

# Adventures for Wilderness



From April 29 to May 2, cities around the world participated in the 2022 City Nature Challenge (CNC). This annual event celebrates biodiversity and encourages people to get out and explore their own backyards while contributing valuable ecological data through citizen science.

The CNC was founded in 2016 as a competition between Los Angeles and San Francisco to see which city could identify the most biodiversity using the iNaturalist app. Since then, it has grown into an annual worldwide event and as of 2020, there were 244 participating cities. Participating cities in Alberta include Lethbridge, Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton.

Citizen science can be defined as 'participatory scientific research conducted in whole or in part by amateur scientists.' Basically, it is science done by people like you and me. Through data collection apps like iNaturalist and eBird, people can contribute important information about biodiversity by simply recording observations while they're out enjoying nature. This data is then used by scientists (professionals this time), to help understand biological

patterns and trends on a broader scale.

The 2022 CNC was the theme of two recent Adventure for Wilderness activities that took place on April 30 and May 1. Participants learned all about the benefits of citizen science and put it into action by making their own observations through iNaturalist.

The first day took us to Frank Lake, just east of High River. There was no shortage of highlights as we walked towards the popular viewing blind at the north end of basin 1. We made sure to tread carefully and stick to well-trodden trails far away from the shoreline to avoid the spread of avian flu which has recently been an issue in Alberta and much of Western Canada. We were happy to see most other visitors also acting conscientiously but disappointed that many others were blazing their own trails close to shore and through delicate nesting areas.

Our group succeeded in identifying over 25 species of birds, including three western meadowlarks and two white-faced ibises. We even stumbled upon a recently deceased striped skunk and were stumped as to what caused its demise.

All in all, our groups contributed nearly 70 observations of flora and fauna over two days. This was just a small part of the thousands of observations that formed a part of Calgary's contribution to the 2022 CNC which was one of the top three cities in Canada for most observations, alongside Victoria and Montreal. This is thanks in large part to efforts of Matt Wallace, a naturalist in Calgary who has been coordinating CNC events in the city for years.

Even if you missed the 2022 CNC, the opportunity to contribute to citizen science lasts all year round no matter where in Alberta, Canada or the world you might find yourself. By downloading apps like iNaturalist, eBird and others, you can make a meaningful contribution to scientific research while you're out enjoying your nature excursions. So, the next time you're thinking of heading out, no matter how far afield, don't forget to download one of these apps and start your role as a citizen scientist.

- By Nathaniel Schmidt



Day two of the Adventure found us at the Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation area just west of Calgary. Birds were the theme of the day and we were excited to spot what was for all, the first yellow-rumped warbler of the season. Our group also managed to record observations of fungi, lichens, mosses and a few species of early wildflowers poking through the ground (no crocuses though!). Photo © N. Schmidt

**A few of our upcoming *Adventures for Wilderness* -  
Check out the website for more!**

**[www.AdventuresForWilderness.ca](http://www.AdventuresForWilderness.ca)**



**Jul. 2&3 - Bikepacking  
the Cowboy Trail**

**Aug. 27 - Orphan Oil & Gas Wells  
and Foothills Geology**

**Aug. 17 - Hiking into the Headwaters  
of Meadow Creek**



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