

# Getting a snapshot of urban wildlife

September 27 2016

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Credit: Victoria University

Victor Anton's PhD research investigates the impacts of predators on native biodiversity in urban areas.

To carry out his research, he has placed motion-activated cameras in Wellington locations to capture images of animals, and asked members of the public to then identify them online.

The project, in its second year, has so far collected over 160,000 photos.

"People have been really responsive, and most importantly the results appear reliable. When we compared experts with other volunteers and how accurately both groups were able to identify species from photos there wasn't any meaningful difference. Each image is checked by at least two different people, this helps correct for small mistakes, like clicking the wrong button.

"The benefits of [citizen science](#) with this type of research are not just the ability to categorise data faster, it's also about getting people involved—the more you involve them the more they care, and the more they learn about the species around them. People have been surprised to see rabbits in their garden, and other animals they didn't know were living around them."

Over the course of the year, motion-sensitive cameras were placed in approximately 50 green areas around Wellington, such as parks and reserves. Each area was recorded for one month per season to allow the researchers to understand how changing weather and seasons affected the biodiversity in these areas. An additional 20 cameras were placed in residential backyards and recorded year-round.

"We chose these based on criteria such as size, and connectedness to other green spaces—both of these factors are important for whether the space will support native birds, such as kākā, and they also influence the presence of pests," says Victor.

Victor's supervisor, Dr Heiko Wittmer, says: "This project is one of many examples of how research conducted at Victoria aims to improve [biodiversity conservation](#) in urban environments. Victor's results will be vital for local constituents and to help the Wellington City Council develop more effective management strategies to protect threatened

native wildlife."

**More information:** For more information see [identifyanimals.co.nz](https://www.identifyanimals.co.nz).

Provided by Victoria University

Citation: Getting a snapshot of urban wildlife (2016, September 27) retrieved 3 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-09-snapshot-urban-wildlife.html>

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