

# CNC YYC 2019 CityWide Challenge Checklist



## General Rules:

Welcome to Calgary's City Nature Challenge where we will attempt to document as much urban biodiversity as we possibly can April 26-29! We hope you connect with your community and increase your love for Calgary's natural spaces. These missions will inspire you to look at the city with a new perspective! Make sure to post all of your observations to iNaturalist (app or desktop) before May 5.

Understandably, there are associated risks while participating. Play within your limits and be respectful of the natural environment. Please pick up any litter, be careful where you walk (do not trample any vegetation), respect wildlife by keeping your distance, and do not remove/damage any vegetation and mineral substances (ex. artifacts, fossils, mineral substances, etc.). We care about these places and want them to exist for future generations!

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## **Calgary's CityWide Challenges Descriptions:**

**Feeder-Finders Mission:** Plenty of birds love living in the city because of the amount of food we humans provide for them. Post 3 observations of birds eating birdseed at your feeder or in your backyard.

**Rocky and Bullwinkle Mission:** Did you know that those common black and grey squirrels you see all over are not native to Calgary? They are called Eastern Gray Squirrels were originally a gift from the Toronto zoo to the Calgary zoo. One day, the squirrels escaped and set-up camp in Calgary. 60 years later and they are everywhere. We are used to them, but we really don't pay much attention to them. Where are they living now? How many exist? Let's try and map out the squirrels of Calgary by documenting where and when we see them. Post your photo and make a comment about what the squirrel is doing and the colour of its fur.

**Rocky and Bullwinkle Bonus:** Follow up your squirrel observation by making an observation of a deer or moose within the city!

**Wiley Coyote Mission:** Take a photo of an urban coyote. Try to identify what it is doing and make a note in the comment section.

**None-ya Beeswax!** Capture photos of three different species of bee in Calgary. Look in your gardens and local parks!

**Natural Graffiti:** Make 3 separate observations of lichens or moss. Zoom in close with your camera to capture the intricate details. Take a photo of what the bryophytes are living on and describe the habitat (what it is growing on) in the comment section.

**Feral Bunny Scavenger Hunt:** Take photos of all the feral rabbits you can find at Lindsay Park (Park behind Repsol Centre) or at your secret location. In the comment section, list the total number of bunnies observed.

**Jack Rabbit Slims:** Make three separate observations of Jack Rabbits living in your neighborhood. Note in the comment section about what color they are.

**Fish Tales:** If you're angler or you are just nearby a water body. Take a photo of your catch and post it to iNaturalist. You can mark the location as "obscured" so nobody finds your secret spot!

**Bird on the Wire:** Post an observation of a bird using some built urban infrastructure (ex. building rooftop, light-post, bridge, sculpture, etc). Make a note in the comments if they are making a nest or any of their behaviour.

**Flowers on the Wall (or Cracks):** Make an observation of a wild plant growing on a wall, fence, or in a crack in the sidewalk. Is it flowering yet?

**Flowers of Spring:** Early spring flowers are important for pollinators. The urban ecosystem is loaded with native and exotics flowers. Document as many flowers as you can by posting your photos to iNaturalist. You can document trees, shrubs, wildflowers, garden flowers, and even any weeds to see what nutritional resources are available for urban pollinators. If you find a flower that was planted make sure to mark it as “captive/cultivated” when you make your post.

**Animal Trackers:** You will look for evidence of organisms rather than the organism itself. Take a photo of animal tracks, scat, fur, feathers, nest /den, to show that animals live within the city but are sometimes secretive.

**Corpse Revival:** Take one photo of a dead animal. If you can identify the cause of death (ex. roadkill), state it in the observation comment section.

**Mouse in the House:** Take a photo of a rodent or an insect (or evidence) that is living in your house. Mark the observation as ‘obscured’ visibility when you make your post.

**Ecosystem Engineers:** Make an observation of an urban beaver. If you come across stumps, a dam, or a lodge, that still counts! If you see the beaver itself, note in the comments what it appeared to be doing. How many were there?

**Flickin’ and a-Drummin!** Take a picture of a Northern Flicker drumming on its chosen amplifier. These include rooftops, sides of buildings, a chimney, or a sign. Did it have a moustache? What colour were the underside of the wings?

**Bob’s Cats:** Take a photo of a bobcat within the city! Do not approach if you find one! Take a photo from a safe distance and post it with comments about how they are part of Calgary’s natural community. This animal is listed as secure/sensitive depending where in Canada they live. Practice marking the location as ‘obscured’ for these types of sensitive creatures. iNaturalist will do it automatically, but make good habits!

**Fruity Tootie:** Find a wild or escaped fruit tree in Calgary. Is there any evidence of birds or critters eating the fruit? Take photos of the leaves, flowers (if any), the bark, and the entire tree.

**Urban Amphibians:** We hardly know anything about Calgary's urban amphibians. If you have a spot where you know frogs, toads, or salamanders like to hang out. Go and take some photos and post them! Note in the comment the life stage (eggs, tadpole, or adults). This information will go towards Calgary's Call of the Wetland program that monitors urban amphibians. Check out the [Call of the Wetland Volunteer Orientation Event](#) to learn more.

**Urban Amphibians Bonus:** If you can't see them, record them! Upload your sound clips online at iNaturalist.ca or email them to [citynatureyyc@gmail.com](mailto:citynatureyyc@gmail.com) and we will post them for you. Make sure to note the location by sending us coordinates or a map!

**Snakes and Ladders:** There are four types of native snakes that have been documented in Calgary. Bull snakes, Plains Garter Snake, Red-sided Garter Snake, and the Wandering Garter Snake. Help us learn more about where and what they are doing in the city by uploading your observations. Most of the time, snakes are discrete. Let's keep it that way by making sure to list the location as 'obscured' when we post any snake observations.

**Ant-icipation...** Make 2 observations of ants in Calgary. Zoom in close so we can see some detail. Are they helping you out in your garden or causing a ruckus in your house? Provide a comment in the details.

**The Bat Mobile:** Do you have a bat house on your property? Have you seen bats flying around scooping up insects? Take a photo if you can but be quick! If it's too dark, make a 'casual' observation (observation without any media) by typing in the word "bats" in the species section. Identify them if you can and provide an estimate for how many you observed in the comments!

**The Bat Mobile Bonus:** Make an audio recording of the bats and upload it on your computer.

**Walking on Water:** Using a jar (or net, or both!), Make 10 observations of aquatic insects from any body of water (pond, lake, puddle, river, or creek). Take photos of the bugs by zooming in close and post them to iNaturalist. Make sure the little buggers are let free after you have studied them.

**Nesting Survey:** Perhaps you have seen some of the birds beginning to make nests around your neighbourhood. Without disturbing the birds take a photo of the nest. If you don't know what type of birds they are list "Birds" in the species section of your iNaturalist form. In the comments, describe if you heard any chicks making noise. Do this for all the bird nests on your street.

**Calgary's Birds of Prey:** Post and observation of a raptor from anywhere in the city. Are there any distinguishable marks on the head, tail, or wings? Make a note of anything that stands out when you post your observation.

**Garden Blitz:** Head into your garden to see what type of habitat you have on your property. Make a minimum of 15 observations that may include:

- Garden Plants or street trees (mark as "captive/cultivated" if it was planted)
- Wild Plants (including weeds)
- Insects and/or worms
- Birds and/or mammals
- Mushrooms, mosses, or lichens
- Any evidence that an organism was present (ex. feather, scat, tracks)

**Earthworm Jim:** While you are outside in your garden, keep an eye out for any worms. Find an earth worm or any other type of worm and take a photo. Use a ruler or your hand so we know how long the worm is! If it happens to rain, use this as an opportunity to look investigate all the worms on your street.

**Flight by Light:** It is well known that moths and other nocturnal insects are attracted to lights. Go outside in the evening and see if any bugs are attracted to the lights on your house. Take photos of any bugs that are hanging around and upload them to iNaturalist.ca. Be sure to give these critters a break by turning off your lights before you go to bed.

**Flight by Night Bonus:** This activity challenge is for anyone who really wants to observe what goes buzz in the night. Set-up a moth observatory station in your yard or Local Park with your friends or neighbours. Project a bright light onto a white sheet hung between two trees or posts. If it's not too cold out, and you're in an area that is relatively dark, the insects will land on the sheet. Photograph any insects you find using a headlight and your camera. Avoid flash so you don't harm these fragile nocturnal friends. After examination of the catch, the moths should be scattered in long vegetation, hidden from the eyes of hungry birds. Do not put them all in one place, as if a predator finds one it will find them all. Upload your photos to iNaturalist and include a photo of your moth observatory station!

**Stinking up the Neighbourhood:** Make an observation of an urban skunk and post it to iNaturalist. Don't get close and don't bother the animals. The urban environment is stressful enough for these little creatures.

**One Fine Porcupine!** Make an observation of an urban porcupine (or evidence of). In the daytime you may find them high-up in the trees or shrubs. In the early morning or evenings you

might seem them on the ground. Take care not to disturb these sensitive animals and do not approach them.

***Calgary's Rarities:*** There are some animals that are so rare, we aren't even sure if they still live in the city. Do not approach them and do not harass them. Make an observation about one of these rare animals and go-viral with your one-of-a-kind observation: Red Fox, American Badger, Raccoon, any type of Bear, Moose, River Otters, Meadowlarks, or any new plant or animal that is a newly listed species on iNaturalist in Calgary.