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**GET INTO NATURE & CONNECT WITH FAMILY IN CITY NATURE CHALLENGE**

*Annual global event April 30-May 3 offers opportunity for Puget Sound folks to discover nearby wildlife, help science and get outside safely.*

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SEATTLE/TACOMA, Wash. – Quick – what’s that speckled green frog by the pond there? Don’t know? Then pull out your phone and prepare to find out during the annual City Nature Challenge!

From April 30-May 3, the annual global event asks ordinary folks to become nature scientists for an hour, a day, however long they have. And there’s no experience necessary. Just download the free iNaturalist app or access it on your computer, get outside and start recording what you see – like that speckled frog.

“Our goal is to help everyone in our community discover and appreciate native wildlife, whether it’s in a yard, park or natural area,” said Craig Standridge, conservation engagement coordinator for Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. “We are surrounded by natural beauty and native wildlife if we just stop and take the time to observe.”

Although the event is global, the Seattle-Tacoma metropolitan area represents one “project” to record and identify wildlife observations during the challenge. Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, Northwest Trek Wildlife Park and Woodland Park Zoo are partnering to promote, support and coach the community in how to use iNaturalist to help science and discover nature and wildlife for themselves.

"It's easy and fun, and it's something your whole family can take part in," said Katie Remine, Living Northwest Program Coordinator at Woodland Park Zoo. "Wildlife is all around us -- with just a little bit of exploring, you can tune your eyes and ears to the nature nearby and spark your curiosity!"

The steps are simple. Download the iNaturalist app or access it on your computer, join the City Nature Challenge - Seattle Tacoma Metropolitan Area iNaturalist project, and snap photos of the wild plants, animals and fungi that you see. If you can identify the species right away, good for you! Otherwise, the app’s artificial intelligence can make suggestions for you, based on everyone else’s previous identifications. (That frog? It was probably a Pacific chorus frog.) Record your location, time and date, and voila! You’re a part of the City Nature Challenge.

Observations can be made anytime in iNaturalist. But to count toward the City Nature Challenge, they have to be recorded from April 30–May 3.

Then anytime through May 9, participants are invited to go in and identify observations – their own or others. Each observation needs two identifications to be verified. Individuals can also participate online only by helping to identify the nature observations of others.

It's a great way to get outside, safely and socially distanced. It's a fun way to explore local parks and trails. It's also a cool way to connect with family or friends, and learn about the native animals and plants that share our habitat here in the Puget Sound region. Even better, the data is used to help real scientists, who can better understand how our regional wildlife is faring, and how to protect it – from frogs to ferns.

And it's also a chance to make our mark on the world: Every year the region with the most observations is highlighted on the app's homepage, as well as the individual with the most unusual species spotting.

Naturalists from Woodland Park Zoo and Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium are offering a free online orientation in iNaturalist on April 15 to help those new to the technology (or to nature):

The Seattle-Tacoma location for the City Nature Challenge 2021 includes Everett, Seattle, Bellevue, Tacoma and all other places in Snohomish, King and Pierce counties.

The iNaturalist app is free, and works on all devices. It can be used on mobile without wifi. Observations and photos can also be uploaded to the site on a laptop.

For more information about the 2021 City Nature Challenge, go to [www.pdza.org/event/city-nature-challenge](http://www.pdza.org/event/city-nature-challenge) or [www.zoo.org/conservation/naturechallenge](http://www.zoo.org/conservation/naturechallenge).

For more information about iNaturalist, go to [inaturalist.org](http://inaturalist.org).

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