cities across seven continents. Kicking off Friday, April 26, at 12:01 am in each time zone, CNC runs through 11:59 pm on Monday, April 29. The global event calls on current and aspiring community scientists, nature and science fans, and people of all ages and education backgrounds to observe and submit pictures of wild plants, animals, and fungi using free mobile apps like iNaturalist. From Tuesday, April 30, through Sunday, May 5, the online community will collaborate to identify species that were photographed during the Challenge, with the total number of observations and highlights from around the world announced on Monday, May 6.

In Memphis, all observations made on the iNaturalist platform within the boundaries of Shelby County will count toward the challenge. While anyone can participate on their own, multiple community partners are hosting events open to the public to encourage spending time in nature among our neighbors. Local organizers include Memphis Botanic Garden, Memphis River Parks Partnership, Overton Park Conservancy, T.O. Fuller State Park, University of Memphis – Meeman Biological Station, and Wolf River Conservancy.

- iNaturalist training at Memphis Botanic Garden, **Friday, 4/26**, hourly at 9, 10, 11, and noon
- Birds and Bugs at Shelby Farms Park, **Friday, 4/26**, 4 - 5:30 PM
- Nature 101 Walks at Overton Park, **Saturday, 4/27**, hourly at 9, 10, and 11 AM
- BioBlitz at Memphis Botanic Garden, **Saturday, 4/27**, 12 - 4 PM
- Moth Party at T.O. Fuller State Park, **Saturday, 4/27**, 8 - 9:30 PM
- BioBlitz at Wolf River Greenway - Epping Way, **Sunday, 4/28**, hourly at 9 and 10 AM
- Cicadas, Butterflies, and Flowers at T.O. Fuller, **Sunday, 4/28**, Noon - 3 PM
- Nature Walk at Downtown’s River Garden, **Monday, 4/29**, Noon - 1 PM

Full details on Memphis events can be found at www.overtonpark.org/citynaturechallenge.

As scientists increasingly rely on community-generated data, it is more important and impactful than ever to document nature observations on community science platforms like iNaturalist. From a study on [bees in urban environments](#) to a [revision of the global biogeography of plants](#), 890 studies were published [using iNaturalist data](#) in 2023. This data helps policymakers make informed conservation decisions that enable humans to coexist with the wildlife around them and view themselves as a part of, not apart from, nature.

After launching the first-ever CNC in 2016, the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (NHMLAC) and San Francisco’s California Academy of Sciences (CAS) are hosting their ninth effort. Last year’s four-day Challenge included over 66,000 participants across more than 450 cities around the world to observe and submit pictures of wildlife they encountered. Participants added over 1.87 million observations of nature to iNaturalist, and scientists continue to use these data to understand and conserve urban wildlife.

Notably, the number of participating cities grew from 450 in 2023 to more than 675 in 2024—one of the biggest jumps in CNC history. This significant uptick is the result of a network of organizers in India who are bringing 206 new projects to the global effort. Memphis has only participated once before, in 2022, when 124 observers made more than 1,800 observations of 748 species. This year, with the addition of multiple community partners and scheduled events, we hope to build significantly on these numbers and truly put Memphis on the map.

How to Participate

For both budding and veteran community scientists, participating is easy:

1. Find wildlife. It can be any wild plant, animal, fungi, slime mold, or any other evidence of life (scat, fur, tracks, shells, carcasses) found in your participating city. Check out [this guide](#) for tips on finding the surprisingly abundant biodiversity in and around your own home.
2. Take pictures and/or sound recordings of what you find using [iNaturalist](#) or your city’s chosen platform.
3. Learn more on iNaturalist as your observations get identified!

2023 Highlights

Scientists can’t be everywhere at once, so without community observations, they’d miss some incredible finds. From an [Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin](#) in Hong Kong to a [giant electric ray](#) with albinism or leucism near Mexico’s Socorro Island, there were over 2,500 observations of rare and endangered species during last year’s CNC. In La Paz, Bolivia—which tallied the highest number of observations for the second consecutive year—an observation of a [small orchid](#) previously only recorded in the nearby city of Cochabamba provided critical information about the plant’s range. In Ukraine, one iNaturalist user documented the first observation of the [palaearctic backspined meshweaver spider](#) in the country. And a recently caught [bull shark](#) in a local fish market in Thailand served as a reminder of the dangers of overfishing. Many other endangered, endemic, or data deficient species were recorded during the CNC, an influx of information that gives scientists, educators, urban planners, and policymakers insight into the biodiversity of urban locales throughout the world.

More Information and Education Toolkit

Visit citynaturechallenge.org

Memphis Resources

Visit overtontopark.org/citynaturechallenge

iNaturalist

Signing up is easy and free. Visit inaturalist.org from your browser, or download iNaturalist from the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play](#) store.

Social Media

#CityNatureChallenge and #CNCMemphis

Twitter handle: [@citnatchallenge](#)

Instagram: [@citnatchallenge](#)

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