

April EcoQuest: Front Range City Nature Challenge

Let's celebrate Earth Day and our Front Range biodiversity by participating in the [City Nature Challenge](#). This is a yearly event for folks in cities all over the world to observe and document biodiversity in their own backyards. Any living organism is fair game for observation – plants, mammals, birds, insects, fish – they all contribute to the City Nature Challenge. To participate, make observations of any organism on iNaturalist during the observation phase. This is followed by an identification phase—where you can join a community of nerdy naturalists to identify the species observed. [Learn more and find local bioblitzes](#).

City Nature Challenge 2026

Observations: April 24-27

Upload and Identification Phase:
April 28 – May 10

For 2025's global challenge, there were 3.3 million observations of almost 74,000 species made by 103,000 people from over 62 countries around the world. This brings the total number of observations made during the past ten years to almost 13 million.

Meanwhile, in the Denver-Boulder metro area, more than 9,714 observations were submitted by 764 people of 1,260 species. We nearly doubled our number of observations and observers compared to 2024 and we broke our previous record in 2020 of ~7,000. This year, our most observed species was chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*). Fun species observed included a [silver fox](#), [long-eared owl](#), [Abert's squirrel](#), [prairie violet](#), [beaver](#), [black-crowned night heron](#), [little brown bat](#), [American mink](#), [elk](#), [moose](#), [northern harrier](#) and [black bear](#)! We even had 145 research-grade observations of [26 species](#) that are listed as rare, endangered or threatened by NatureServe or the US Fish and Wildlife Service (over twice as many as last year).

It's easy to participate – your iNaturalist observations will automatically be added to [the City Nature Challenge 2026: Colorado Front Range project](#) if they are made during the challenge event and occur in the Front Range (see above link for map of included areas). Additionally, all plant and fungal observations will automatically be added to the [Denver EcoFlora Project!](#)



American beaver (*Castor canadensis*), [tmr3](#), some rights reserved, CC BY-NC.



Long-eared owl (*Asio otus*), vulnerable in Colorado, [bbco](#), some rights reserved, CC BY-NC.



Prairie violet (*Viola pedatifida*), an imperiled species in Colorado, [kranztz](#), some rights reserved, CC BY-NC.

What is an EcoQuest?

EcoQuests, part of the Denver EcoFlora project, challenge citizens to become citizen scientists and observe, study and conserve the native plants of the City via iNaturalist, an easy-to-use mobile app.

How Do I Get Started?

1. Download the iNaturalist app or register online at [iNaturalist.org](#).
2. Take photos of the plants in bloom that you find on your daily neighborhood walk. It is ok if they are weeds! But avoid taking photos of cultivated plants in gardens or in your home.
3. If you are concerned about revealing the location of sensitive organisms or observations at your own house, you can hide the exact location from the public by changing the "geoprivacy" of the observation to "obscured."

4. Post your findings on iNaturalist via the app.
5. Your observations will automatically be added to the [Denver EcoFlora Project](#).
6. You can add an identification to your photo when you post your findings on iNaturalist, or leave it blank for others to identify.

What is the Goal?

The EcoFlora project is designed to meaningfully connect citizens with biodiversity, and to assemble novel observations and data on the metro area's flora to better inform policy decisions and conservation strategies.



Photo by Scott Dressel-Martin