

2016 Sandy Hook BioBlitz
Sandy Hook Unit
Gateway National Recreation
Highland, NJ 07732
September 23-34, 2016

Thank you for registering to participate in the 2016 Sandy Hook BioBlitz. The National Park Service (NPS) is celebrating its 100th birthday with more than 100 BioBlitzes around the country. This year's BioBlitz is hosted by the American Littoral Society and the National Park Service.

A BioBlitz is a celebration and exploration of biodiversity. It is a biological inventory where volunteers work alongside scientists and expert naturalists to find and identify as many species as possible over a short time period. It is an opportunity to increase awareness of the diversity of organisms that exist within our urban landscape, to learn about what lives and grows in the natural areas that surround our neighborhoods and communities; to become more connected to our surroundings; to increase our understanding of biodiversity; to become empowered to protect the places and spaces where nature exists; and – most importantly – to have fun!!

National Park Service – Gateway National Recreation Area:

The “Base Camp” for the BioBlitz surveys and events within Gateway National Recreation Area will be located in the Fort Hancock Parade Grounds behind the American Littoral Society Headquarters, 18 Hartshorne Drive, Highlands, NJ 07732. All volunteers for BioBlitz surveys must check in at Base Camp.

Overview of how it will work:

Upon check-in at the Base Camp, you will join a survey group and be provided information about where and what you will survey. You will meet with the expert leading your group and then head out with your group to inventory as many species as you can. After completing the field survey, each group will return to Base Camp to report their findings.

All volunteers will be given a BioBlitz t-shirt when you check-in at Base Camp. We encourage you to wear the t-shirt during surveys so that you are easily identified as part of this event

Before each survey, group leaders and volunteers will gather in the “Rallying” area at Base Camp to: 1) go over data collection; 2) make sure Base Camp has record of where you plan to sample, a list of who is in your group and cell phone contact for your group (important safety measures); and 3) review any other logistics/questions/concerns.

At the end of each survey, it is important that each group return to Base Camp so that we can: 1) record that everyone returned safely; 2) collect all data sheets (or record that

all data was entered in field via iNaturalist); and 3) document if any specimens were collected for identification.

Data Recording Procedures:

This year iNaturalist is one tool that we are using to record observations (see below for link to more information). But don't worry – species observations can also be recorded the old fashioned way – pencil and data sheet. You don't need to have a smart phone or be tech savvy to participate in the BioBlitz.

Species should be identified to genus and species if known. Common names should also be specified if available. If using iNaturalist, the location will be stored automatically. If you record data on a data sheet, please record an approximate location (according to the map provided at the Base Camp) for each individual species that you record.

During the BioBlitz we will try to find and identify as many species as possible within 24-hours. If the group of organisms that you are working with cannot be identified during the BioBlitz, then please try to identify as best as possible in iNaturalist or with notes on the data sheet. This will allow us to get an approximate total number of species for your group at the end of the BioBlitz.

Only group leaders (scientists and expert naturalist) are authorized to collect specimens for identification. Any organism that does not need to be “collected” for identification purposes should be observed and noted in iNaturalist or on a data sheet. *All scientists and volunteers should emphasize non-destructive sampling techniques, and minimize habitat damage associated with their particular sampling methods. Vouchering of specimens is not required at the BioBlitz. Volunteers and scientists cannot remove specimens from the park without prior approval from the NPS data manager at the BioBlitz.*

Any data collected must be provided to us **before the end of the BioBlitz**. Please be sure to submit your completed data sheets at the Base Camp. **Please be sure to write neatly on the tally sheets!** iNaturalist will automatically store observations and make them available to the park.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

In the event of an emergency, call 911. If you have questions or problems during the BioBlitz, please contact Patti Rafferty at 631-605-5680 or Jolene Willis at 347-844-3412. Sandy Hook Law Enforcement may be reached at 732-872-5900.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Restroom facilities will be available near the Base Camp throughout the event. At other locations a combination of portable facilities and/or daytime access to indoor facilities is available. Maps will be available at the Base Camp with location of restroom facilities throughout the park.

- Water will be available throughout the event at Base Camp - please bring a reusable water bottle.
- Food will be provided for registered volunteers participating in surveys on Friday evening (dinner) and Saturday morning (breakfast and lunch).

THINGS TO WEAR/BRING:

- Closed toe sturdy shoes. Depending on where you are going, waterproof boots or sneakers that you don't mind getting wet may be needed/ recommended.
- Rain gear (let's hope we don't need it).
- Insect repellent.
- Sun block, sunglasses, hat and other individual needs you may have.
- A long sleeve shirt and long pants can help to protect you from sun and insects.
- Flashlight – if working at night.
- Refillable water bottle.

HELPFUL LINKS:

- **BioBlitz Page:** <http://www.inaturalist.org/projects/2016-national-parks-bioblitz-gateway-sandy-hook-bioblitz>
- **Getting Started with iNaturalist:** <http://www.inaturalist.org/pages/getting+started>

In addition to the biological surveys, the National Park Service and American Littoral Society will be hosting nature walks, seining and a star party during the BioBlitz.

The BioBlitz is not possible without you. Thank you. Have fun!!

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact: Stevie Thorsen (Stevie@littoralsociety.org) or Patti Rafferty (patricia_rafferty@nps.gov).