

Diving Into The City Nature Challenge

Tips on engaging young iNaturalists in outdoor observations.

Are you gearing up for this year's City Nature Challenge? Well, let's dive into how to get your family team prepped and raring to go!

Tips While Engaging In The City Nature Challenge

- **Think Pokemon Go for real organisms!**
- **Assign Mission Roles**
 - For example, have a Spotter, Photographer, and Researcher on your team.
- **Think about habitat and niche.**
 - Think about where things would most likely live, then go explore.
 - What is habitat? What do living things need? Where can we find those things?
 - Ecotones are great places to search for productive spaces!
- **Limiting the Space You're Exploring**
 - One Tree Strategy
 - Create a focus area. Use a hula hoop, string, sticks to create a spot and find all of the things you have in that one boundary.
 - Explore under a rock. Find a rock between 4-10" and use that as an investigation area.
- **Scout your area!** Check for poison ivy and other hazards.
- **Create a collaborative code of conduct.**
 - How can I interact safely with the organisms that I observe?
 - [Leave No Trace](#) principles
- **Set Time limits or check-in intervals.**
- **Special City Tips**
 - Look to the sky and your fire escape.
 - Step outside. *Seriously, how many pigeons can you see?*
 - [Unseen City: The Majesty of Pigeons, the Discreet Charm of Snails & Other Wonders of the Urban Wilderness](#)
 - Dig in the soil.

Pre and Post Challenge Recommendations

- Check out the City Nature Challenge education resources for explorers of ALL ages at <https://citynaturechallenge.org/education-toolkit/>.
- Practice observation! Try [Biodiversity Bingo](#) with very young explorers to get them started.
- Look for patterns! Explore observations in your city or group and look for patterns and trends in what you see.
- Start to visit the same spot during different points in the year. How do your observations change during different seasons or months?
- Learn how humans interact with observed species