

EXPLORE: URBAN NATURE

Join the challenge

Using iNaturalistUK to engage new audiences in the national programme of the Urban Nature Project

Dr Jessica Wardlaw

Citizen Science Programme Developer

THE
URBAN
NATURE
PROJECT



Community Science programme: Strategic goal

Embedding and demonstrating best practice in all aspects of citizen science, to deliver an innovative programme that achieves high impact outcomes for science research, the people who take part, and the planet.

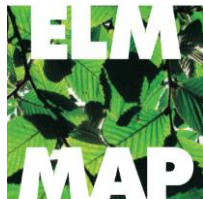
Strategic objectives:

- a. Deliver an ambitious programme of innovative new citizen science projects that deliver impactful outcomes for all participants
- b. Create pathways & tiers of participation to develop participants' skills, science identities & sense of agency.
- c. Work towards engaging and involving the widest possible audience through intentional EDI activity.
- d. Use our high profile to advocate for citizen science, share tools and disseminate best practice.



PAST PROJECTS AND COLLABORATIONS

BIG SEAWEED SEARCH



Walkers and naturalists collaborating to map Britain's surviving elm trees

miniature
lives
magnified



City
Nature
Challenge
2021

Decoding
NAture



Project Plumage



earthworm
watch

The
Microverse
Revealing invisible urban ecosystems



ORCHID
OBSERVERS



NOTES FROM NATURE

TIERS OF PARTICIPATION

CROWDSOURCING

Engage new audiences with citizen science through surprising, engaging and innovative digital means, enabling them to contribute through **quick, entry-level activities**.

Project Plumage

CONTRIBUTORY

Provide opportunities for people to deepen their engagement with citizen science by **contributing research data**.



COLLABORATIVE

Provide opportunities for citizen scientists to **connect with nature and expand their scientific knowledge and skills** by participating in multiple steps of the scientific process.



CO-DESIGNED

Co-development of project design between project team and target audience participants

**THE
URBAN
NATURE
PROJECT**

URBAN NATURE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER



More than 80% of the UK population live in urban areas, set to rise more than 90% by 2030



There's a current shortfall of 173,000 skilled STEM workers, and new STEM roles are expected to double in the next 10 years



Urban green spaces are the natural environment that children visit most frequently, but almost a quarter of children spend time outside less than once a month



Rich biodiversity can exist in urban areas, and can exceed that of the surrounding landscape



Adults who experience nature as children are more likely to be motivated to protect the environment



Spending time in nature can improve mental and physical health

URBAN NATURE PROJECT

Developing evidence and agency to connect with and restore nature within the UK's urban spaces

By:

1. Transforming our five-acre gardens into an exemplar of urban wildlife research, conservation and awareness
2. Kick-starting an urban nature movement across the UK
3. Developing new scientific tools, skills and networks that are needed to restore urban nature



EXPLORE: URBAN NATURE *JOIN THE CHALLENGE*

Aim

To support a new generation of advocates for the planet, dedicated to studying and protecting urban nature, working together to create positive change by:

- Connecting a broader audience to the natural world
- Building scientific skills needed to understand the natural world and the threats it faces
- Enhancing and supporting the protection of urban biodiversity through the application of science

Outcome

Young people feel more confident and increase their skill in:

- Forming scientific questions (for citizen science)
- Making and recording scientific observations to address hypotheses or questions

16,000

Young people participating in the national learning programme.

1,500

Teachers trained as part of the national learning programme.

80,000

People participating in a national citizen science programme.

35

Young people taking part in a new summer volunteer programme.

4,000

People attending national BioBlitz events.

100

Prince's Trust youth workers and 50 young people participating in a Get Started programme nationally.

100

People from the Museum's local community taking part in a new volunteer programme.

With partners from our Real World Science network:

- 1 Natural History Museum, London
- 2 RSPB Giving Nature a Home Glasgow in partnership with Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum
- 3 Great North Museum, Newcastle
- 4 National Museum Cardiff
- 5 Birmingham Museums Trust
- 6 Leeds Museums and Galleries
- 7 Wollaton Hall (Nottingham City Museums and Galleries)
- 8 Peterborough Museum (City Culture Peterborough)
- 9 National Museums Northern Ireland
- 10 Dorset Museum
- 11 Stoke-on-Trent Museums



CITIZEN SCIENCE

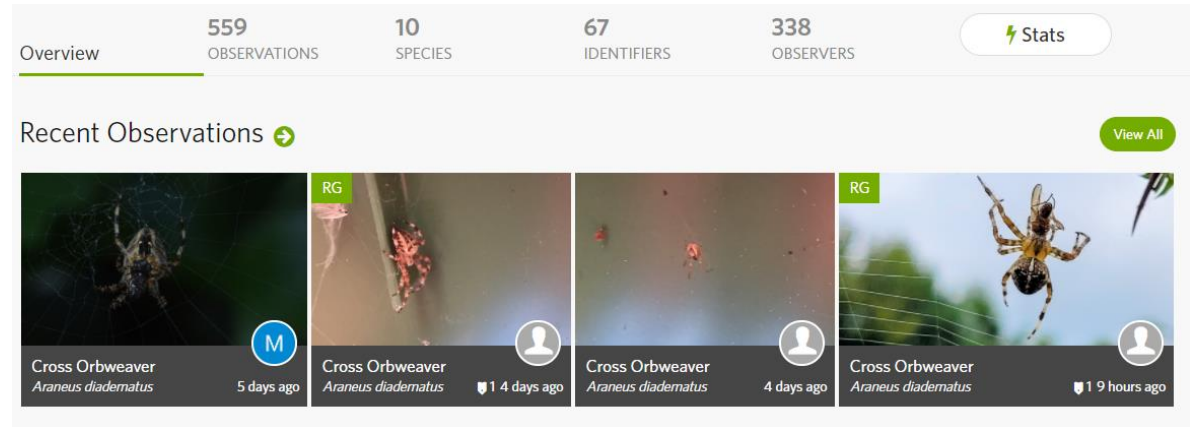
Mass citizen science
projects

Escalator model

Co-creation

Seasonal nature trackers

Bioblitz events



SPECIES SELECTION CRITERIA

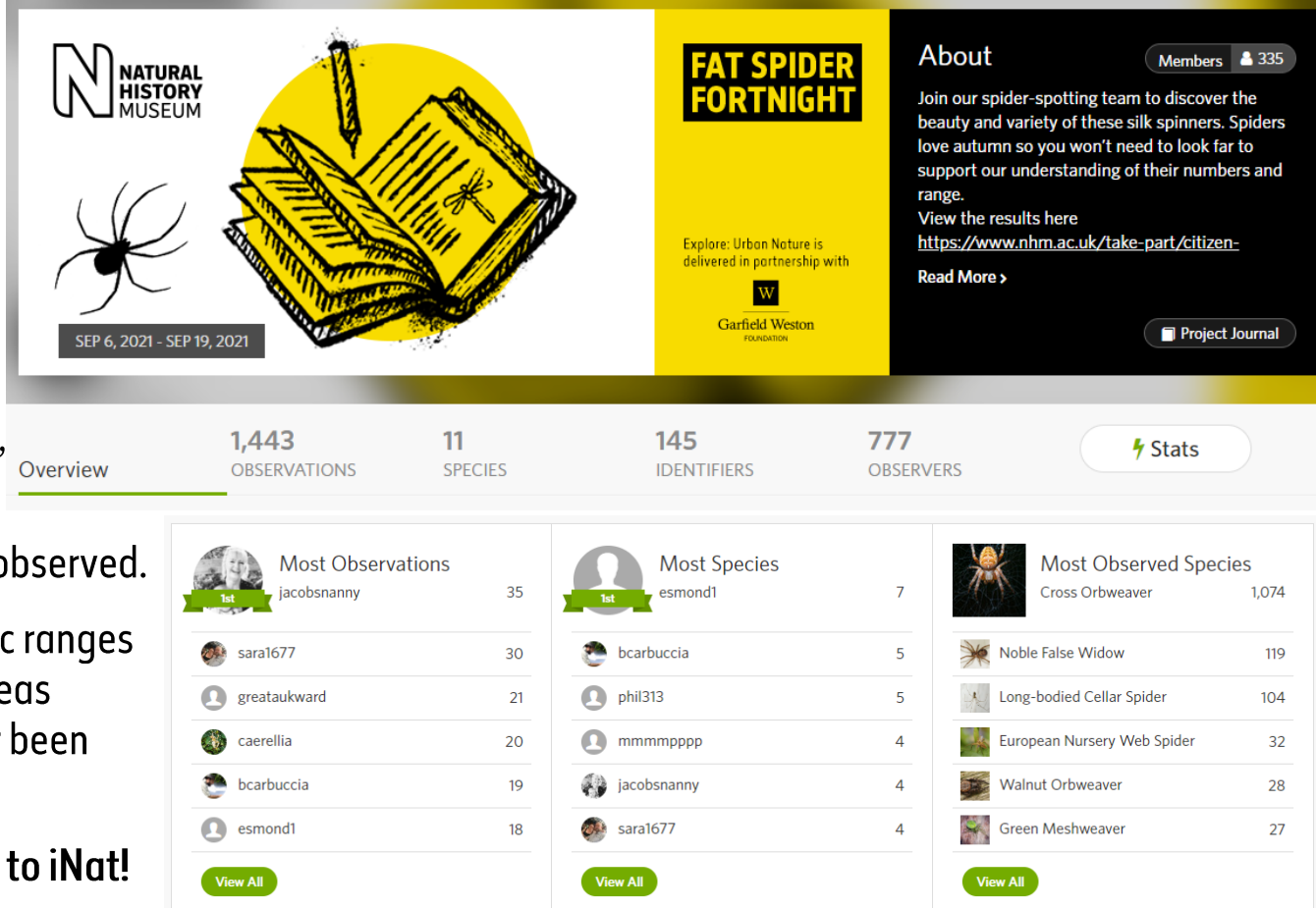
- Identifiable in photos
- Of scientific interest
- Balance of species easy enough to find and rarer or under recorded species
- Season-appropriate



FAT SPIDER FORTNIGHT

6-19 September 2021

- Over 670 people took part, over 1250 observations.
- All 11 target species were observed.
- At least 10 new geographic ranges were established - new areas where a species has never been recorded before.
- 150 observers were new to iNat!





Sarah Bell
@sarahsgonewild

#fatspiderfortnight

Just the hashtag I've been waiting for. Been watching this chonk grow all summer



Social media analytics

Twitter pictures shared	45
Twitter # interactions	994
Facebook pictures posted	212
Instagram pictures posted	86

SOCIAL MEDIA: WHO ATE ALL THE FLIES?

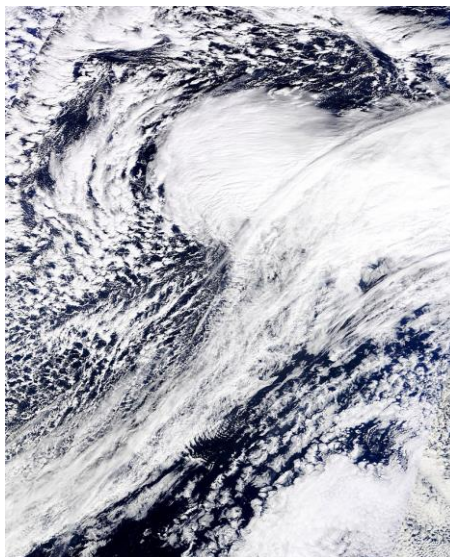
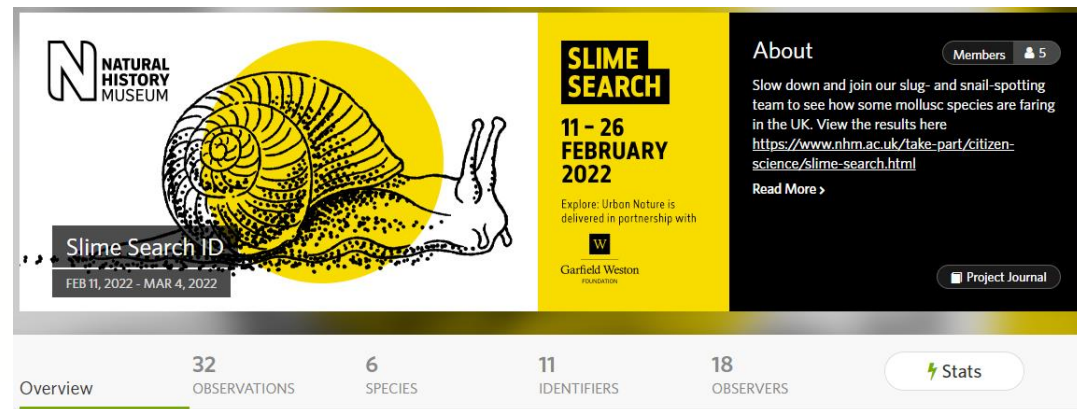
She is beauty, she is wonder, she is our Fat Spider Queen 👑



SLIME SEARCH



- 10 species
- 5 slugs/5 snails each paired with a similar-looking but rarer species
- Disappointing in terms of the observations made but mostly because of the storms
- Project extended by a week to give more people the opportunity to participate



Corrie Primary @CorriePrimary · Feb 25

Children at Corrie had fun participating in #slimesearch. Which species can you spot?



Natural History Museum @NHM_London · Feb 24

Have you spotted any slugs and snails out this week? Remember to share photos of your slippery finds with us using #SlimeSearch so we can see them!

Find out more about Slime Search here nhmlondon.org/SlimeSearch



LESSONS LEARNED

- You can't control the weather!
- Great to work directly with recording schemes who are already enthused about iNaturalist
- It's difficult to understand the iNat audience as well as we'd like to.
- An innovative approach to attract social media users to iNaturalist to reach new audiences





QUESTIONS?

nhm.ac.uk/schools/explore-urban-nature

nhm.ac.uk/take-part/citizen-science/fat-spider-fortnight

nhm.ac.uk/take-part/citizen-science/slime-search.html

nhm.ac.uk/take-part/citizen-science/city-nature-challenge

Email: j.wardlaw@nhm.ac.uk