



Israel's Backyard Bird Count project: 19 years of changes and insights (2006-2024)

Nirit Lavie Alon, Shlomit Lipchitz, Tomer Gueta, Amos Belmaker, Yaela Golumbic

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Citizen Science (SC)

- The Israel Backyard Bird Count is a CS project that grew from the bottom up rather than from top down by scientists (Bonney et al., 2009)
- Research on the effectiveness of processes and operations in the management of CS projects is limited (Freitag, A., & Pfeffer, M. J. 2013)
- A constant tension exists between scientific goals and public/educational objectives





Citizen Science in Israel

- Israel is at the beginning of its journey in the field of CS as compared to other countries about 50 active biodiversity projects, most of them 1-8 years old
- The Israeli Center for Citizen Science a new organization that brings together projects and data, encourages CS and researches it, supports project leaders
- Founded in 2006, Israel's Backyard Bird Count is the oldest CS projects in the country











Israel's Backyard Bird Count (IBBC)

Report on bird species observed near the house and their quantity, every year in January, based on similar projects abroad

Goals:

Scientific- creating a multi-year database and characterizing trends in bird frequency

Public - increasing public involvement in nature conservation

Educational - increasing awareness and interest in birds, deepening familiarity and knowledge, and educating for active citizenship

Research question - What are the insights and conclusions for the future, from changes throughout the 19 years of operation of IBBC?









Changes Throughout IBBC



	2006-2015	2016-2021	2022-
Project Management	המרכז לטיפות ציפורי הבר בתר ובצפה yardbirds.org.il	The Society for the Protection of Mature in Israel Educate. Love. Protect.	אמרע אגוריי אמרע אגוריי yardbirds.org.il אמרע לוגרינן אנועינוגען אורע לעריע אגוריי במערג לעריע אגוריי Educate. Love. Protect
Data collection Protocol	Open and flexible protocol Duration varies from a week to a month	Strict protocol Duration is two weeks	Unchanged protocol & Duration . Guidelines for protocol accuracy, aimed at educators
Data Reporting	Manual report sent by post, email and fax	GIS form From 2019 also on eBird From 2020 only on eBird	Only ovia eBird Providing more instructions and manuals
Data Analysis	Analysis of all data received - Simple frequency analysis (Excel)	Data filtered according the protocol - Simple frequency analysis (Excel) In 2019 - A complex statistical analysis of all observations from 2006 for a research	Unchanged Adding analysis in R and Open Refine



Changes Throughout IBBC - Public Exposure

Many efforts over the years to expose IBBC to a wide diverse audience, through various means:

- Project website upgrad refining messages, instructions and resources
- A new guide for bird identification, emphasizing the distinction between similar species
- Dedicated workshops for the general public and educators
- Conference presentations, media coverage, and social media advertising*
- Short training videos

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• Many publications are also available in Arabic



המרכז הישראלי למדע אזרחי

23 צפיות • לפני 4 חודשים

247 צפיות י לפני 4 חודשים



Social Media Exposure

- Rich content posts (24-28)
- Training videos, illustrations, invitation to events, feedback form, annual summary reports...
- Photos, questions and answers
- Increas cooperation amateur birders examining the protocol



Number of participants in social networks



illustration: What is it? Rose-ringed parakeet or Monk parakeet

Quizzes: Adjust image to silhouette ; Who am I?

Results - Public Participation

Number of reports over the years according to various factors



Bird Frequency Results



An increasing trend in the frequency of invasive species

A significant decrease in variety of native species in urban environment







Colléony & Shwartz, 2020

Bird Frequency Results

An increasing trend in the frequency of invasive species: Common myna, Rose-ringed parakeet, Monk Parakeet

All results - raw data, annual summary reports, research article - are available on website







Discussion

- Changes in the **public participation** over the years due to use of eBird, Covid 19, rainy days
- Difficulty in identifying birds emphasis on distinguishing between similar species
- Hard to measure **Cost/Benefit** of the different efforts to increase the number and quality of reports
- Effect of **eBird** on number of reports debating whether to return to a simple web form
- Examining whether the protocol is optimal or needs to be modified (another study)
- All the above related to the decision is the project should be **scientific or public-educational** oriented?







What Do We Recommend After 19 Years of Experience?

- **Be prepared for changes** every long-term project is expected to be dynamic as a result of cultural and technological changes
- **Detailed scientific planning** The protocol and data analysis must be planned in advance as precisely as possible, based on the research questions formulated in consultation with the researchers. If possible, avoid making changes to the protocol
- **Decision-making processes** should be based on meetings of the leading team with scientists, marketers, etc. before and after the count. The decision-making process should be documented and used as a basis for future decisions
- Evaluation of Cost/Benefit documentation of all the efforts taken in order to optimize the results





Thanks for listening

niritalon@tauex.tau.ac.il





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