



# THE FIELD NATURALIST

Quarterly Bulletin of the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club

October – December 2022

Issue No: 4/2022



## Saturday 3rd - Sunday 4th December BIOBLITZ 2022– BIOBLITZ GOES REGIONAL

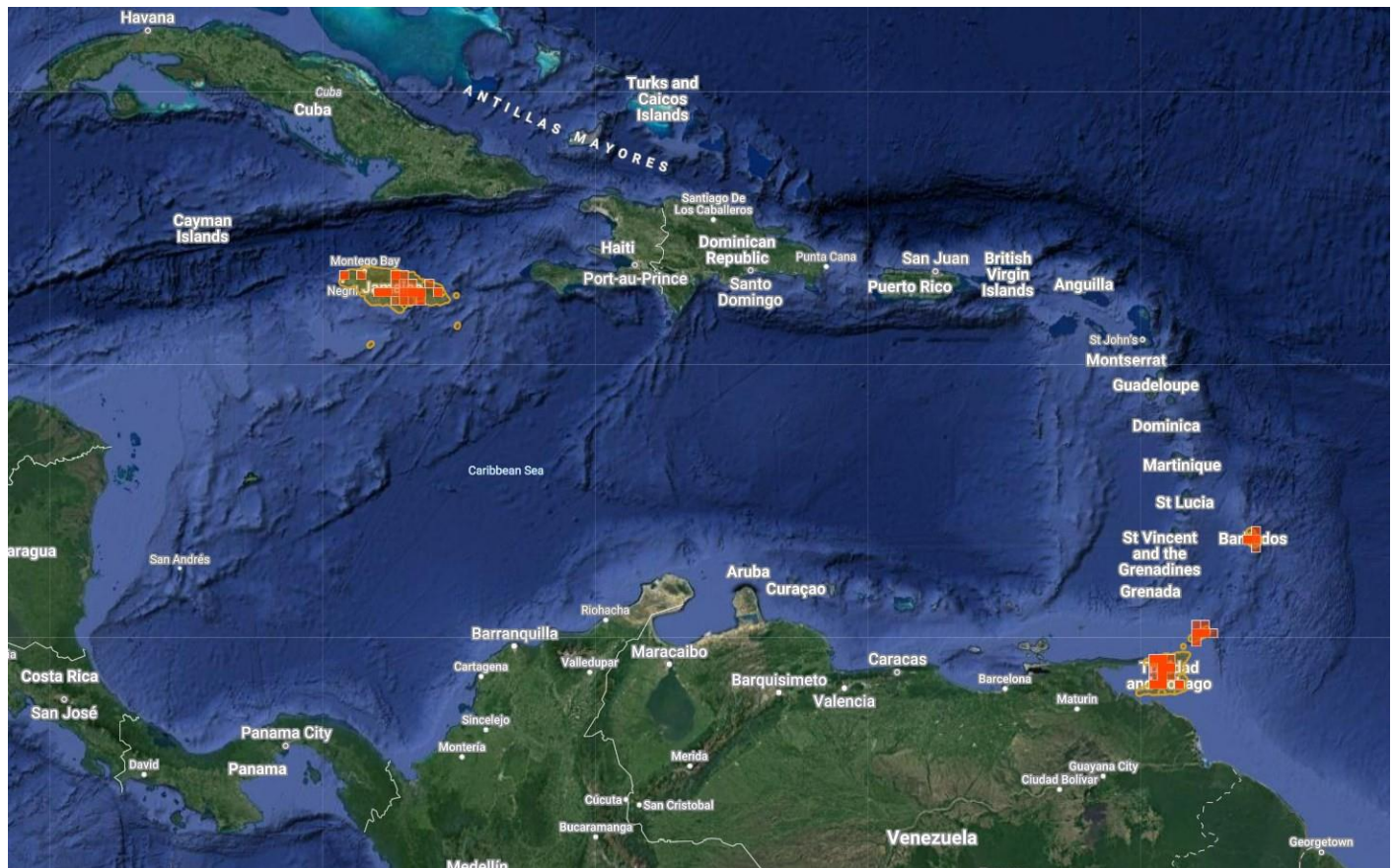


by Stephanie Warren-Gittens

Another year, another virtual Bioblitz, but this year with a difference! Although the worst of the pandemic seemed behind us, we decided to keep the 2022 event virtual. However, we were challenged with finding a way to make this year different to the other two virtual events in 2020 and 2021, and we thought that there was no better way to enter the second decade of Bioblitz than incorporating the other two University of the West

Indies campuses—the Cave Hill Campus in Barbados and the Mona Campus in Jamaica—to have the very first inter-island Bioblitz event! As such, the respective departments and persons were engaged and we are thankful for their assistance in spreading the word and social media posts across their networks to ensure that these islands were also represented. So, on December 3rd- 4th, 2021

(continued on page 3)



Locations of the first ever inter-island Bioblitz, observations highlighted by the orange dots: Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago. Generated by iNaturalist.

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*Quarterly Bulletin of the  
Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club*

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**October - December 2022**

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#### Editor's note:

Many thanks to all who contributed and assisted with articles and photographs.

#### Disclaimer:

The views expressed in this bulletin are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and views of the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club

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## Contact us!

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**Figure 1: Map of observations made during Bioblitz 2022 in the respective territories. Top left Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and (bottom) Jamaica (not to scale). Source: iNaturalist**

(continued from Page 1)

The 11th annual Bioblitz took place with 1295 species observed from 4,728 observations by 124 observers across the three countries.

With three years of a virtual event and the supporting iNaturalist data, it was easy to draw comparisons over the three years to get a pretty good idea of the average backyard findings across the country for the 2020-2022 period. Incorporating the other two Caribbean Islands also presented another dimension and depth to this year's results, as we were also able to

compare the top

10 backyard findings across the three islands. What would the similarities or differences be? And we were hopeful as well that some of the endemics of Barbados and Jamaica may have been captured in the observations.

The overall species breakdown observed for Bioblitz 2022, as per the iNaturalist app (\*as at April 2023) is as follows:


- Plants: 567 species
- Molluscs: 35 species
- Insects: 365 species
- Arachnids: 48 species
- Amphibians: 19 species



- Reptiles: 34 species
- Birds: 147 species
- Mammals: 17 species
- Fungi: 32 species
- Other animals: 31 species

For the third year, one of the observations made iNaturalist’s ‘observation of the day’. This year’s observation was that of the plant, *Helosis antillensis*, taken by user kyma in Tobago. This follows from other observations made during Bioblitz events also making iNaturalist observations of the day in those respective years: Bioblitzer ralytt’s observation of a tufted coquette in 2020 and Nandani Bridglal’s observation of a green urania in 2019 in the last in-person Bioblitz event in 2019.

The top observer for this year’s Bioblitz, in terms of number of observations and species observed and uploaded was damionwhyte (iNaturalist username) in Jamaica, with 372 observations and 148 species!

A special thanks to all participants, whether as an observer or an identifier or a well-wisher, for helping to keep the Bioblitz event alive and well through the uncertainty of the pandemic. Many thanks as well to the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists’ Club and Life Sciences Department, the University of the West Indies for the continued support which has allowed this event to persist for twelve years! 



Plant species, *Helosis antillensis*, observed by Bioblitzer Kyma in Tobago which made the iNaturalist’s observation of the day

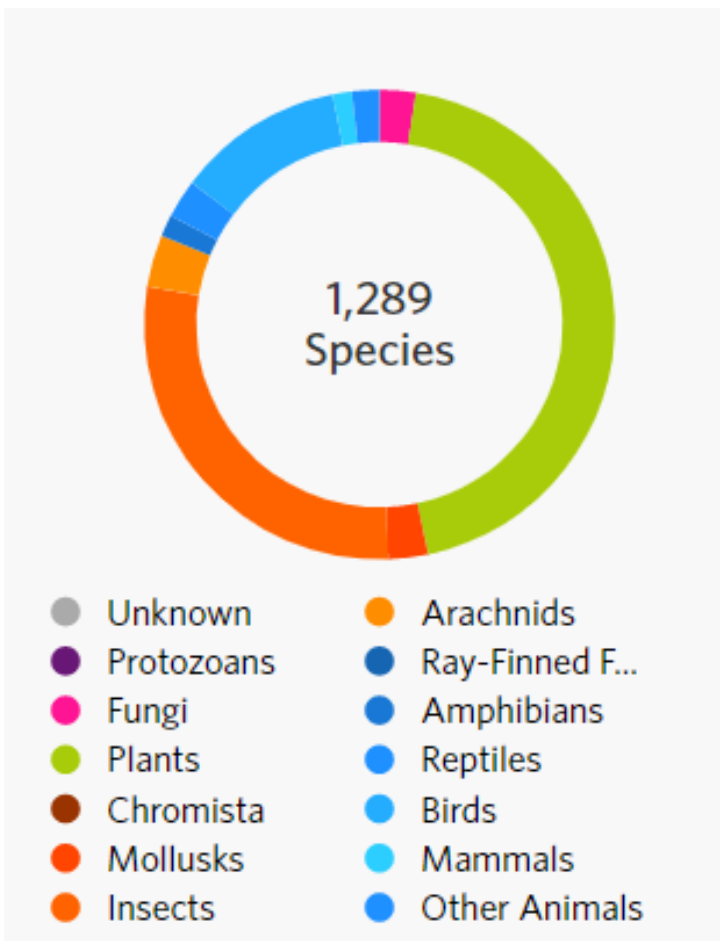
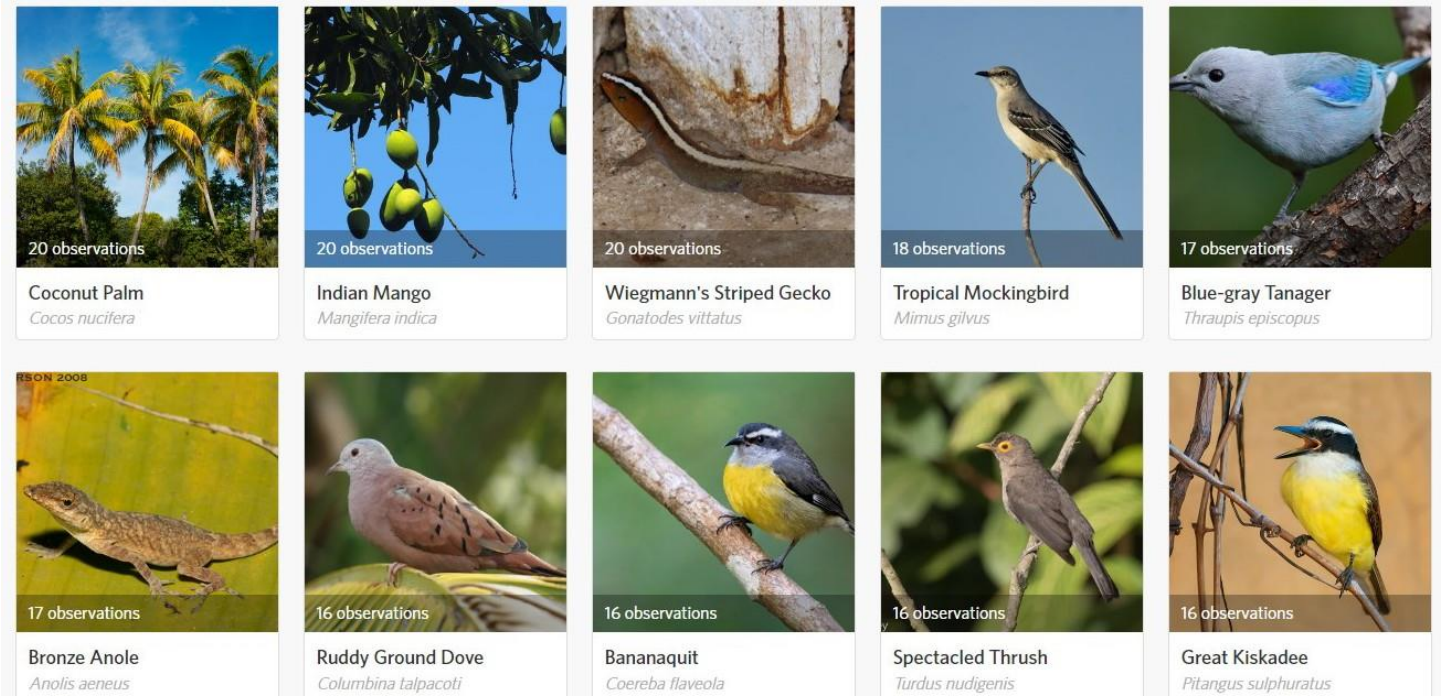


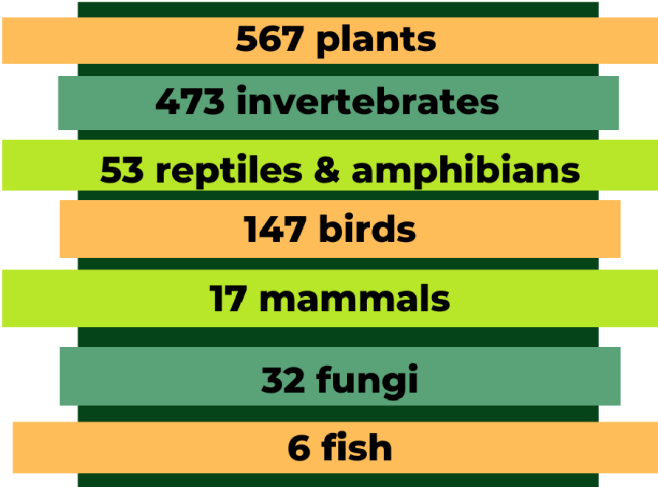
Figure 3: Breakdown of observations by identification status, and breakdown of species identified by taxa Source: iNaturalist.



**Figure 2.** The ten most commonly observed and uploaded species across Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Jamaica during the 2022 Inter-Island Bioblitz. *Compilation courtesy iNaturalist*



## OVERALL STATS - species breakdown



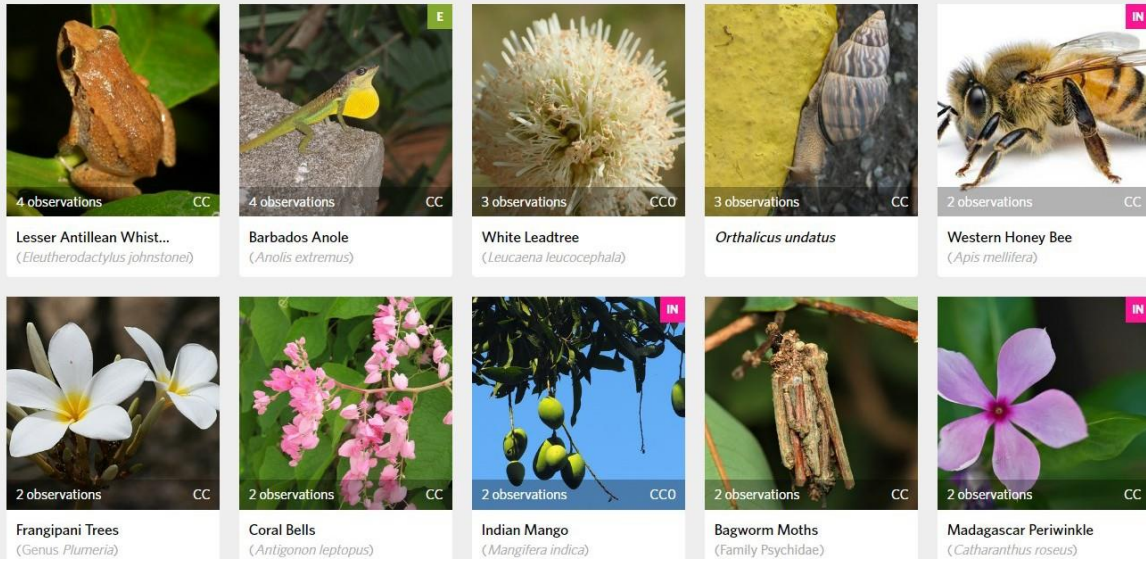
\*as at April 2023

## OVERALL TOP 10\*

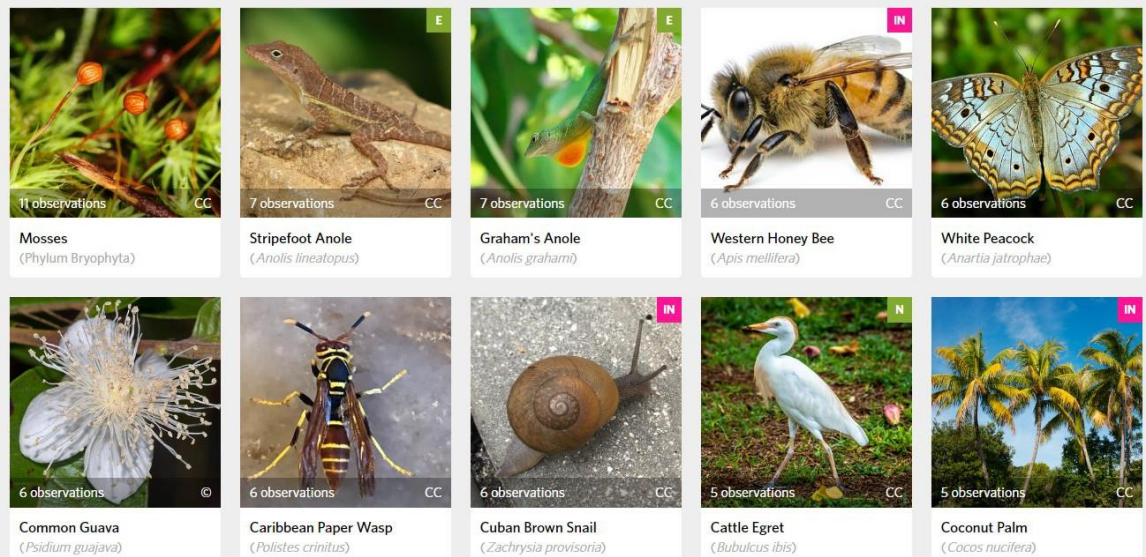
- Coconut Palm
- Indian Mango
- Wiegmann's Striped Gecko
- Tropical Mockingbird
- Blue-gray Tanager
- Bronze Anole
- Ruddy Ground Dove
- Bananaquit
- Spectacled Thrush
- Great Kiskadee

\*as at 20th December, 2022

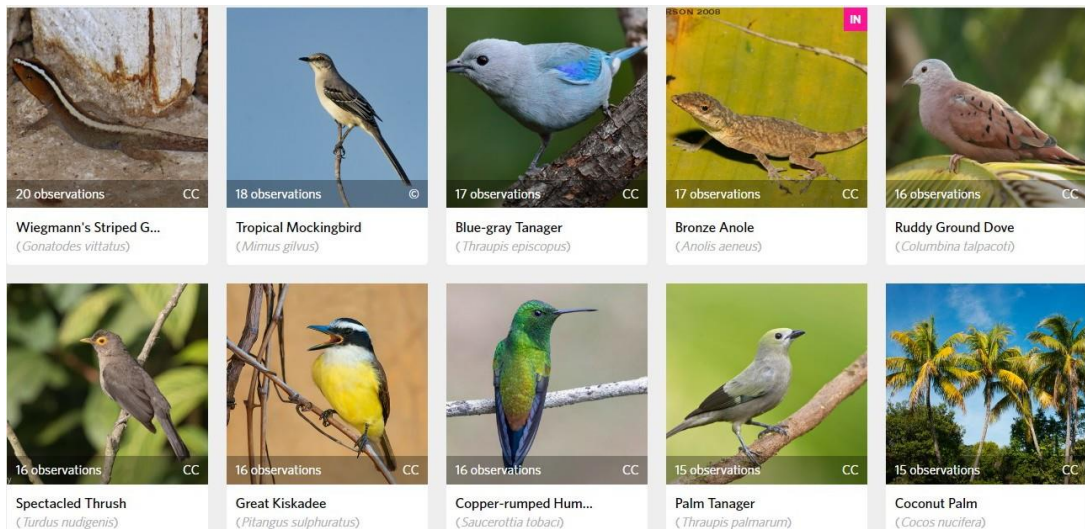




**Compilation of the top 10 species observed in Barbados from 95 species across 150 observations.**



**Compilation of the top 10 species observed in Jamaica 416 species across 1074 observations**



**Compilation of the top 10 observations made in Trinidad and Tobago. All compilations courtesy iNaturalist**

TOP



10

Barbados	T&T	Jamaica
Lesser Antillean Whistling Frog Barbados Anole White Leadtree <i>Orthalicus undatus</i> (snail) Western Honey Bee Frangipani Trees Coral Bells Indian Mango Madagascar Periwinkle Ornate Bella Moth	Wiegmann's Striped Gecko Tropical Mockingbird Blue-gray Tanager Bronze Anole Ruddy Ground Dove Spectacled Thrush Great Kiskadee Copper-rumped hummingbird Palm Tanager Coconut Palm	Mosses Stripefoot Anole Graham's Anole Western Honey Bee White Peacock Common Guava Caribbean Paper wasp Cuban Brown Snail Cattle Egret Coconut Palm

\*as at April 2023



STATS

Barbados	Trinidad & Tobago	Jamaica
<b>150 observations</b>	<b>3,503 observations</b>	<b>1,074 observations</b>
<b>95 species</b>	<b>1046 species</b>	<b>416 species</b>
<b>11 observers</b>	<b>72 observers</b>	<b>41 observers</b>
<b>68 identifiers</b>	<b>347 identifiers</b>	<b>181 identifiers</b>

\*as at April 2023

**The TTFNC and the Bioblitz organisers thank you Bioblitzers for partnering with us for the Inter-Island Bioblitz 2022!**

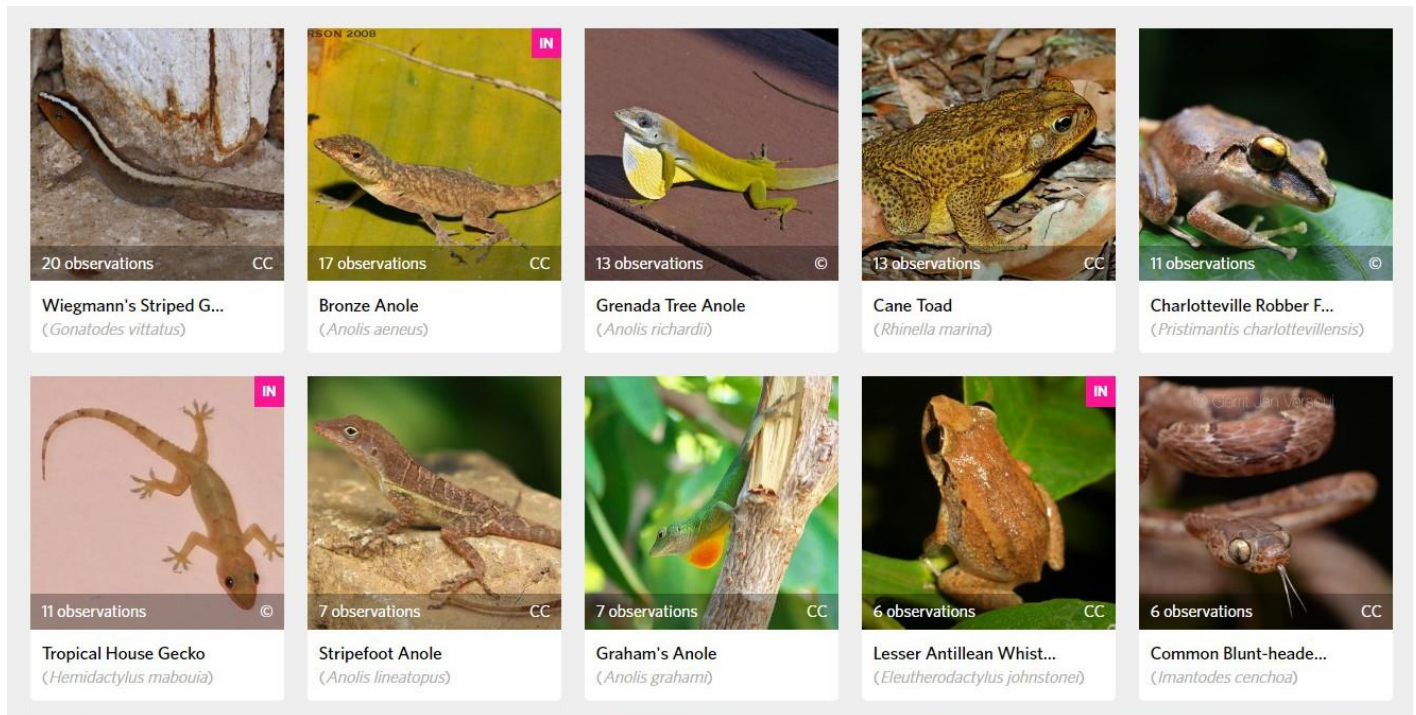
Bioblitz Trinidad & Tobago 2022 Committee:

Dr. Amy Deacon, Dr. Mark Hulme, Dr. Ryan Mohammed, Dr. Linton Arneaud, Stephanie Warren-Gittens, Renoir Auguste, Laura Baboolal and Kareshma Rampersad





## AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE GROUP REPORT



**Top 10 species across the 3 islands: 53 herp species from 229 observations.** *Compilation courtesy iNaturalist*

From 229 total herpetology observations, a total of 53 species were observed altogether across Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. The top 10 species observed are seen in the above compiled photo. Of these 53 species, 19 were amphibians and 34 were reptiles.

Of this overall total, 47 species from 183 observations were made in Trinidad and Tobago, eighteen species of which were amphibians and these included the endemics: Charlotteville robber frog, Lesser Antilles robber frog, along with the eastern glass frog, tungara frog, Mount Tucuche tree frog, banana tree frog, Bloody Bay poison frog, yellow throated frog, the Bloody Bay litter frog and the cane toad. The 29 species of reptiles included lizards such as Wiegmann's striped gecko, bronze anole, Grenada tree anole, tropical house gecko, northern turniptail gecko, Trinidad Ameiva, the Trinidad worm lizard, snakes including the common blunt head, *Corallus ruschenbegi*, and a spectacled caiman.

There were just four species of amphibians and reptiles uploaded for the Bioblitz weekend in Barbados; these included the one amphibian, the Lesser Antillean whistling frog and three reptiles—the Barbados Anole, tropical house gecko and the brown anole.

In Jamaica, there were seven herp species represented from 34 observations, two of which were amphibians. The Lesser Antillean whistling frog seen in the other two islands, was observed along with the greenhouse frog. Whereas the reptiles (only lizard observations made), included the stripefoot anole, Graham's anole, Bluefields anole, the brown anole (observed as well in Barbados) and the tropical house gecko, shared across all three islands.





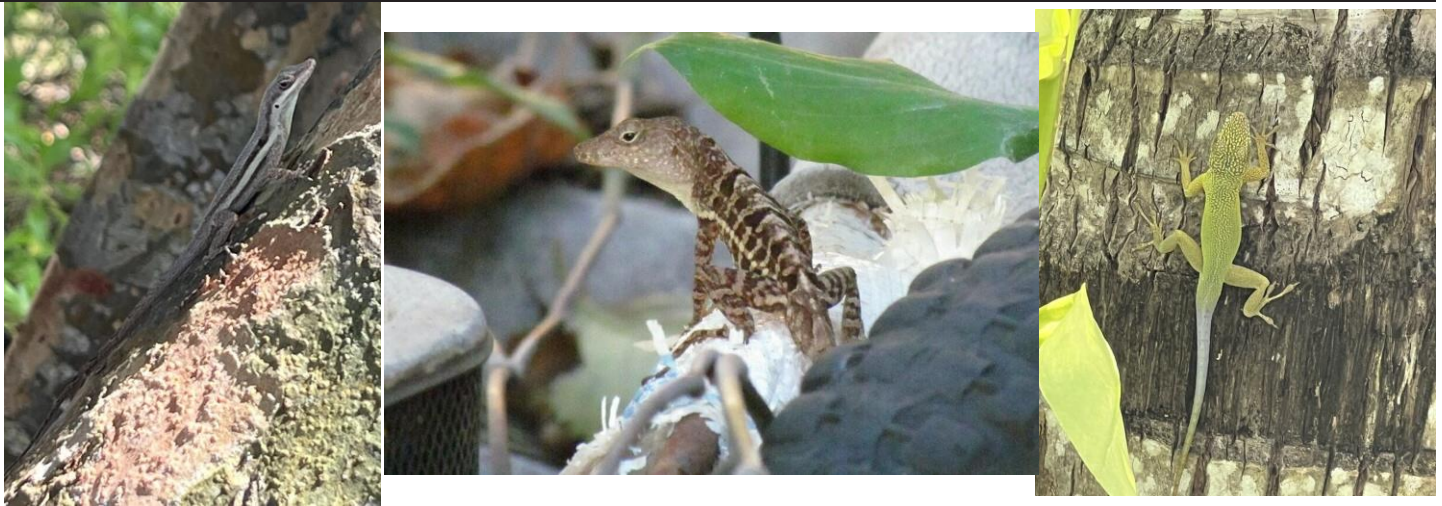


Some amphibians observed in Trinidad and Tobago (Left): Eastern Glass Frog; (Top right): Charlotteville Robber Frog. Photos by zakwildlife; and (bottom right): Bloody Bay Litter Frog. Photo by saifudeen\_muhammad



Amphibians found in Jamaica and Barbados: (Left): A rainfrog observed in Jamaica. Photo by kingsloane; (Right): Lesser Antillean whistling frog spotted in Barbados. Photo by julianwalcott.





Some Jamaican endemic reptiles observed at a Bioblitz 2022 (L-R): Bluefields anole or Jamaican opabellied anole. Photos by damzc; the stripefoot anole. Photo by elijahmcdonald88; and the Jamaica turquoise anole or Graham's anole. Photo by damzc.



A Dormilona observed in Trinidad and Tobago.  
Photo by vx-jameer.



Barbados



T&T



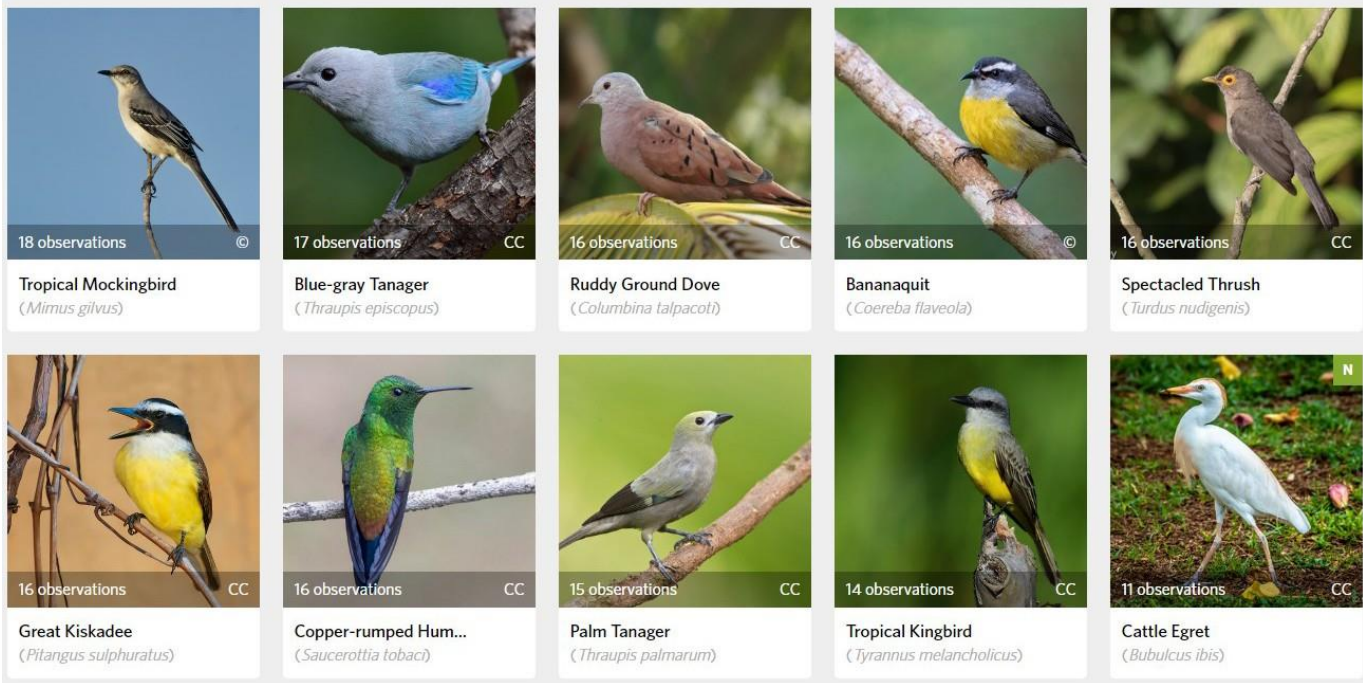
T&T

(Right top to bottom): A few of the reptiles observed: a Barbados anole observed in Barbados. Photo by julianwalcott; while a spectacled caiman was seen in Trinidad and Tobago. Photo by drjayf; along with a Trinidad worm snake. Photo by stephtran.





## BIRD GROUP REPORT



### Top 10 birds found during the Inter-Island Bioblitz 2022 (across all countries).


Compilation courtesy iNaturalist

A total of 147 species from 595 observations were uploaded from across all three territories the weekend of Bioblitz 2022. As this event was dominated by observations from Trinidad and Tobago, it was no surprise that the bird group followed a similar pattern.

In Trinidad and Tobago a total of 118 species were uploaded from 505 observations. The top 10 species from Trinidad and Tobago were as follows: tropical mockingbird (*Mimus gilvus*), blue-gray tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*), ruddy ground dove (*Columbina talpacoti*), spectacled thrush (*Turdus nudigenis*), great kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*), copper-rumped hummingbird (*Saucerottia tobaco*), palm tanager (*Thraupis plamarum*), bananaquit (*Coereba flaveola*), tropical kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) and blue-black grassquit.

In Barbados, only three birds species were photographed and uploaded, only a fraction of the number of species found there. These birds were

the red junglefowl (*Gallus gallus*), Eurasian collared-dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) and an endemic to the island—the Barbados Bullfinch (*Loxigilla barbadensis*).

A total of 41 species from 87 observations were made in Jamaica, with the top 10 species observed by the Bioblitzers being the cattle egret (*Bubulcus ibis*), red junglefowl, northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), Zenaida dove (*Zenaida aurita*), tricolored heron (*Egretta tricolor*), greater Antillean grackle (*Quiscalus niger*), common gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*), blue-winged teal (*Spatula discord*), American coot (*Fulica americana*) and the rock pigeon (*Columba livia*). 





**Barbadian species observed (L-R): Barbados bullfinch and Eurasian collared-dove.**

*Photos by julianwalcott*



**Jamaican birds observed: (left): An endemic red-billed streamertail or doctorbird. Photo by wendyjamaica; (right top): American redstart. Photo by Kingsloane and (right bottom): A northern mockingbird chilling at the beach. Photo by damzc.**





**Birds observed in Trinidad and Tobago:**

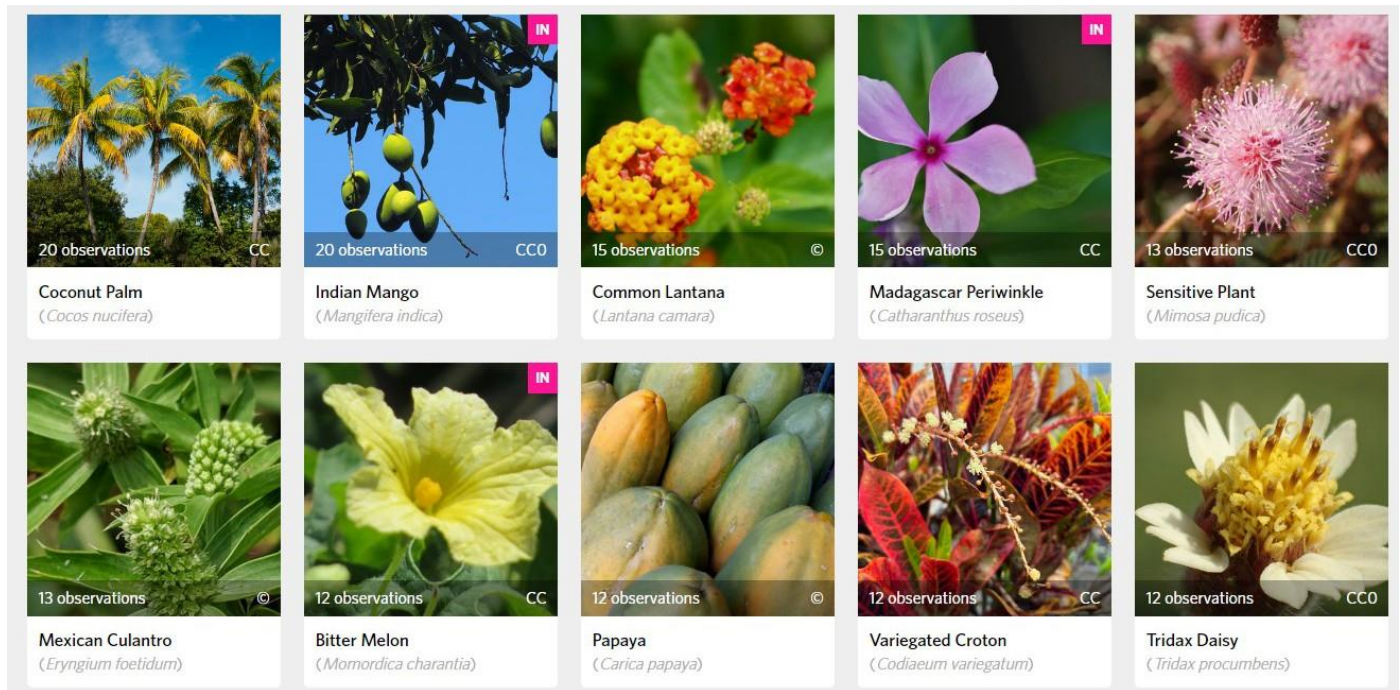
**(Top L-R):** Bananaquit party in Tobago. *Photo by toadmankelly*; and one of the national birds- the cocrico or the rufous-vented chachalaca. *Photo by rainernd*

**(Middle L-R):** A merlin. *Photo by rainernd*; and a tropical screech-owl. *Photo by eseebaran*

**(Bottom L-R):** a common pauraque . *Photo by vx jameer*; and the great kiskadee. *Photo by tarranmaharaj*



# PLANT GROUP REPORT



**Top 10 plants across the three islands: 566 species from 2,215 observations across all three islands.**


*Compilation courtesy iNaturalist*

Continuing with the trend over the years in past Bioblitz events, the plant group has dominated the number of observations and species observed and Bioblitz 2022 was no different. This trend was also observed with Jamaica and Barbados. In total, from 2,215 observations, 567 plant species were observed and uploaded to the iNaturalist project group. The top 10 species across the three islands have been included in the photo compilation above, however this would have been heavily skewed towards the Trinidad and Tobago observations, which had the highest number of observations with 67% of observations based in Trinidad and Tobago, followed by 29% of observations in Jamaica, while 4% of the observations were from Barbados.

In Jamaica, 259 species of plants were observed from 650 observations, with the top 10 species being: mosses (Phylum Bryophyta), common guava, coconut palm, Indian mango, ackee, common lantana, figs, genus *Sida*, bitter melon, papaya.

Whereas in Barbados, 58 species were

observed from 82 observations, with only two items in common with Jamaica in the top 10 plant species; these were the Indian mango and coconut palms. Other species included in the top 10 observations were white leadtree, frangipani trees, coral bells, Madagascar periwinkle, jasmine, rattleweed, tribe Spermaceae and grasses.

There were 430 species observed from 1483 observations based on upload to the iNaturalist platform from Trinidad and Tobago. There were some similarities in the top 10 species, with the other two islands, and these were the coconut palm and the Indian mango. With Jamaica, the bitter melon and common lantana were also a top 10 species, whereas in Barbados, the Madagascar periwinkle was similar. Other species which rounded out the top 10 that were not among the top 10 in Jamaica and Barbados included the Mexican culantro (chadon beni), tridax daisy, sensitive plant, whitemouth dayflower, and parrot's beak. 





Jamaica



Jamaica



Jamaica



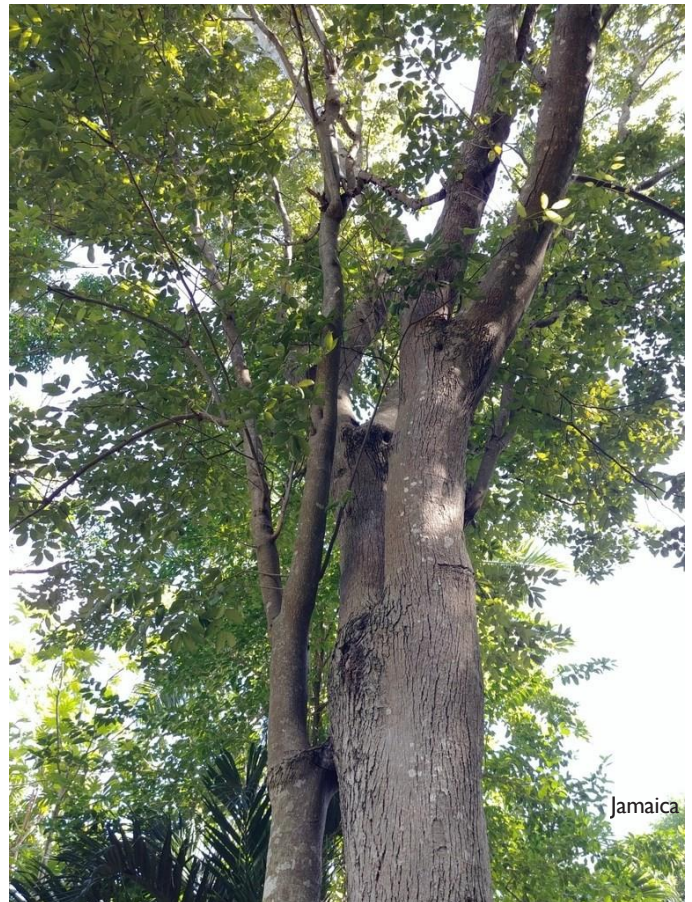
Jamaica



Barbados



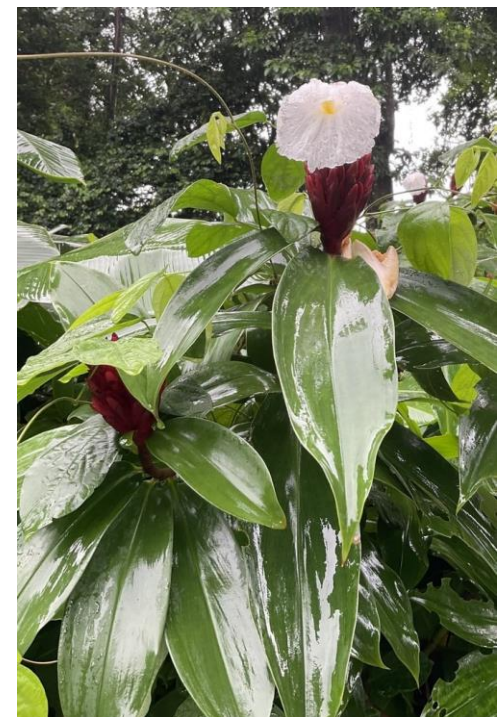
Jamaica



Jamaica

**Clockwise from top left: Jamaican poinsettia.** *Photo by amlsutton*; **white leadtree.** *Photo by damionwhyte*; **Jamaican dogwood;** *Photo by wendyjamaica*; **a common dandelion.** *Photo by jodi l 99*; **giant milkweed observed in Barbados** *Photo by dionnecarbon*; **some other Jamaican observations;** **butterfly pea (purple).** *Photo by damionwhyte*; and **porterweed (vervine).** *Photo by amlsutton*





(Trinidad and Tobago: a cocoa pod on the tree. Photo by anaadi; broadleaf maidenhair. Photo by shell\_vet; crêpe ginger. Photo by bunty1; and in Barbados, the cactus *Pilosocereus lanuginosus*. Photo by hyagwyneth; and the sandbox tree. Photo by antonioholder.





# FUNGUS GROUP REPORT



**Fungi observations in Trinidad and Tobago: bristly tropical cup.** *Photo by theo\_atkinson* **and a field of conecap mushrooms.** *Photo by figtree.*

Across the three countries for this year's Bioblitz, 32 confirmed species of fungi from 143 observations were recorded, the top 10 of which are included in the photo compilation above. Of these, 30 species were observed from 107 observations in Trinidad and Tobago, with two observations and one confirmed species in Barbados, while there were four confirmed species from 34 observations in Jamaica.

Some of the observations included bristly tropical cup, frayed ribbon lichen, common greenshield, whitewash lichen, turkey tail, chicken of the woods in Trinidad and Tobago, splitgill mushroom in Barbados and in Jamaica,



bracket fungi, splitgill mushroom, button and allied lichen and the Genus *Byssocorticum*.

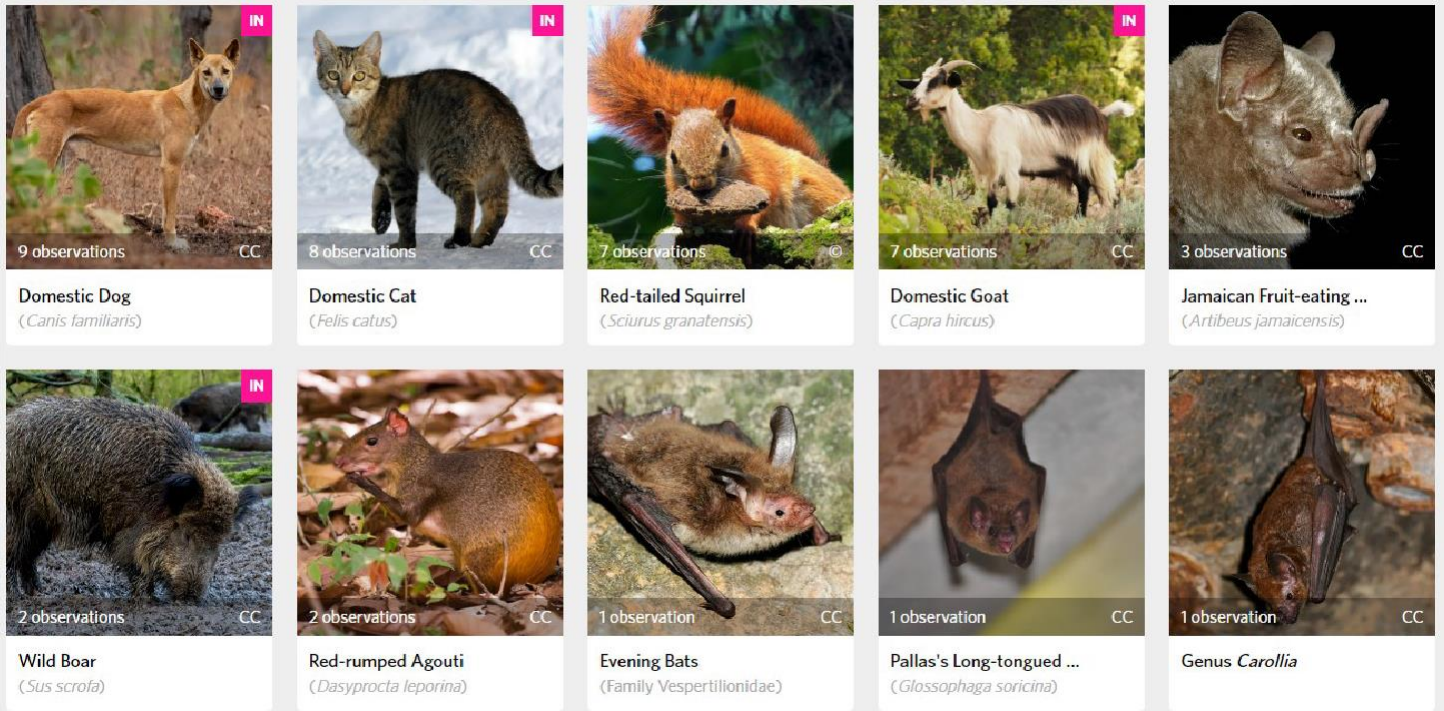


**(Left): Genus *Schizophyllum* observed in Trinidad and Tobago.** *Photo by amydeacontt;* **(top left): splitgill mushroom observed in Barbados.** *Photo by henri16* **and (top right): false turkey-tail in Jamaica.** *Photo by rajodane*






## MAMMAL GROUP REPORT



**Overall top 10 mammalian species 17 species from 55 observations.** *Compilation courtesy iNaturalist.*

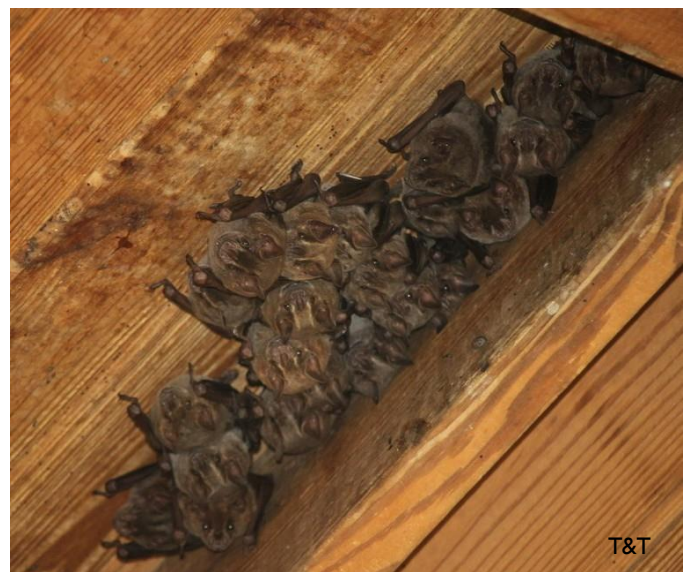
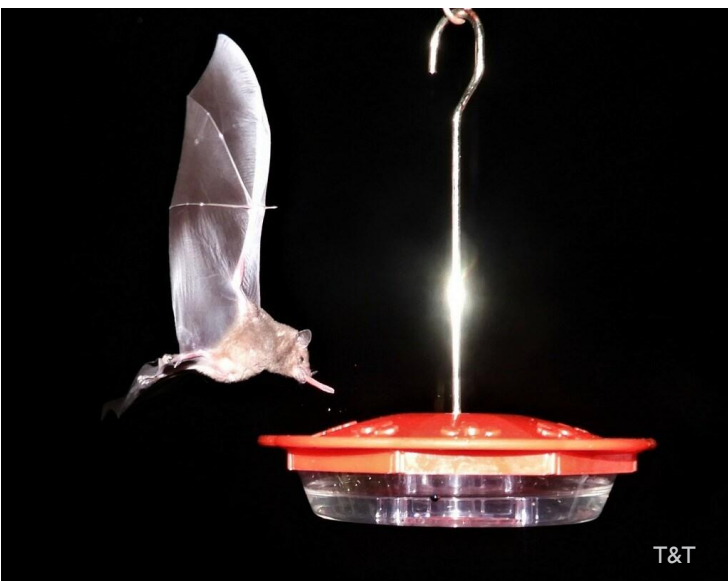
For the mammalian species, 17 species were identified from 55 observations from Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica combined; unfortunately no mammals were recorded in Barbados during the Bioblitz 2022 event. In Jamaica, the six mammalian species were mostly domestic animals including dog, cat, rabbit, goat with other species including a wild boar and a small Indian mongoose.

Unfortunately, no observations of the Jamaican endemics (bats and other mammals were uploaded to the iNaturalist platform, whereas in Trinidad and Tobago, 14 species of mammals were observed from 41 observations. Similar to Jamaica, these included some domestic species such as dog, cat and goat. However, other species included seven observations of the red-tailed squirrel, two observations of the red-rumped agouti, single observations of the southern possum (manicou) and the Robinson's mouse opossum and a zebu. The bats included the Jamaican fruit eating bat, evening bats, Palla's long-tongued bat and bats of the Genus *Carollia* and *Saccopteryx*. 



**Small Indian mongoose spotted in the distance in Jamaica.** *Photo by damionwhyte*





(Top L-R): A backyard observation of a red-tailed squirrel observed. *Photo by rgoordial*; and a Robinson's mouse opossum. *Photo by stephtran*

(Middle L-R): A red-rumped agouti. *Photo by figtree*; and a common opossum or manicou. *Photo by kristy\_sl*;  
 (Bottom L-R): Pallas's long-tongued bat. *Photo by toadmankelly*; and a colony of neo-tropical fruit bats. *Photo by figtree.*





# AQUATIC GROUP REPORT



Jumping Guabine  
(*Anablepsoides hartii*)

3mo



Minnows, Suckers, Car...  
(Order Cypriniformes)

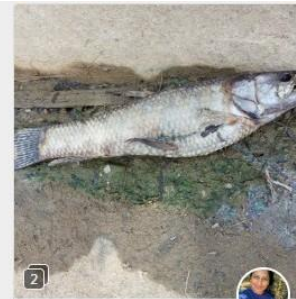
Casual

3mo



Minnows, Suckers, Car...  
(Order Cypriniformes)

3mo

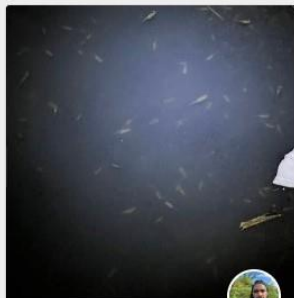


Common Wolf fish  
(*Hoplias malabaricus*)

Research Grade

2 ★1

3mo



Guppy  
(*Poecilia reticulata*)



Jaguar Guapote  
(*Parachromis managuensis*)

6



Jaguar Guapote  
(*Parachromis managuensis*)

5




Guppy  
(*Poecilia reticulata*)



## Overall fish species in backyards observed across the three islands. Compilation courtesy iNaturalist

Unlike the past two 'backyard' Bioblitzes held in Trinidad and Tobago, where some marine fish species were recorded, this year it seems that participants really stuck strictly to their 'backyards', as observations were limited to freshwater species. Overall, only six species of fish were recorded from 11 observations across Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago; there were no fish observations in Barbados.

In Trinidad and Tobago, there were observations of the guppy (*Poecilia reticulata*), marbled swamp eel/ zangee (*Synbranchus marmoratus*), common wolf fish (*Hoplias malabaricus*) and jumping guabine (*Anablepsoides hartii*), while in Jamaica the only species observed was that of a jaguar guapote (*Parachromis managuensis*). 

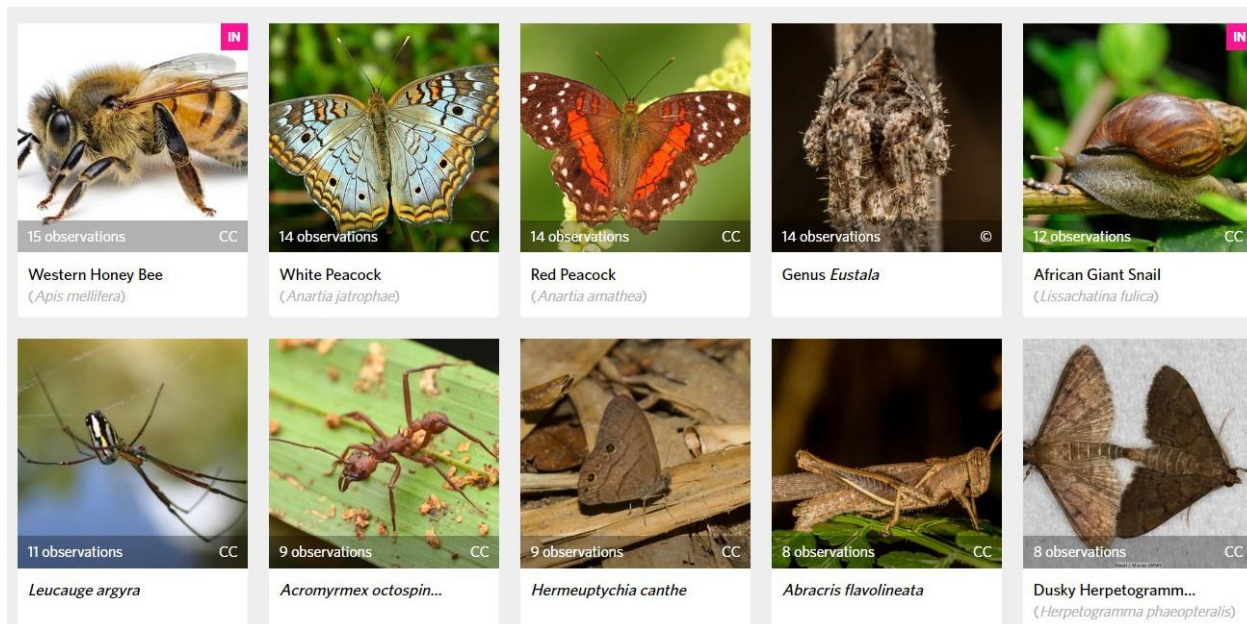


Top: A zangee or marbled swamp eel and bottom: Mollies. Photos by nicholasmohammed





# TERRESTRIAL INVERTEBRATES



**Overall Top 10 species of Invertebrates across the three islands of 443 species from 1356 observations.** *Compilation courtesy iNaturalist*


The invertebrate group was the second highest group total for this year's Bioblitz, with 443 species from 1356 observations, the top 10 of which are highlighted above. In keeping with the other groups, the top 10 were heavily skewed by the Trinidad and Tobago observations, as 81% of the invertebrate observations were from Trinidad and Tobago, 16% from Jamaica and 3% from Barbados. Of the total number of invertebrate species, 364 were classed as insects.

There were 380 species observed from 1,103 observations in Trinidad and Tobago, with the Top 10 including four Lepidoptera: red peacock, white peacock, the dusky hermpetogramma and *Hermeuptychia canthe*; two arachnids, Genus *Eustala* and *Leucauge argyra*; and two insects, the ant *Acromyrmex octospinosus* and the western honey bee (*Apis mellifera*). A grass hopper (*Abracris flavolineata*) and the giant African snail rounded out the top 10.

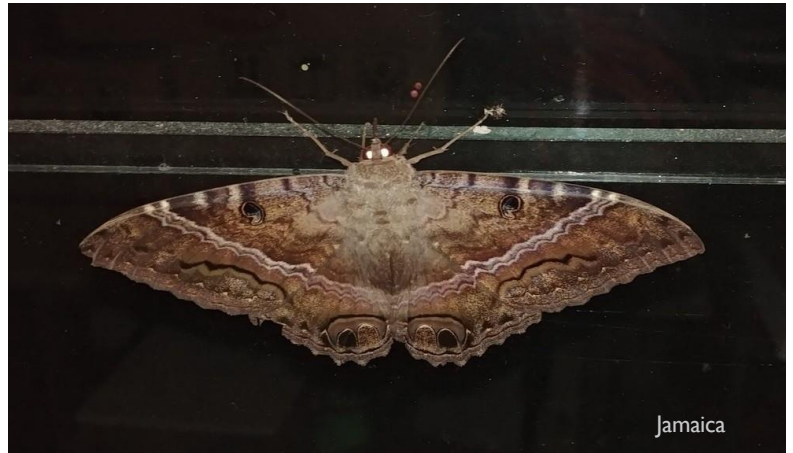
In Jamaica, 91 species were observed from 217 observations. The top 10 species observed were as follows: the western honey bee, white

peacock, Caribbean paper wasp, Cuban brown snail, *Thelidomus aspera*, spinybacked orbweaver, zebra longwing, *Leucauge argyra* (spider), Cuban crescent (butterfly) and Julia heliconian.

In Barbados, there were 23 species observed from 36 observations and these included four molluscs: *Orthalicus undatus*, *Pleurodonte isabella*, *Brachypodella costata* and the pancake slug (*Veronicella sloanii*). The arachnid spinybacked orbweaver, Leptidoptera such as the ornate bella moth and bagworm moths, and other insects, including the western honey bee, fireflies and spotless lady beetles.

Of the top 10 species found across the islands, the Western honey bee was observed throughout. *Leucauge argyra* (spider) and white peacock butterfly were common in both Jamaica and Trindad and Tobago while, based on the observations uploaded, the spinybacked orbweaver, was shared between the top 10 species for Jamaica and Barbados. 





(Clockwise from top left) observations of Lepidoptera and Odonata: white peacock. Photo by tarranmaharaj; black witch. Photo by wendyjamaica; *Phrygionis privignaria*. Photo by stephtran; Julia heliconian. Photo by kingsloane; flame-tailed pondhawk. Photo by eseebaran; Isabella's longwing. Photo by tarranmaharaj; and ruby-spotted swallowtail. Photo by brystrange.





T&T



T&T



Barbados



Barbados



T&T



T&T



Barbados



Barbados



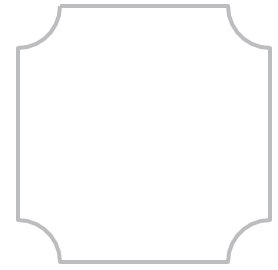
Barbados



T&T

**(Top L-R): Grass neoscona spider, *Leucauge argyra*.** Photos by brystrange; **phrynid tailless whip scorpions.** Photo by justinspringer;  
**(Second row from top, L-R): *Pleurodonte isabella*.** Photo by julianwalcott; **Dixon's striped firefly.** Photo by brystrange;  
**Subfamily Pentatominae.** Photo by amydeacontt;  
**(Third row from top, L-R): Ornate bella moth.** Photo by justinspringer; ***Orthalicus undatus*, pancake slug.** Photos by julian\_walcott; and **(bottom): Tribe Steirodontini (a katydid).** Photo naturaleya





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For more information about Bioblitz 2022 Trinidad and Tobago and previous Trinidad and Tobago Bioblitzes see the webpage:

<https://sta.uwi.edu/fst/lifesciences/bioblitz-events-trinidad-tobago>

For more photos and posts about the event see the Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/TandTBioblitz>

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**NOTICE FROM THE EDITORS:** *Do you have any natural history articles, anecdotes or trip reports that could be published in The Field Naturalist? We welcome contributions from members. Please email your ideas or finished pieces to [admin@ttfnc.org](mailto:admin@ttfnc.org). We look forward to hearing from you.*

### **Submission of articles and field trip reports:**

- 1. All articles must reach the editor by the eighth week of each quarter.**
- 2. Electronic copies can be submitted to the 'Editor' at: [admin@ttfnc.org](mailto:admin@ttfnc.org) or directly to the editor or any member of Management. Please include the code QB2023 in the email subject label.**