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Catch the King, a Hampton Roads citizen-science project for mapping high tides, is now officially a Guinness world record holder.

London-based [Guinness World Records Ltd.](#) announced this week that Catch the King's debut event has earned a place in its book of accomplishments under the category of "[most contributions to an environmental survey.](#)" More than 700 [Catch the King volunteers](#) surveying a high tide on the morning of Nov. 5, 2017, collected a record-setting 59,718 measurements, according to the Guinness citation.

All that data-gathering helped improve a tidal flooding forecasting model developed at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. Catch the King also inspired a [new flood mapping program launched last year by WHRO](#) Public Media in more than 120 science classrooms across Hampton Roads. And Catch the King is becoming a [springboard for citizen-science projects](#) and art-science collaborations throughout the region.

Catch the King's third-annual public mapping event is scheduled for high tide on the morning of Sunday Oct. 27, 2019. Organizers aim to have more than 1,000 citizen-scientists participating by 2020, some as part of new year-round mapping teams now being established.

As sea level rise and tidal flooding increasingly threaten coastal Virginia, Catch the King offers residents a chance to crowdsource vital information about the tides' reach.

Catch the King was launched by The Virginian-Pilot, the Daily Press, WHRO Public Media and WVEC-TV in conjunction with the nonprofit group [Wetlands Watch](#) and the Norfolk-based technology company Conursive Corp., whose "[Sea Level Rise](#)" app is used to measure tides. The project's volunteer coordinator is Qaren Jacklich. Its chief science liaison is [Derek Loftis](#), an assistant research scientist at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. Catch the King's crown sponsor is the Hampton Roads Sanitation District.

Loftis and Jacklich are cited in the Guinness citation along with Conursive's CEO, David Richards; Skip Stiles, the executive director of Wetlands Watch, and Dave Mayfield, a former Virginian-Pilot environmental reporter who conceived Catch the King and now serves as its lead volunteer.

More information on Catch the King, including volunteer opportunities, is available at whro.org/kingtide or by searching Facebook for "[Catch the King.](#)"



Comments on the Guinness record from some people who serve with Catch the King

“Being involved in such an innovative and constructive project has been an incredible experience. Attendance at our app training sessions in 2017 was so high. In some cases, we had 30 to 40 people outside learning the app at once. This alone was evidence that the issue of flooding in our region is on the minds of the masses. It’s critical for anyone near the water to start taking notes. I’ve had the pleasure of meeting hundreds of citizens who want to make a difference. I believe that many of our mappers will be longtime tide watchers.”

--Qaren Jacklich, volunteer coordinator, Catch the King

“The overwhelming response from volunteers in Catch the King’s inaugural year has provided a wealth of validation data for verifying and enhancing the predictive capacity of VIMS/William & Mary’s flood forecast models for years to come. The knowledge we gain from Catch the King each year compounds in value when combined with each prior year’s survey and our model’s short- and long-term forecasts to provide one of the most comprehensive recurrent flooding data sets on the planet.”

--Derek Loftis, assistant research scientist, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, and chief science liaison for Catch the King

“I’d never imagined that this project would grow into something that could claim a world record, and I’m honored that so many folks have wanted to be part of it. I think it shows that a lot of people in coastal Virginia don’t want to just sit on the sidelines when it comes to flooding and sea level rise – they want to be part of any solutions. And they know that the solutions begin with learning and documenting as much as you can about the problem.”

--Dave Mayfield, Catch the King founder

“The Guinness recognition is really a story of teamwork. From Skip Stiles and me first outlining the app on a coffee shop napkin, to individuals like Derek Loftis and Dave Mayfield quickly joining in, and then on-boarding research organizations like the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and many others. This shows what a connected community can accomplish.”

--David Richards, CEO of Concurtive Corp., developer of the app used in Catch the King

“In 2014, Wetlands Watch came up with the ‘Sea Level Rise’ smartphone mapping app to crowdsource flooding information. We had no idea that five years later, through partnerships with energetic people and organizations, we’d be in the Guinness record book. This is a marvelous example of how people can come together to deal with the problems we face along the coast.”

--Skip Stiles, executive director, Wetlands Watch