



مدينة إكسبو دبي
EXPO CITY DUBAI

Terra

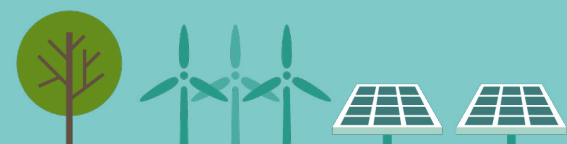


10



City Nature Challenge 2025: Dubai

End of Project Report





What does nature in cities look like?

Citizen science is transforming the way we understand and conserve biodiversity. It invites everybody to become active participants in scientific research, allowing anyone with a smartphone or camera to contribute valuable ecological data.

Terra, Expo City Dubai is utilizing citizen science to collect urban biodiversity data to help answer the question - what do cities in nature look like? With a mission to transform the way people connect with nature, Terra is a hub for sustainability, citizen science and biodiversity conservation.

At Terra, the primary method of collecting and analyzing biodiversity data has been through the global database iNaturalist. On this program, an active event called the [Terra Biodiversity Project](#) helps track fauna and flora around Terra's thriving landscape. Engaging the UAE's local communities along with organizations such as Emirates Nature-WWF and the Dubai Natural History Group allows for large scale data collection in a short time, providing valuable information about our local species diversity. These long-term datasets are critical for tracking biodiversity trends and could even inform regional biodiversity assessments and highlight the importance of tracking biodiversity in an urban setting such as Expo City Dubai.

Aside from the scientific benefit of citizen science for the conservation of biodiversity, it also contributes to local community engagement by raising awareness and allowing for participants to gain firsthand experience with local biodiversity while providing them with opportunities to learn about species identification, ecological processes, and scientific methods. Citizen science bioblitzes strengthen community bonds and encourage the tribe to take an active role in conserving their local environments. Many projects, including the Terra Biodiversity Project, also incorporate traditional ecological knowledge, strengthening the link between local culture and biodiversity conservation.

By aligning its mission of building a world where Nature and humans thrive in harmony, Terra uses citizen science to empower people to notice, record, and protect the natural world while creating a more sustainable and biodiverse future for Dubai and beyond.

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City Nature Challenge 2025

The City Nature Challenge 2025 marked a decade of global collaboration for biodiversity, reinforcing its status as one of the largest citizen science events in the world. Launched by the California Academy of Sciences and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County in 2015, the City Nature Challenge turns simple moments of noticing and recording nature into powerful acts of conservation.

This year, the 2025 Challenge saw participation from 669 cities across 62 countries, culminating in a record-breaking 3.3 million observations of

wild plants, animals, and fungi. Over 103,000 people contributed to this effort, showcasing the incredible power of grassroots environmental engagement.

Terra, Expo City Dubai, was the proud host and organizer of the City Nature Challenge 2025: Dubai edition. This is the first year that Dubai and the UAE have been represented as participants on the global citizen science biodiversity map. Dubai's participation in this Challenge marked a significant milestone in the city's commitment to biodiversity and citizen science.

Over the 4 day observation period from April 25 to 28, residents and visitors engaged in documenting the city's rich natural heritage, contributing to a global effort to catalogue urban wildlife.

The [Dubai project](#) amassed over 1,300 observations, showcasing the enthusiasm and dedication of the community. Participants ranged from seasoned naturalists to first-time observers, all united by a shared curiosity about the natural world. The diversity of observations highlighted the unique ecosystems present within and around the city.

City Nature Challenge 2025: Dubai

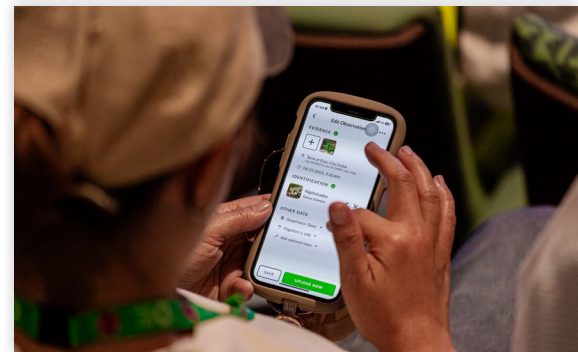
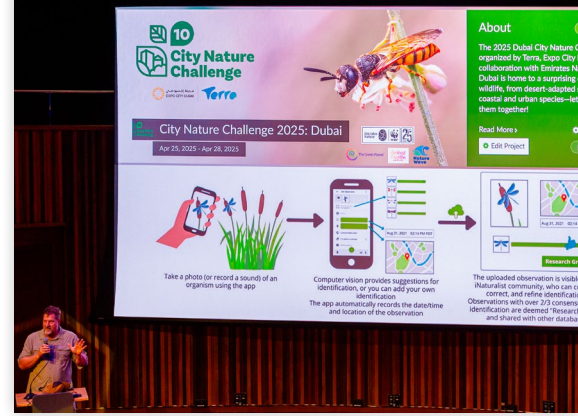
The Terra led City Nature Challenge events in Dubai were characterized by a series of guided walks and bioblitzes, with a focus on different urban habitats and species.

- **April 25:** In collaboration with Emirates Nature-WWF, a morning nature walk around the Terra landscape with 50 Expo City Dubai community members, revealed urban biodiversity, like salmon arab butterflies, white-eared bulbuls, and purple sunbirds.
- **April 26:** In collaboration with Emirates Nature-WWF, an evening exploration of the Al Marmoom desert with 60 Expo City Dubai community members unveiled nocturnal creatures such as scorpions, desert geckos, and beetles.
- **April 27:** In collaboration with Dubai Holding Entertainment, a visit to Dubai Parks & Resorts with 15 Expo City Dubai community members including families with children, revealed wetland species by the pond, with sightings of damselflies, slender skimmers, and blue butterflies.
- **April 28:** In collaboration with Emirates Nature-WWF and the Nature Wave, a bioblitz at Terra engaged 90 students

from local schools, who documented various insects, birds and butterflies, fostering hands-on learning experience.

The success of Dubai's City Nature Challenge participation was amplified by the collaborative efforts of organizations such as Emirates Nature-WWF, Dubai Holding Entertainment, and The Nature Wave. Their support in organizing events and promoting awareness played a crucial role in mobilizing the community. Educational institutions, like the Arbor School and the Jebel Ali School, also contributed significantly, with students actively participating and gaining firsthand experience in biodiversity documentation.

Dubai's inaugural involvement in the City Nature Challenge has set a precedent for future citizen science initiatives in the region. The collective efforts have not only enriched global biodiversity databases but have also instilled a sense of environmental stewardship among participants. As the city continues to grow and develop, such initiatives will be vital in balancing urban expansion with ecological preservation.





10 City Nature Challenge

2025 Results



3,310,131
Observations

Contributed by community
scientists worldwide

73,765+
Species

Including 3,338 rare/threatened/
endangered

102,945
People

From 669 cities in 62 countries
on 6 continents

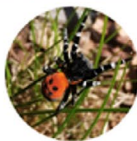
Featured observations from around the world



1. Pacific Trillium
BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA
found by Joan Septembre
Rare four parted Trillium
also known as a Quadrium!



2. Townsendia pulcherrima
ARLINGTON, TEXAS, USA
found by Sam Kieschnick
First observation on
iNaturalist and rarely
documented species.



3. Eresus sandaliatus
AALBORG, DENMARK
found by Mikkel Rødvig
Near-threatened velvet
spider found in Denmark.



4. Mediterranean Fanworm
MARSEILLE, FRANCE
Sylvain Le Bris captured this
fanworm along with a snail.



5. Arabian Gazelle
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
found by Rohail Akbar
Vulnerable and endemic to
Asia, documented from a new
city joining for 2025.



**14. Chisos Mountain
Crested Coralroot**
MICHIOACÁN, MEXICO
found by @elimaya
Critically endangered.



6. Hawksbill Sea Turtle
DAVAO, PHILIPPINES
found by Michael P. Sibbaluca
Critically endangered species
documented by a new
iNaturalist user.



13. Brown-throated Sloth
PANAMA CITY, PANAMA
Cute sloth observed and
photographed by Nathan
Külling.



7. Phidiana unilineata
ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA
found by Sri P.
Tamarapalli
A nudibranch
rediscovered
after 160 years!



12. Cerro Socopo Tree Frog
CAYENNE, FRENCH GUIANA
found by Quentin Uriot
Critically endangered and
endemic, found by a new
iNaturalist user.



11. Giant Sphinx
COCHABAMBA, BOLIVIA
This vibrant green caterpillar
was found by Beimar
Fuentes Ramos, a brand new
iNaturalist user.



10. Pretzel Slime Mold
PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA
Amazing pretzel look-alike
slime mold found by
@Lizziepop.



9. Gold-banded Forester
MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE
found by @sarahhbanner
A beautiful observation by a
brand new iNaturalist user!



8. Weedy Sea Dragon
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA
found by @hunterefs
Vulnerable and endemic
to Australia.

Founded in Los Angeles and San Francisco in 2016

10 years of bringing the world together for biodiversity

12,948,135
Observations

113,320
Species

363,723
People

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Cities	2	16	68	159	244	419	445	482	690	669
Countries	1	1	17	28	40	44	47	46	51	62
Observations	19.8K	125K	441K	963K	815K	1.27M	1.7M	1.9M	2.4M	3.3M
Species	2.5K	8.6K	18K	31K	32.6K	45.3K	50.1K	57.2K	65.7K	73.7K
Observers	1K	4K	17K	32K	41K	52K	67.2K	66.4K	83.5K	103K

K = thousand M = million

CITY NATURE CHALLENGE IS ORGANIZED BY



**NATURAL
HISTORY
MUSEUM**
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

CityNatureChallenge.org

@CitNatChallenge

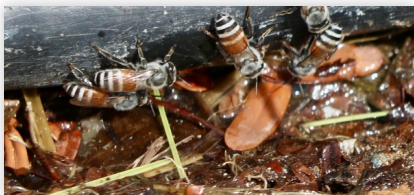
Dubai 2025 Featured Observations



1371 OBSERVATIONS
contributed by Dubai's residents
as citizen scientists



326 SPECIES
including both wild and captive/
cultivated flora and fauna



ARABIAN RED DWARF HONEY BEE | DIFC
found by Ahmed Almansoori (ahmed_almansoori)
The UAE's only wild and native honeybee that is often seen nesting on the national Ghaf tree. They are important pollinators for our desert flowers.



ARABIAN BABBLER | MUSHRIF PARK
found by zfrinan
A native resident bird with a very long tail. Often seen hopping around on the ground.



TIGER BEETLE | AL MARMOOM
found by Drew Gardner (asgardner)
A fierce predator, pictured here with its meal! They use their thin, long legs to run fast and their big, bulgy eyes to hunt for prey.



DESERT BABUL BLUE | AL FURJAN
found by kateryna_f
A tiny desert butterfly that has a beautiful purple blue hue on the inside of its wings. It feeds on the acacia.



ETHIOPIAN HEDGEHOG | AL MARMOOM
found by lucaghess
One of the only 2 native hedgehog species in the UAE, this nocturnal hedgehog is a rare find in the deserts of Al Marmoom.



PURPLE SUNBIRD | TERRA, EXPO CITY DUBAI
found by Georgina Pereira (georgina168)
A native resident sunbird species that has a long curved beak, making it an important pollinator for many flowers.



EVAN'S BLUETAIL | DUBAI PARKS & RESORTS
found by Benedict Samuel (benedict555)
A desert damselfly with an easily recognizable blue spot on its tail. When resting, damselflies have their wings folded.



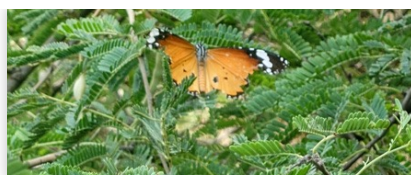
PUFFBALL MUSHROOM
AL MARMOOM
found by iivana1291
A rare find and a desert fungi species that still needs to be researched more in the UAE.



YELLOW-SPOTTED AGAMA | JEBEL ALI
found by Phillip Dunn (phillip_dunn)
A lizard that is endemic to the Middle East and has yellow spots along its blue body. This agama also has an orange yellow tail.



ARABIAN GREAT SHRIKE | AL MARMOOM
found by Alessandro Budroni (alessandro49244)
A native and non-migratory shrike that is also called the butcherbird because it likes to impale its prey before feasting!



AFRICAN MONARCH | MIRDIF
found by Chris McConnell (chris99028)
Also a plain tiger or milkweed butterfly, thanks to its striking orange colour and its host milkweed plants, like the native sodoms apple



MIDDLE EASTERN SHORT-FINGERED GECKO
AL MARMOOM
found by Rohail Akbar (tnaturalworld)
A UV fluorescent dune gecko that is often seen standing firmly on the sand, with its tail up in the air, to make itself seem bigger.

Dubai 2025 Featured Observations



126 OBSERVERS

from neighbourhoods
throughout the city of Dubai



119 IDENTIFIERS

contributed to making
observations Research Grade



CRESTED LARK | AL MARMOOM

found by anvar1071

A native non-migratory lark that is often seen picking at grains or seeds, but can sometimes be observed catching beetles.



DARKLING BEETLE | AL MARMOOM

found by abusamra

A resilient desert beetle that survives the extremely dry and harsh climate by collecting atmospheric water on their hard wings.



EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE | AL GARHOUD

found by Donna Schakelaar (donna165)

A native resident dove species that has a distinct black marking which resembles a collar on its neck.



ARABIAN PAPER WASP | JEBEL ALI

found by Sheena Khan (sheenakhan)

A wasp that is both a predator and an accidental pollinator. They live in colonies and build paper like nests.



WOLF SPIDER | AL MARMOOM

found by hildaecdnature

A solitude spider pictured here with an egg sac on its back. It is an agile hunter with excellent eyesight.



LARGE CARPENTER BEE | MIRDIF

found by parimani

True to its name, this skilled bee's nesting behaviour is to burrow into hard plant material like wood.

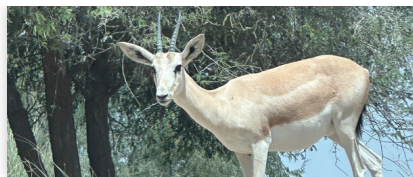


ARABIAN DESERT SHIELD BUG

AL MARMOOM

found by jbyasse

A common desert dweller with a shield like shape that is often seen feeding in the night.



SAND GAZELLE | AL MARMOOM

found by noahexploresworld

A native desert antelope that is both fast and shy, and is commonly known to give birth to twins regularly.



ARABIAN ORYX | AL MARMOOM

found by malinb_

Once declared extinct in the wild, this antelope now thrives in our desert. Its striking white body and long, straight horns stand out in the dunes.

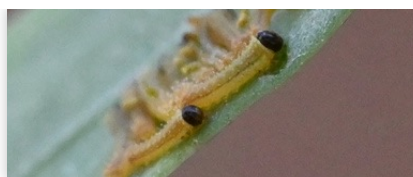


SLENDER SKIMMER

DUBAI PARKS & RESORTS

found by Helene Coulon (helene_coulon)

A dragonfly that is a skilled hunter, both on land and in water. When resting, dragonflies have open wings that are spread apart.



SALMON ARAB CATERpillars

TERRA, EXPO CITY DUBAI

found by Arabella Willing (arabellawilling)

Pictured here on the toothbrush tree leaf, the feeding caterpillars will soon evolve to be salmon arab butterflies.



ARABIAN SHORT-FINGERED GECKO

AL MARMOOM

found by mohammed_roshan

Also called the sand gecko, this UV fluorescent desert lizard is a common sight in the deserts of Dubai.

Marketing and Communications

Highlights:



Social Media

Estimated reach:

5,000,000+

6x

dedicated in-feed posts on
Terra social media channels

INCLUDING

**5 collaboration
posts**

on Instagram with main
Expo City Dubai page with
1.3 million followers

5x posts

on TikTok, Facebook
and YouTube

1x post

on LinkedIn

33x stories

shared on Terra Instagram

45,000+
impressions

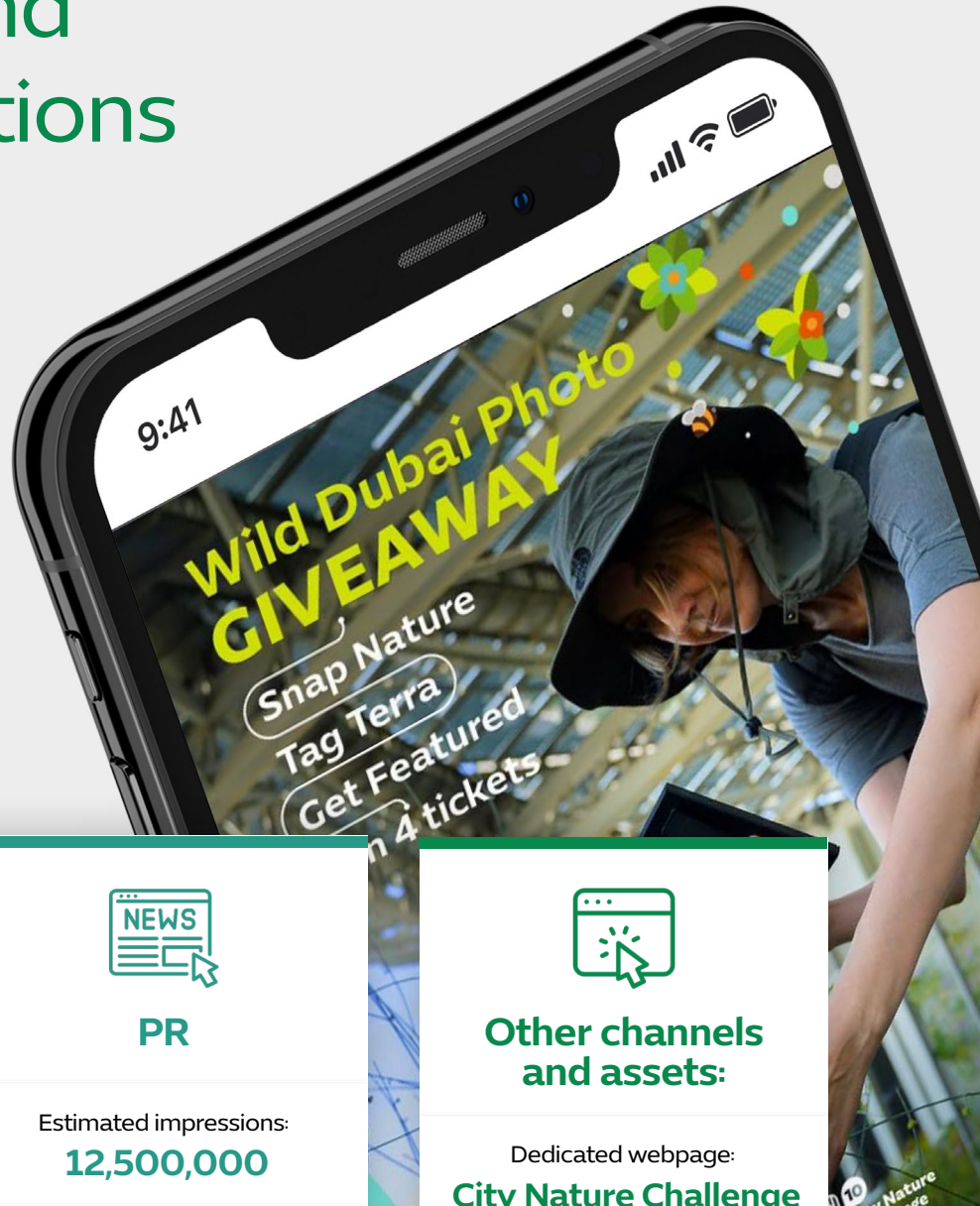
450+
engagements

30,000+
video views



Post on
Nat Geo Arabia
reaching their

**3.2m
followers**



PR

Estimated impressions:

12,500,000

11x

published articles

INCLUDING

articles in tier 1
daily publications

**Gulf News and
The National**

Published through

WAM



1x post

prime time
radio interview
[Link](#)



Other channels and assets:

Dedicated webpage:

City Nature Challenge

Supplementary
designed artwork:

**Fauna
Bingo Card**

E-shot

to Terra database

Mention in ECD newsletter
to full database of

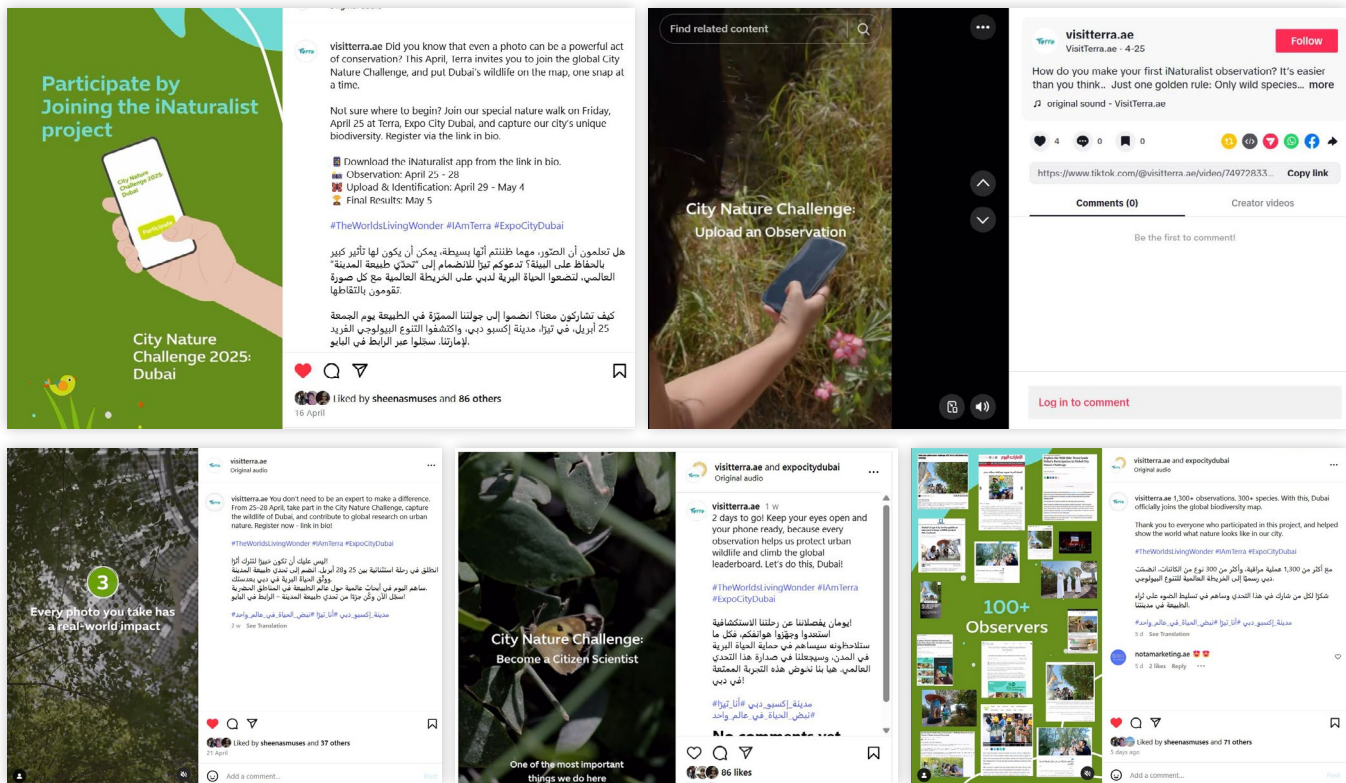
1m+

Invites sent to all ECD
employees and tenants

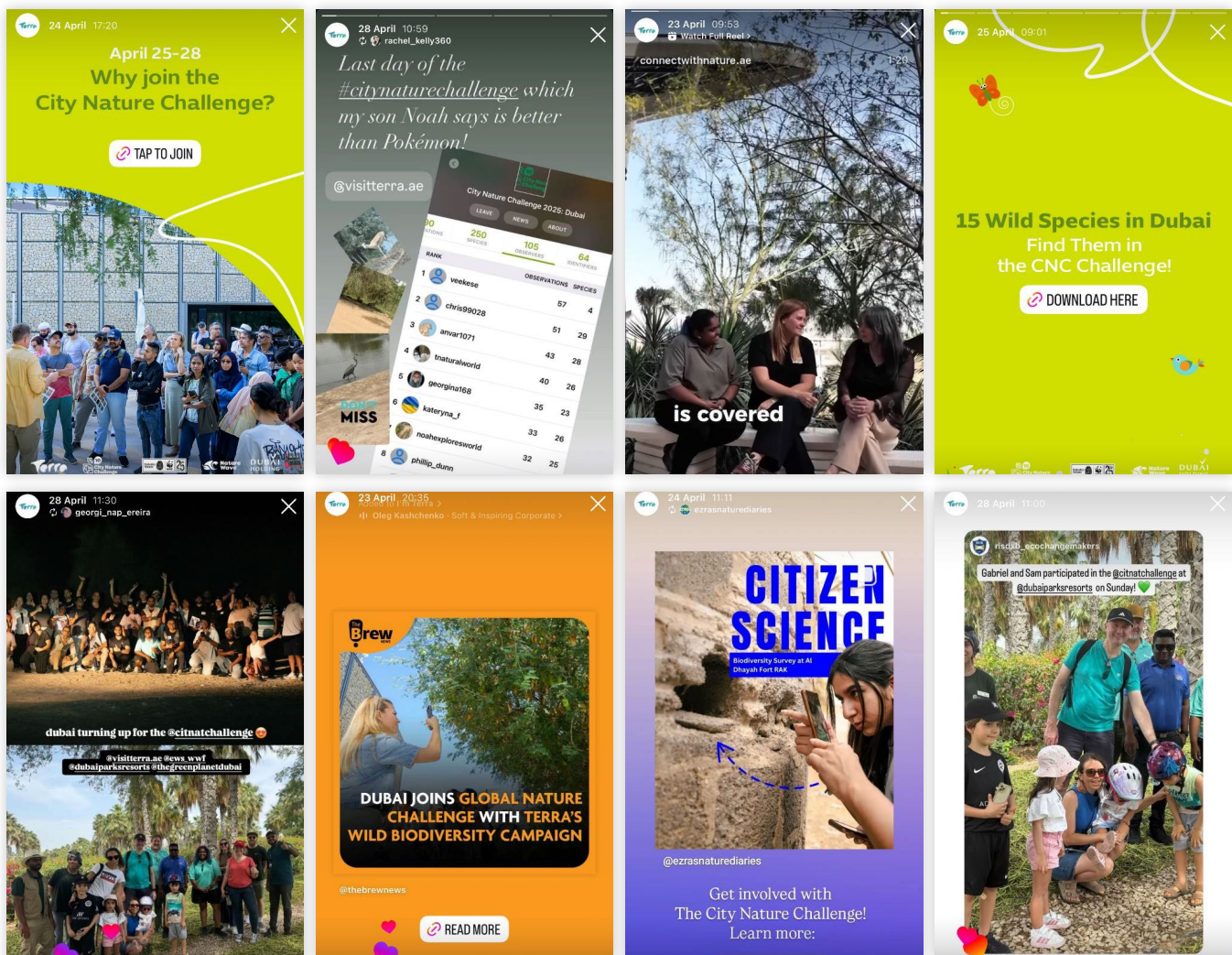
9x

entries to social media
competition

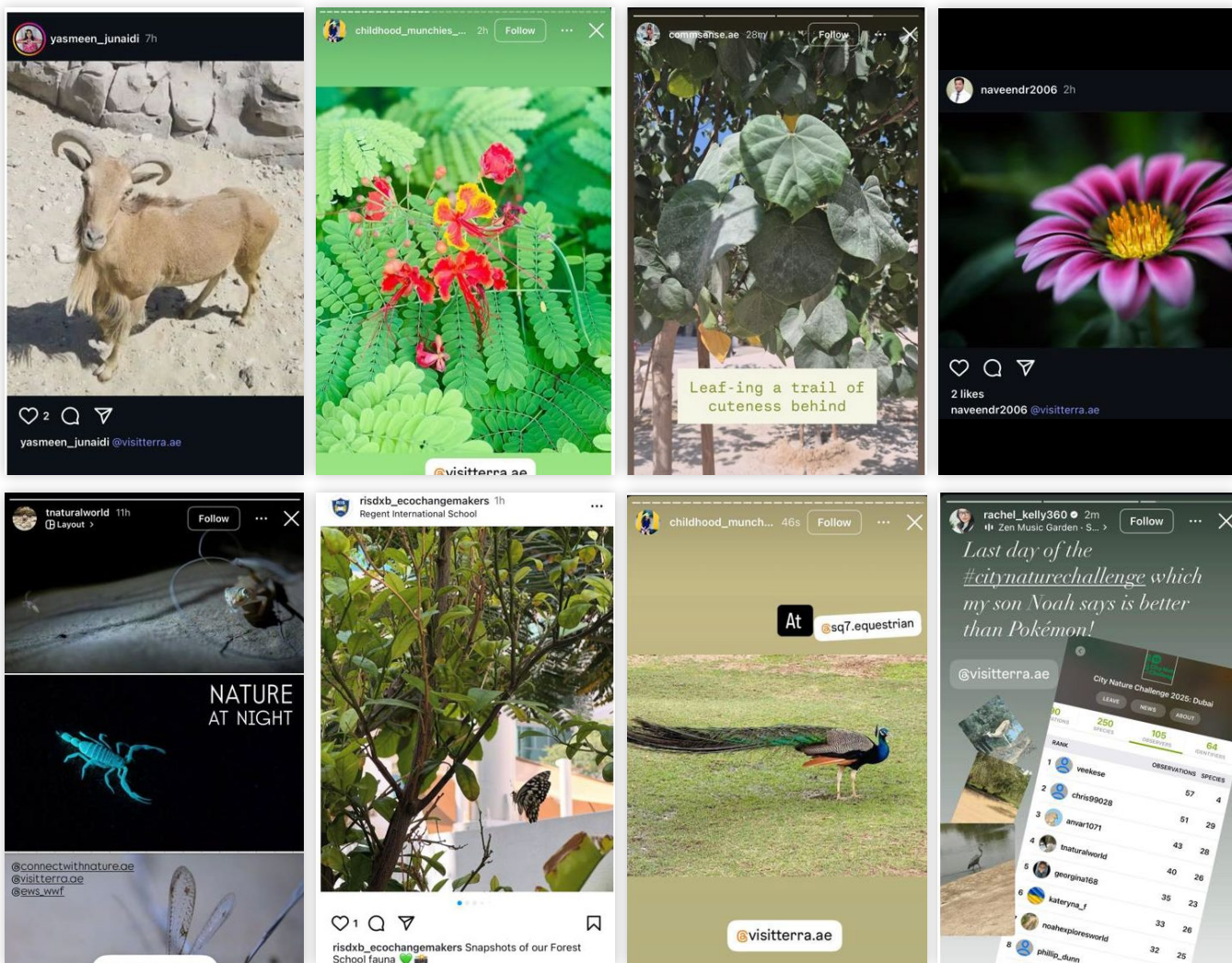
Owned Social Media Content: In-feed



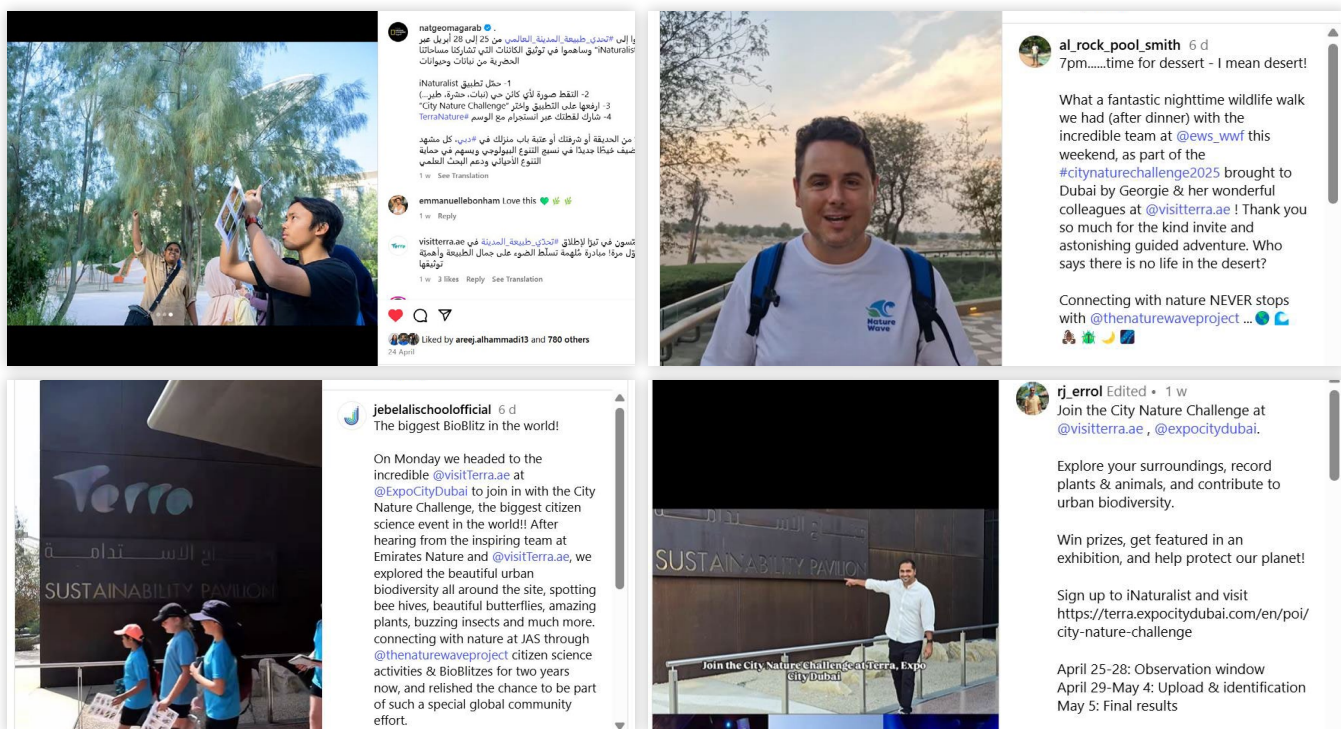
Owned Social Media Content: Story highlights



Social Competition



Community Posts



Impact and Reach: Join Us Now for 2026!

The City Nature Challenge has emerged as a transformative global initiative, harnessing the collective efforts of residents to document urban biodiversity. The growth of the Challenge over the last ten years underscores the increasing recognition of the importance of community engagement in biodiversity conservation.

The impact of the Challenge extends beyond data collection. It fosters environmental awareness, educates participants about local ecosystems, and encourages stewardship of natural resources. By engaging individuals in hands-on scientific activities, the Challenge empowers communities to take an active role in understanding and protecting their local environments.

In Dubai, the 2025 City Nature Challenge marked a significant step in integrating citizen science into the city's sustainability initiatives. Participants documented a diverse array of species, from urban adapted

birds to desert dwelling reptiles, showcasing the rich biodiversity present even in arid environments. The event also served as an educational platform, with events and guided walks enhancing public understanding of local ecosystems.

The success of the Challenge in Dubai reflects the city's commitment to environmental conservation and public engagement. It demonstrates how urban centers can play a pivotal role in global biodiversity efforts by mobilizing residents to observe, record, and appreciate the natural world around them.

Looking ahead, the momentum generated by the 2025 Challenge provides a strong foundation for ongoing citizen science initiatives in Dubai. Between now and the next City Nature Challenge, Terra will continue to champion urban conservation through regular community bioblitzes and citizen science workshops. Additionally, Terra will be convening a UAE

Urban Biodiversity Coalition for professionals later this year, creating a national platform for collaboration and action.

By continuing to support and expand such programs, we further the goals of UAE's sustainability, education, and biodiversity conservation, together. **We invite organizations who wish to be involved in the City Nature Challenge 2026 and the UAE Urban Biodiversity Coalition to reach out.** Let's join forces to make next year's edition bigger and better, so we can start to track Dubai's urban biodiversity trends over time.

The City Nature Challenge will be back in 2026, and Dubai will be back on the map! Until then, go out, explore, continue making observations, and come visit us at Terra, Expo City Dubai.

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