

outdoor Citizen Scientist Learning

Choose where to begin your science journey!

Bio Blitz - for new scientists

A 'BioBlitz' is a concerted effort to discover and record as many living things as possible within a set location over a limited time period (usually 24 to 36 hours). The main scientific aim of a BioBlitz is to generate or extend biodiversity data at the chosen location. BioBlitzes cannot be complete biological surveys but they do create significant species lists and have facilitated the discovery of new species, the rediscovery of rare species and the identification of species where they are not usually found.

Through recording the names and locations of species, a BioBlitz can generate biological species' records that can be used to help scientific research as well as to inform conservation practice and policy, local planning and land management on a variety of scales.

Resources and Preparation:

- Prepare login account for iNaturalist.
- Digital cameras / tablets for taking photo observations.
- Clipboards, pencils.
- Rope to mark out the Blitz area for your student groups (1mx1m).
- Mark out the Blitz areas and consider how you will group your students.
- Optional tools to help eg. magnifying glasses.
- Consider inviting a local naturalist as a special expert guest for the activity.

Year
4 & 5

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Main activity:

- Head outside and model the activity at one assigned BioBlitz location.
- Break into smaller groups, each assigned a BioBlitz location (marked out using rope in a 1mx1m area – consider different locations around the school, could use skipping ropes to mark out).
- Students to take photos of their observations.
- At the end of the time, return for a class discussion.

Discussion questions:

- What sorts of plants and animals did you find?
- What did you notice about your BioBlitz site?
- What could impact on the species that were living in the area?
- How many species did they estimate to have found?
- What could we do next with this data?
- Would repeating this BioBlitz at a different time be useful? What might we discover?

Where to next?

Educator activities

- Save all observation photos into a folder saved as the date of the Blitz.
- Log into iNaturalist and upload the photos as a batch export to save time.
- Check back in to view data results.
- Discuss the findings with the class (number of different species).

Student activities

- Use the photos to do some more detailed sketches of the species, frame them as a display in the classroom.
- Write a newsletter article about the experience.
- Repeat the BioBlitz in a different season to compare observations.
- Use the data to make graph of the number of observations made.
- Use the data to make graphs and data presentations of the number of observations made.
- Head outside and make bug hotels and new habitat for species.
- Use the plant species identified to discuss planning for a new garden at the school.

Curriculum links:

- Living things depend on each other and the environment to survive (ACSSU073)
- Living things have structural features and adaptations that help them to survive in their environment (ACSSU043)
- Science involves making predictions and describing patterns and relationships (ACSHE061)
- Scientific knowledge is used to solve problems and inform personal and community decisions (ACSHE083)
- With guidance, pose clarifying questions and make predictions about scientific investigations (AC SIS231)
- Consider the elements of fair tests and use formal measurements and digital technologies as appropriate, to make and record observations accurately (AC SIS066)
- Communicate ideas, explanations and processes using scientific representations in a variety of ways, including multi-modal texts (AC SIS093)

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