

CITY NATURE CHALLENGE 2022 REPORT

INTRODUCTION

During City Nature Challenge 2022 we engaged with local residents in the Bristol and Bath region to take part in the global citizen science initiative from the 29th April to 2nd May 2022 to record as much wildlife data as possible. The Challenge enabled participants to connect to nature, learn about their local wildlife, and contribute to vital data on wildlife distribution. The project was delivered through in-person City Nature Challenge hubs in parks and green spaces, wildlife walks, online resources including guides for schools, and an online marketing campaign.

"[I enjoyed] amazing information about the importance of urban wildlife on the nature walks, using iNaturalist for the first time. Really surprised me how much I enjoyed four days of minutely inspecting my local green spaces. Learned so much from using the app." City Nature Challenge 2022 participant.



Activities at a City Nature Challenge hub

OUTCOMES

Headlines:

- In the participant feedback survey, 91% of respondents strongly agreed that they enjoyed taking part in City Nature Challenge. When asked what they had enjoyed, respondents mentioned learning about local wildlife and different species, being outside in nature, and using iNaturalist.
- 78% of respondents said that taking part in City Nature Challenge had made them notice wildlife more.
- Bristol and Bath had the highest number of wildlife observers in the UK, with 404, and the 3rd highest in Europe.
- We ran eight City Nature Challenge hubs in parks and green spaces across the region. At the hubs we spoke with 581 members of the public about their local wildlife, favourite wildlife spots, and how to take part in City Nature Challenge.
- We ran six wildlife walks in Bristol city centre led by local wildlife experts, which were attended by 67 people. The feedback from these was very positive.
- Resources were created to aid participation in City Nature Challenge, which can be found on the [resources page](#). These included lesson plans, information for schools, home educators and youth groups, an invertebrate identification guide, CNC Poster, and a how to take part guide.
- In partnership with the University of Bristol, we ran four eDNA workshops. These interactive workshops, led by researchers, explored how science and technology can be used to identify wildlife using DNA. The workshops were attended by 34 people.
- 7,989 wildlife records were submitted from the region, which can be used to inform conservation, management and research.
- We recruited a team of 15 volunteers to support the running of the in-person City Nature Challenge hubs.
- Prior to the City Nature Challenge weekend, we ran two online training sessions. These were attended by 22 people.
- Our online communications directed at the Bristol & Bath region to promote the challenge hit over 78,000 impressions across our Twitter, Facebook & Instagram social media channels. Over 3,000 users visited our City Nature Challenge UK site in the week lead up and duration of the challenge.



Wildlife recording during City Nature Challenge



University of Bristol's eDNA workshop



Wildlife walk led by expert Ed Drewitt

Statistics taken from the [Bristol and Bath City Nature Challenge iNaturalist project page](#):



7,989

Wildlife records



1,268

Species



404

Wildlife observers

PARTICIPATION

We saw a small drop in participants on iNaturalist from last year of 19. However, engagement levels at our City Nature Challenge hubs was much higher at 648 people, who took part in activities, chatted to staff and volunteers, or joined wildlife walks. This suggests that some people were joining in with activities, for example bug hunting, walks or pond dipping, but were choosing not to record wildlife on the iNaturalist app.

Despite a lower number of wildlife records this year (7,989) compared with last year (8,336), there was a much higher number of species recorded – 1,268 compared with 1,015 in 2021. This suggested that participants were taking a more considered approach and being more selective with the records that they submitted and focused on finding different species.



Pond dipping at Bath City Farm

LEARNING & IMPROVEMENTS

- Positive feedback from wildlife walk participants suggest that they are a great activity to engage the public with City Nature Challenge and the natural environment in Bristol City Centre. We would like to continue to run walks during future City Nature Challenges.
- One of the benefits of doing city centre wildlife walks is that they are accessible for wheelchair users or those that are less mobile. In future we will be clearer about the accessibility of walks in the marketing material.
- Although engagement numbers were high at the City Nature Challenge hubs, iNaturalist users were comparative low during the Challenge. The conversations we had with members of the public demonstrated that there is a real interest in running engagement activities focusing on learning about urban local wildlife. We considered this as positive learning for future engagement activities around Bristol's Ecological Emergency Strategy.
- The number of people engaging at the hubs and on walks, yet not using iNaturalist, suggests we may need some more accessible ways into wildlife recording, for example a paper survey available or more iNaturalist training.
- Although City Nature Challenge hubs were a great way to engage with members of the public, they could be improved by involving more local organisations and community groups. By working in collaboration with local groups we could reach a broader audience and showcase local expertise and projects.