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CITIZEN SCIENCE CAN RECONNECT HOOSIERS WITH THEIR COMMUNITY, NATURE, DURING THE PANDEMIC

Goal set for 10,000 observations of urban wildlife calls for thousands of Hoosiers to be a part of the 2021 City Nature Challenge

Indianapolis, IN (April 16, 2021) – For the fifth year, Indiana Sciences and a coalition of partners are challenging Indianapolis residents and surrounding communities to stay connected with the urban wildlife around them by becoming citizen scientists and participating in the “Social Distancing Edition” of the 2021 global [City Nature Challenge](#) from April 30 – May 3, 2021.

Organizations joining Indiana Sciences to engage Hoosiers across the state include Keep Indianapolis Beautiful (KIB), Indiana Wildlife Federation (IWF), Indiana Forest Alliance (IFA), Reconnecting to Our Waterways (ROW), Marian University, Indianapolis Office of Sustainability (Sustain Indy), Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and Indy Parks and Recreation.

“When citizens of all ages can be in nature and identify the diversity of species that exist across the state, it helps them understand the interconnected ecosystems that link all plants, animals, insects, waterways and humans,” said Julie Rhodes, Collective Impact Director at ROW. Not only does this fun challenge lead to better understanding, it can also lead to better care of these natural resources.

The Indiana City Nature Challenge (**#IndyCNC**) offers Hoosiers an opportunity for friendly competition between Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, and other major cities in the Midwest. From 2018 to 2020, over 1,000 citizen scientists have completed over 11,000 observations during Indianapolis’ three years participating in the City Nature Challenge.

In response to the pandemic and the need for distancing, partners are organizing “self-guided” events. Organizers encourage Hoosiers to participate in their own yard, or green-spaces and parks, while staying safe following appropriate social distancing.

“We see this as an opportunity for individuals to rediscover the wonder and beauty of the natural world as spring brings an explosion of growth and we continue to take pandemic precautions,” said Rufus Cochran, Executive Director of Indiana Sciences.



Both budding and veteran citizen scientists are encouraged to participate by:

1. Finding wildlife. It can be any plant, animal, fungi, slime mold, or any other evidence of life (scat, fur, tracks, shells, carcasses!) found in your participating city.
2. Taking a picture of what you find, and be sure to note the location of the critter or plant.
3. Sharing your observations by uploading your findings on our [iNaturalist](#) project!

Plan now to find your #IndyCNC events and download the app so you are ready to take the challenge and be a citizen scientist.

The **City Nature Challenge** has expanded to more than 300 cities in over 40 countries across the globe. Kicking off April 30 at 12:01 am in each time zone, the Challenge runs through May 3rd, 11:59 pm; then citizen scientists will verify identifications until May 9th. The multi-city, global event calls on current and aspiring citizen scientists, nature and science fans, and people of all ages and science backgrounds to observe and submit pictures of plants and wildlife using the free app [iNaturalist](#). Indianapolis participants should add observations to the "[City Nature Challenge 2021 Indianapolis](#)" project in iNaturalist. Results will be announced on May 10.



RESOURCES:

#IndyCNC Information and Education Toolkit:

<https://indianasciences.org/cnc-2021/>

iNaturalist:

Join at <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2021-indianapolis> from your browser, or download iNaturalist from the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play](#) store. It's free and easy!

Social Media

#IndyCNC and **#CityNatureChallenge**

Twitter handle: [@IndianaSciences](#) and [@kibiorg](#)

About Indiana Sciences

Indiana Sciences is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization uniting Indiana's community of passionate science enthusiasts and advocates as a diverse, nonpartisan group to celebrate and communicate science. From "March for Science Indianapolis" and "Books, Booze, and Brains" to "A Day For Science" and "The Science of Science Fiction", Indiana Sciences is dedicated to fostering a new frontier for science communication and science advocacy. To learn more, visit IndianaSciences.org or follow us on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook at [@IndianaSciences](#).

About Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc. (KIB)

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc. is a private nonprofit organization with a mission to engage diverse communities to create vibrant public places, helping people and nature thrive. Annually, KIB works with over 15,000 volunteers on nearly 900 community projects. To learn more, visit www.kibi.org or follow us on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook at [@kibiorg](#).

About Reconnecting to Our Waterways

Reconnecting to Our Waterways (ROW) is a collective impact initiative that has worked purposefully since 2012 to change the quality of life and ecology along Indianapolis waterways and surrounding neighborhoods. ROW has been able to convene community partners to enhance quality of life through innovation, analysis, cultural advancement and investment along Indy waterways and neighborhoods. We have walked alongside communities to discover and celebrate Indy's waterways as a community asset. To learn more, visit ourwaterways.org or follow us on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook at [@ourwaterways](#).