

Running a BioBlitz

Hints and tips for planning and hosting a BioBlitz in the UK



Written by OPAL, the Natural History Museum and the Marine Biological Association

About this booklet

This booklet contains ideas for developing a BioBlitz in the UK. It is written as though for a partnership running large-scale events. But a BioBlitz doesn't have to be big to be successful. One that brings together a handful of people to explore the wildlife in a small area can be just as rewarding. If you would like to hold a smaller event, just select the ideas that are relevant to you.

One of the beauties of the BioBlitz concept is that it is very flexible – you can tailor the day, rather than having to conform to a particular format. You should use this booklet as a source of ideas that you can add to and adapt.

In autumn 2010, this booklet will be updated to include case studies. We are looking for content suggestions and would particularly like to hear about what has worked well – and what hasn't.

If you have any questions or would like to submit ideas for the next booklet, please get in touch.

John Tweddle: j.tweddle@nhm.ac.uk or 0207 942 5120

Lucy Carter: lucy.carter@nhm.ac.uk or 0207 942 5188

Jack Sewell: jase@mba.ac.uk or 01752 633 336

Use of this guide

This guide is an output of the OPAL project, a Big Lottery Fund grant holder, www.opalexplornature.org.

It has been designed to support the running of BioBlitzes and related wildlife events and can be freely distributed in its original form for non-commercial purposes. Please feel free to forward it to anyone you think will be interested. All content is copyright OPAL, the Natural History Museum and the Marine Biological Association. No images or sections of text can be extracted and used elsewhere without first obtaining permission.

File last updated 06/04/2010

Contents

Part 1: BioBlitz basics

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. What is a BioBlitz? | 1 |
| 2. Getting started | 2 |
| 3. Planning checklist | 3 |

Part 2: Further information on selected topics

- | | |
|--|----|
| 4. Choosing a site, date and duration | 5 |
| 5. Basecamp – the focus for activities | 7 |
| 6. Recruiting volunteers and specialists | 9 |
| 7. Recording your survey results | 11 |
| 8. Health, safety and related documents | 13 |
| 9. Publicity | 15 |
| 10. Ideas for activities | |
| Daytime: ideas for public activities | 16 |
| Daytime: ideas for scientific surveys | 18 |
| After dark: ideas for scientific surveys | 19 |
| 11. After the event | 21 |
| 12. Resources and links | 22 |



1 What is a BioBlitz?

A BioBlitz is a collaborative race to discover as many types of wildlife as possible, within a set location, over a defined time period.

A BioBlitz comprises a group of scientists, students, naturalists and other members of the public teaming up and working against the clock to spot and record as many kinds of plants, animals and fungi as possible within a particular locality. This mixture of wildlife experts and the wider public is key to the BioBlitz concept.

It is an informal and fun way to create a snapshot of the variety of life that can be found in an area. It provides the opportunity for participants to learn together and share their expertise and enthusiasm for nature. This is a great way of breaking down barriers to engagement with science and raising awareness of the role of biological recording. It also gives the public an opportunity to contribute to a genuine scientific survey.

A BioBlitz can be carried out anywhere there is wildlife, including urban and rural areas, inland or coastal locations, and upland and lowland settings. It is a very flexible concept – it's up to you how many people to invite, how big an area to explore and what activities to include.

First developed by Sam Droege in the USA in 1996, BioBlitzes are now held regularly in many countries and have been taking place in the UK since 2006.



2 Getting started

Will a BioBlitz meet your goals?

This is the first question that should be asked. From an organiser's perspective, the BioBlitz concept is very flexible and can be designed to fit your budget, aims and interests. If planned carefully, it can be an effective way to spread your message to a wide audience, launch a product or partnership, recruit new members or simply showcase and explore the diversity of life in a particular area. BioBlitz events are also a lot of fun. They work best if they have a defined, active outcome – a positive reason for people to get involved.

If your aim is to compile a full site inventory, then a BioBlitz probably won't be the most efficient way to do so, though it could kick-start the process and attract expertise.

What resources do you have?

Whatever the scale, a BioBlitz will require resourcing. Staff and volunteers will be needed to plan, publicise and run the event, and you will require funding to cover running costs. How much of each is needed will depend on the scale of event you are aiming for and the materials you already have. Most existing wildlife-related outreach materials can be fitted into a BioBlitz. You may want to consider seeking sponsorship.

Investigate a partnership approach

A BioBlitz lends itself to partnership working. Teaming up with other organisations is an excellent way to share ideas and expertise, spread the resourcing and maximise publicity. Local Records Centres, Wildlife Trusts, natural history societies, community groups, councils and universities are all good starting points.



3 Planning checklist

Once you've decided a BioBlitz is for you, aim to plan as far in advance as possible. The main tasks are listed below, with more detailed hints and tips for selected topics on the following pages.

Things to do as soon as possible:

- meet with groups and organisations that may be interested in contributing, to scope ideas and support
- confirm your budget and seek any additional funding or sponsorship
- choose a site and secure access permission (p5)
- set the date and duration (p6)
- set the event theme and start to plan its structure and content

In the six months leading up to the event:

- invite naturalists and volunteers (p9)
- finalise the event structure, including the design and development of Basecamp (p7)
- plan and develop all component BioBlitz activities (p16)
- invite participants – circulate publicity material and press release and contact local community groups (p15)
- arrange site facilities – parking, catering, toilets (p5)
- book any equipment you need to hire – marquee, generator, tables and chairs, tea urn etc
- write web pages and set up blogs and other online media
- design and order any signs, banners etc
- prepare recording sheets and a records database (p11)
- write risk assessments and other policy documents (p13)
- arrange any necessary licences (for example, for vending)
- arrange first aid cover (p14)

- arrange on-site security and marshalling (if required)
- obtain collecting permission from the landowner where relevant, and for protected sites also contact the relevant statutory body
- finalise the event timetable
- prepare and circulate an information pack for staff and volunteers (p10)
- design and print programmes for public attendees

The week before:

- inform the local police/coastguard about your event
- re-confirm bookings for anything you are hiring
- check everything you need is prepared
- update staff and volunteers on their roles at the event (print a rota showing who is doing what, when)
- carry out a final publicity push (p15)

On the event day/day before:

- co-ordinate delivery and set-up of any hired equipment
- set up your site, including Basecamp and activities
- walk the venue to check for any new risks – or exciting wildlife
- brief staff and volunteers
- talk to the media and update websites/social media
- BioBlitz

After the event:

- clean up the site before leaving
- thank the landowner and everyone who helped
- collate the findings and write an event report (p21)
- carry out any other follow-up activities (p21)
- relax and recover

4 Choosing a site, date and duration

Choosing a site

This will influence the overall feel of the event along with what is found, so choose carefully. Public parks, local nature reserves and privately owned estates that are publicly accessible are all popular locations. Remember you will need to gain access permission for your chosen venue and, if you are planning a 24-hour event, will probably be on site overnight.

The site should:

- be safe, particularly after dark
- be easily accessible to your chosen audience, with good public transport links and ample parking
- be able to cope with your expected audience size without any negative impact on biodiversity
- contain the desired habitats and species groups
- contain appropriate facilities, including toilets and catering (an added cost if you need to arrange these separately)
- contain somewhere to site your Basecamp (p7)
- be geographically close to the organising team, making site visits and event set-up easier



Date, duration and timing

- Are there constraints on when your BioBlitz can be scheduled? Are there other events you would like to avoid competing against or to tie in with (for example, another BioBlitz to race)?
- You can find wildlife at all times of year, but some months are better than others. Late spring and early summer are good for spotting a wide range of species, with day length and temperatures more favourable for outdoor activities.
- So far, UK BioBlitzes have been held between May and September, with late May and June being most popular.
- If you are hoping to invite school groups, they may need the event to be held on a weekday during term time.
- For families, scouts, guides and local community groups, weekends and holiday periods are better.
- Many events run Friday to Saturday, with a focus on schools on the Friday and a broader family audience on the Saturday.
- BioBlitzes traditionally run for 24 hours, but this is not a hard and fast rule – an intensive afternoon survey may meet your goals just as effectively.
- Similarly, there is no fixed rule for the start time. For a public launch, start late morning to give people time to get there.
- It may be worth inviting experts to start recording earlier in the morning, or late the previous evening, so you have something to show when the public arrive.
- For coastal events, try to coincide with a particularly low tide, and schedule activities to fit in with tide times.



5 Basecamp – the focus for activities

Key to a successful BioBlitz is a busy, well organised and accessible Basecamp that can serve as the focus for the event. This is somewhere for scientists to congregate and report their results, and for participants and press to see what has been found so far. It can also provide a useful starting point for activities.

Depending on your site, you may want to set up multiple bases around your study area, but a single base can often be more dynamic and sociable.

Plan with the landowner and if possible choose a location that can be used for the full duration of your event. Check whether there are any existing buildings on site you can use, ideally with electricity, heating and lighting. If not, then work out how big a Basecamp you require – do you need to hire a marquee or will a few gazebos or tents suffice? Plan for bad weather.

Think about what you need to power, including lighting, heating, kettles, laptops and the internet. If you need to hire a generator (the quieter the better), shop around for the best deal.

Tips on location

- safe, secure and easy to navigate around
- centrally located within your activity area, if possible
- easy to find and accessible to the public
- close to parking and/or public transport links
- close to catering and toilets (accessible 24 hours)



Ideas for what to include in and around Basecamp

- Information point – to find out what is happening, pick up maps and recording forms and sign up for activities.
- Identification area – for naturalists to confirm their identifications and help members of the public identify anything they have found. Set up a table with field guides, microscopes and perhaps a camera, laptop and internet access.
- Results area – possibly combined with the identification area. Include table(s) and laptop(s) for data entry and a flat screen or display board to publicise the latest results. Try to show examples of recent finds. If you want to update blogs and websites, you will need to organise internet access.
- Rest and refreshment area – somewhere to sit and renew energy between surveys, particularly overnight. Fold-up chairs and trestle tables are always useful.
- Sleeping area – for anyone staying overnight.
- Secure area – for staff and volunteers to leave personal possessions and store field equipment when it's not in use.

Other useful content

- maps of the survey area, showing survey grid and the locations of facilities and activities
- first aid and fire extinguisher points – clearly signed
- copy of the information folder and all relevant forms (p13)
- tannoy system to announce activities/results
- box of useful bits – antiseptic hand-gel, bin bags, tape, string etc
- kettle, tea, coffee and snacks



6 Recruiting volunteers and specialists

Recruiting the right mix of wildlife specialists, staff and volunteers to co-ordinate public activities is vital. While there are no set rules on how many scientists and naturalists should take part, the more the merrier. Try to recruit a diverse breadth of expertise. Most naturalists will be happy to bring their own equipment – just remember to ask them.

Find out in advance which roles volunteers and specialists are most comfortable with. Some will just want to get on with recording, others will also be happy to run a public-facing activity.

Where to recruit scientific experts and volunteers

Spread the word through your contact network. Local biodiversity-related websites and email newsgroups can be particularly effective in reaching naturalists. Here are some more ideas (websites on p23):

- Wildlife Trusts and Local Records Centres
- natural history societies and recording schemes
- local community/friends groups with an interest in the site
- town councils
- local museums
- universities (contact the student union about volunteers)
- BTCV (environmental conservation volunteering)
- vinspired (youth volunteering, active until March 2011)
- Volunteering England (for advice on recruiting and managing volunteers)



Ideas for rewarding experts and volunteers

If your event sounds fun and produces useful data, most naturalists and general volunteers who have the time will take part for free. It helps if elements of your event contribute to their wider goals (for example, by promoting their interest or organisation).

In return for their input, you could:

- offer to cover the costs of travel, subsistence and consumables
- allow volunteers to promote membership of their group at the event – add their logos to publicity material and invite them to run a stall or activity
- provide free food and drink throughout the event
- incorporate a social activity, such as a barbeque
- give free access to all non-sensitive wildlife records

Information pack for staff, experts and volunteers

In the run up to the event, send out an information pack to everyone who has signed up to help. It should include:

- background to the event and what you hope to achieve
- details of the event – where, when, parking, facilities
- details of safety procedures
- survey information – map, collecting policy, recording form
- timetable
- claim form for travel expenses
- your contact details for any questions



7 Recording your survey results

A list of what was found is the most obvious output of a BioBlitz. A simple system to capture and collate this information will not only make life easier on the day, but will also help ensure your species records are as useful to others as possible. If you are new to recording, then contact your local records centre for guidance and advice or download the National Biodiversity Network's *Darwin Guide to Recording Wildlife* (p22).

Giving the public a chance to take part is arguably the most important aspect of a BioBlitz, but it means that data quality can be variable. Identifications made by expert naturalists will be self-verified, reliable and will form the bulk of your species list. The quality of publicly generated identifications will be less certain. This doesn't matter so long as you add a care note to such records or, better still, get an expert to check them. Asking participants to photograph what they find can help you verify their identifications.

Tips for designing a recording form

You'll probably want to produce a standard recording form for everyone to use on the day. Keep the design simple and include:

- what was found (scientific name, common name)
- where (grid reference, GPS point, area on map)
- when (date, time, night or day survey)
- by whom

You may also want to add:

- whether the observation was verified (if so, by whom)
- how it was found (eg survey technique)
- any other comments (eg abundance of species, size, whether any photos were taken)



Other advice

- Explain how you intend to use the wildlife data, so anyone taking part knows where it will end up. Members of the public will be interested in seeing their data incorporated and learning about how it will help.
- As far as possible, try to type up your species records on the day. Include at least one laptop at Basecamp.
- Encourage naturalists to hand in recording forms throughout the day, not all at the end.
- You do not need a complex records database to hold your observations – an easy-to-use spreadsheet and trained people to enter the information will suffice.

If you do want to use a more sophisticated system, then try not to reinvent the wheel. There are a number of well-designed recording databases out there, which are compatible with existing web resources. Your Local Records Centre or the National Biodiversity Network can advise.

- Experienced recorders will often have an existing standardised recording system they would like to use. A scanner can be useful to copy information contained in, for example, their field notebooks.
- If you cannot identify an organism to species level, don't worry. Just record it at whatever accuracy you are confident of.
- Some organisms will need to be dissected to be identified. Think about whether you want this to happen, but don't shy away from explaining the need for it, or for collecting voucher specimens.

Check that collection is permitted at your site and be aware that a permit may be required at some locations. Landowners and your local statutory agency should be aware. For advice on collecting plant material see <http://www.bsbi.org.uk/Collecting.pdf>.



8 Health, safety and related documents

As event organiser, you have a statutory duty of care – the safety of staff and participants should always come first. The following policies, documents and checks will help ensure you are well prepared, legally covered and know what to do if something goes wrong. Example templates for the various forms can be downloaded from www.opalexplorenature.org.

Health and safety

- Assign a named person to be responsible for health and safety at your event, and provide t-shirts or badges to staff and volunteers, so it is clear who is involved in running it.
- Write a risk assessment (p22). This is a legally required health and safety assessment of your event, including all activities.

It involves identifying potential hazards, assessing how they could harm staff, volunteers or participants, and evaluating the risk of them actually happening. You are legally required to do everything ‘reasonably practicable’ to protect people from harm. As such, the final steps in the process are to define and implement precautionary measures that either entirely remove these hazards or reduce the likelihood of them happening to acceptable levels.

Ensure that other organisations taking part prepare a risk assessment to cover the activities they are leading. Collate these prior to the event.

- Write a simple-to-follow accident and incident procedure (emergency plan) to ensure staff and volunteers know what to do in an emergency, including how to evacuate the site.
- Make an accident and incident form, so you can log any accidents/incidents that occur and how they were responded to.



- Do all you can to protect children and vulnerable adults. A written child protection policy is a good idea, and key staff should be Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked (p22). Clearly state at the event that children must be accompanied by a parent/guardian at all times, and avoid one-to-one situations between children and adults.
- A simple-to-follow lost child procedure will ensure staff and volunteers know what to do if a child is lost or found.
- Whatever the size of your event, you will need to arrange first aid cover. There are no fixed guidelines as to what is required – it is related to the level of injury risk. As a minimum, you will need one or more trained first aiders and a first aid kit at Basecamp. Contact your local Red Cross or St John Ambulance branch for advice (p22).

Other documentation

- A Public Liability Insurance Certificate is required for all public activities.
- If you intend to take publicity photos, you will need signed photo consent forms from anyone pictured, agreeing to their image being used in this way. Download the OPAL Media Toolkit for more information www.opalexplornature.org.
- Compile an emergency contacts list, including phone numbers for staff and volunteers in key roles.

Keep copies of the above, along with any other useful information such as a timetable, maps and staff/media briefing notes, within a folder at each event information point.



9 Publicity

Spend some time planning how to promote your BioBlitz as effectively as possible. The aims and scale of the event will influence how widely you want to spread the word.

General promotion

- invite groups and contacts you think will be interested, and ask everyone in your partnership to do the same
- you may want to invite a celebrity as an added hook
- advertise locally in the weeks leading up to your BioBlitz (using fliers in libraries, banners at the venue, newsletters etc)
- contact relevant email newsgroups, online biodiversity-related communities, blogs and Twitter streams

Working with the media (newspaper, television and radio)

- Getting information about your event into the media can be a valuable and cost-effective way to gain publicity.
- Decide on your story before contacting anyone. Remember to make your message as 'newsworthy' as possible – journalists receive a lot of requests, so yours needs to stand out.
- A good story will have human interest and be of local relevance (for example, local communities getting involved in a positive activity). Events that are novel, extreme, large-scale or in interesting locations also stand out.
- The OPAL Media Toolkit contains detailed advice about working with the media, writing a press release, photography and filming. It has been prepared for OPAL, but most content is transferable. You can download it for free from www.opalexplornature.org.



10 Ideas for activities

Daytime: ideas for public activities

As part of the planning process, it is worth thinking about how much public involvement you would like, in what way and for how long. Will your event work on a casual, drop-in basis, or do you want to offer a range of timetabled activities that can be pre-booked?

Always put safety first and ensure that each activity is covered within your risk assessment. Be particularly careful around water.

Tips

- With the exception of early evening guided walks, you will probably want to limit public activities to daylight hours.
- Try to timetable activities so they don't overlap.
- Provide clear information about what's on and how to join in.
- If you are inviting school groups, activities will need to be tailored to fit their available time and desired learning goals.
- If your target is the general public, then offer a range of activity types and durations. Include family friendly activities, and don't underestimate the value of icebreakers, such as face painting and drawing, as a way to capture attention.
- Think about how to encourage people to take part in recording activities. Goody bags for children who complete one or more activities are always popular. For adults, the knowledge that their records will be used and valued is often enough.
- Competitions, such as wildlife photography/drawing and guess the number of species that will be found, can be really popular.
- Running structured activities with the public is very rewarding but can also be tiring, so try to rotate duties among volunteers.



Ideas for self-guided activities

- Recording forms and maps (for knowledgeable participants).
- Printed identification sheets of target species to look for (for example, the top five to find or a hunt for alien invaders).

You may already have materials within your partnership. If not, make the most of resources designed for existing public-facing surveys, which will also help others (p23).

- Nature trail around the site and associated 'Spotter Sheets'.
- Send participants on 'missions' to find different species artefacts that can be identified by an expert back at Basecamp, for example, shells, feathers, leaves, nuts.
- Strandline survey. Collect interesting finds for identification.
- Ask participants to photograph what they find and bring their images to Basecamp, where they can be added to the database or identified on the spot. Remember to get a signed photo consent form if you want to re-use any images.

Ideas for activities involving staff or volunteers

- Guided walks.
- Timetabled updates and informal talks at Basecamp.
- Microscopes always draw a lot of interest, especially if linked to a laptop or flat screen monitor. The monitor can help you explain what is being looked at, and several people can interact at once. Try analysing a sample of soil, sand or pond water.
- Themed activity/discovery zones (for example, pond life or leaf-litter explorers). You could offer goody bags, stickers or badges to children who visit each zone.
- Wildlife-related stands and stalls, face painting and crafts.
- Beach clean or litter pick (remember health and safety).



Daytime: ideas for scientific surveys

Records from surveys carried out by experts from natural history groups and science institutions will likely form the bulk of your species inventory. Each record will be verified and accurate, and time spent attracting such expertise is well spent. If you are after an impressive tally of species, recruit experts for species-rich groups, such as flowering plants, invertebrates and fungi.

Tips

- Invite as many naturalists as possible from local societies and recording schemes. This is a great way to share expertise and enthusiasm and build a detailed and rounded inventory.
- Work to the skills of those present and the habitats available.
- Try to timetable surveys where possible, but accept that many naturalists will want to do their own thing. In coastal locations, tide times can influence when certain surveys must take place.
- You could build teams to co-ordinate different surveys.

Survey ideas

- Individual surveys to suit the expertise available – plants, fungi, lichens, birds, ground-living invertebrates, flying insects, small mammals, reptiles, aquatic and marine flora and fauna etc.
- Basecamp Blitz – an audit of what is around Basecamp.
- Timed Mini-Blitzes – encourage naturalists to descend on a small area, or focus on a particular habitat or taxonomic group for a short, concerted effort (say, one hour). A good public-facing activity that can include large numbers of people.
- Scuba diving and snorkelling. Team up with Seasearch, or your local dive club and check your insurance covers these activities.
- Vigils for marine life and bird life from hides or vantage points.
- As well as trying to find living organisms, you could hunt for tracks, trails and other signs of wildlife.



After dark: ideas for scientific surveys

Some surveys are best suited to after dark, but there is no reason to ignore taxonomic groups more usually surveyed in the day. If you want to run public activities, then evening bat walks and moth-trapping are always popular.

Survey ideas

- Basecamp Blitz – a repeat of the daytime activity but focusing on the many invertebrates that will be attracted to the lights.
- Bats – easy to track with a mobile detector and ideal for guided walks. Contact your local bat group.
- Light trapping for moths is well suited to public involvement either on the night or by examining the catch the next morning. Night-flying parasitic wasps, lacewings and shield bugs may be attracted, too.
- Simple light traps can also be made for use underwater, where they will attract planktonic species and various invertebrates. Contact us for further information (see pii).
- Live trapping of small mammals by trained people – remember to check traps regularly. The Mammal Society can advise.
- Terrestrial invertebrates – many arthropods and molluscs are very active at night. You can search by hand or set pitfall, flight interception and malaise traps to check in the morning.
- Beach surveys – the beach and foreshore come alive with invertebrates at night. Survey by torchlight or set pitfall traps.
- Rock-pooling – a fantastic habitat to explore after dark. Check tide times and pay particular attention to safety.
- Wildlife walks – just take a torch and recording form and identify whatever you find.
- Audio-recording of birdsong at dusk and as dawn approaches.



Tips for working after dark

Night surveys are among the most exciting aspects of a BioBlitz. They are something most of us don't get to do very often and a great opportunity to see wildlife that is hidden by day. This novelty appeal can be a real draw for scientists and public alike, but it does need careful planning.

Hints and ideas

- Safety is paramount. Think carefully about the value of remaining on site throughout the night and place safety first.
- Decide who you want to be on site. Open public participation is probably not desirable.
- Ensure the site is secure and adequately lit. The main access routes to and from Basecamp should be obvious.
- Write clear emergency procedures, and brief everyone who will be on site overnight.
- Track who is where at all times. Ask participants to sign in and out of Basecamp (detail where they are going, who with and times from/to).
- Work in pairs or small groups (never alone), and take particular care around water, especially in tidal areas.
- Ask everyone to wear a reflective jacket and carry a whistle and torch.
- Be sensitive to people who live nearby, and notify the local community and police/coastguard that you will be on site.
- Ensure there are always at least two people at Basecamp.
- Organise plenty of food and hot drinks, and ensure you have 24-hour access to toilet facilities.
- If you are running a generator, check it is sufficiently soundproofed, properly vented and has enough fuel.



11 After the event

Post-event analysis is really important and maximises the value of what you have achieved. Here are some ideas for making the most of the enthusiasm and wildlife records generated by your BioBlitz.

Making the most of the scientific information

- Identify any species that require follow-up work.
- Edit the species list and analyse the dataset. You could look at total numbers of species within different taxonomic groups, rare and protected species, proportions of native and non-native species or compare your findings with previous surveys of the site. Please contact us (details on pii) if you would like advice.
- Circulate the species list. Verified records will be of interest to local natural history societies and recording schemes, Local Records Centres, statutory bodies and council ecologists.
- Contribute your results to other surveys (p23).
- Pass reliable records to the National Biodiversity Network www.nbn.org.uk and consider adding marine records to the Data Archive for Seabed Species and Habitats www.dassh.ac.uk.
- Feed relevant findings into site management practices.
- Follow up any interesting scientific stories.

Making the most of the partnership/enthusiasm

- Thank those who helped for their input and ask for feedback on what worked well and what could be improved next time.
- Circulate a brief report of the findings to scientists, volunteers, the landowner and any sponsors.
- Send a snappy summary of findings to local media contacts.
- Arrange follow-up talks with local schools and communities.
- Start planning for next year.



12 Resources and links

Free downloadable BioBlitz resources

You can download a copy of this guide and a Media Toolkit from www.opalexplornature.org. We will soon be adding additional resources including:

- example recording form and guidance notes
- example survey registration form
- risk assessment template and guidance notes
- photo consent form template
- accident and incident form template
- ideas for evaluating your event

Planning and running your event

- example BioBlitz web write-up: www.marlin.ac.uk/bioblitz
- helpful guide to planning and running public events: www.green-space.org.uk/parkit/downloads/PlanIt!.pdf
- *The Darwin Guide to Biological Recording* (National Biodiversity Network): www.nbn.org.uk/Useful-things/Publications/Darwin-Guide-to-Recording-Wildlife-pdf.aspx
- background to risk assessments in the workplace (also relevant outside): www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf
- Criminal Records Bureau checks: www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk
- Red Cross: www.redcross.org.uk
- St John Ambulance: www.sja.org.uk
- national BioBlitz programme: <http://www.bnhc.org.uk/home/bioblitz.html>



Activity ideas and resources

- links to current public-facing wildlife surveys: www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/british-natural-history/uk-biodiversity-portal/get-involved/citizen-science-projects/index.html
- ideas for wildlife activities (includes a section on health and safety and risk assessments): www.green-space.org.uk/downloads/parkit/toolkits/Wildlife%20activity%20toolkit.pdf
- information about recording marine species, free identification resources and species information: www.marlin.ac.uk
- identifying and recording non-native species: www.nonnativespecies.org
- free activity sheets from the Woodland Trust: www.naturedetectives.org.uk
- guidelines for safe pond dipping: www.rospa.com/LeisureSafety/AdviceAndInformation
- IYB-UK (the UK partnership supporting the International Year of Biodiversity) to find out what else is going on: www.biodiversityislife.net

Recruiting specialists and volunteers

- Local Records Centres: www.alerc.org.uk
- natural history societies: www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-societies-online
- recording schemes: www.brc.ac.uk
- Wildlife Trusts: www.wildlifetrusts.org
- marine expertise: www.mba.ac.uk and www.marlin.ac.uk
- BTCV: www.btcv.org.uk
- Volunteering England: www.volunteering.org.uk
- vinspire: vinspired.com/about-us

