

PLANNING A COMMUNITY BIOBLITZ



Wildlife recording in action – moths, rock pools, birds (kingfisher)

INTRODUCTION

A BioBlitz is a series of local activities aimed at discovering what wildlife shares our spaces – and to ultimately conserve and protect what we find.

It can be of any length but is often undertaken over 24 hours or a weekend. It can be part of a wider Biodiversity Festival or could be a series of short events held over the year – it is up to the local community to decide what is best for them.

There is often a lack of knowledge about which species is living in any given location. If we don't know, we can't care for it or share our knowledge. A BioBlitz is a fun and exciting way to involve local people in exploring their nearby wildlife and making biological records. The event brings together scientists/species experts to work alongside members of the public to identify as many species of animals, insects, plants and marine life as possible.

As we are in a twin crisis of climate change and biodiversity loss many people do not know what they can do personally to make a difference – global and national news is invariably too daunting, but bringing the local community together (all ages, all abilities) to not just enjoy the area and discover its wildlife but to actively “do something” turns all this round. We really can make that collective difference and the outcome can be very long lasting.



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WHAT EXACTLY IS A BIOBLITZ? WHAT IS A BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN?

- What is a BioBlitz? [BioBlitz | Natural History Museum \(nhm.ac.uk\)](https://www.nhm.ac.uk/bio blitz)
- Watch this 1.5-minute video prepared by East Haven Together - [Holding a BioBlitz? - YouTube](#)
- Explore the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan (it's more interesting than you think!): [Action Plan – New LBAP 2016-26 – Tayside Biodiversity](#)
- Click on the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership's website home page – www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk - to find out more about the projects and events taking place within the area. You can sign up to the Partnership's quarterly E-News or download the annual Tayside Recorders' Bulletin.



WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

The East Haven BioBlitz report (page 5 onwards) shows how each of these outcomes can be achieved – and gives hints, tips and examples of the successful events that were held: [EHBioBlitzReport \(easthavenangus.com\)](https://easthavenangus.com/EHBioBlitzReport).



- Key Outcome 1

Creating an up-to-date Species List to make available locally

- To ensure all species are recorded either via iNaturalist or iRecord so that the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) database is updated

- Key Outcome 2

Young people are engaged with nature

- Specific events for children and families (such as rock pooling or pond dipping)
- Presentations to and by children in a school environment
- Activities such as nest box workshops, school swift surveys, wildlife gardening, taking part in the TBP and other groups' projects for young people (including the new Tayside Young Recorders' Group for all those under 30 years of age)



- Key Outcome 3

Increase local knowledge and understanding of wildlife habitats and how best to safeguard them

- Volunteer activities to remove invasive non-native plants (such as Giant Hogweed) and manage specific sites (such as greenspace grassland or local graveyards)



- Key Outcome 4

Develop skills in identifying plant, marine and wildlife

- Develop biological recording skills by engaging local people in taking part in national citizen science surveys such as BeeWalks, Big Garden Birdwatch, FIT studies, etc.



- Encourage local people to take part in events to learn more about species, such as Polli:Nation Workshop, Tay Ringing Group, Plant Watch, bat surveys, etc.

➤ Key Outcome 5

Safeguarding Local Species and Habitats for the future

- Link into the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan to discover which actions (and projects) can be taken forward in the future
- Prepare a Biodiversity Action Plan for the village, town or neighbourhood, or a suite of simple Management Plans for specific sites within the area – for instance local SuDS (sustainable urban drainage) ponds, graveyards, school grounds, etc.

WHO CAN WE INVOLVE?

- Who will co-ordinate; is a community sub-group needed?
- Species specialists/ County Recorders
- Local groups/ Organisations
- Local Volunteers
- Local schools, youth groups, Tayside Young Recorders’ Group
- Others

It is essential to adopt a partnership approach to cover all the skills and knowledge needed – there is no need to reinvent the wheel although you may prefer to be innovative! Individual recorders and surveyors can be approached, as can environmental organisations/ groups, many of which may already have local projects underway and may welcome extra input.

The Tayside Biodiversity Partnership is happy to help with contacts but those who have already held Bioblitzes in the area are bound to welcome being in touch, for example East Haven Together and Sustainable Kirriemuir. They will have contacts to share too.



Photo (above) © Catherine Gemmell



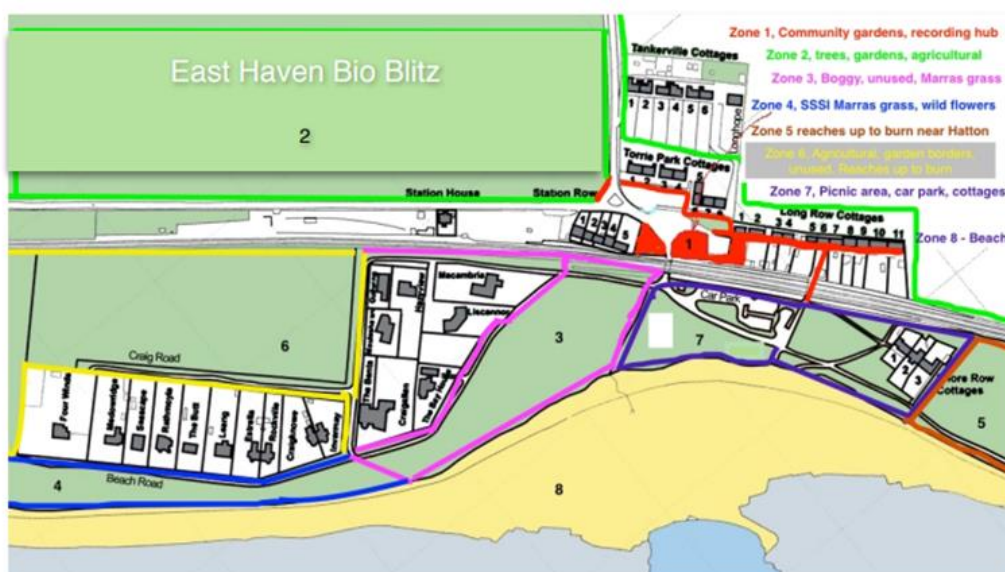
WHAT FUNDING DO WE NEED TO RUN A BIOBLITZ?

If you have free use of a community hall or someone can provide a temporary gazebo to act as the Nature Hub, then it may not cost much at all. There may be local experts willing to give up their time and travel free of charge and others who are happy to lead guided walks or can run nest box or bug hotel workshops who will just want to be reimbursed for the cost of the materials they provide.

In the planning stage it is essential to list all potential costs – insurance, public liability, hall/marquee hire, a PA system if needed, electricity, internet access, refreshments, consultancy fees and travel expenses, children’s equipment etc. Many of these items can be piggybacked onto other groups or organisations, but it is wise to list everything from the outset and then plan accordingly. If this sounds overwhelming, perhaps plan a small series of easily accessible events at first, such as an early morning bird race, bug hunts, a bat and owl walk in the evening, or a butterfly identification ramble – and ask a local café or community group to provide the refreshments.

PLANNING THE BIOBLITZ

- Preparing the Programme of Events, including liaising with species experts as to their availability
- Planning the publicity – social media, posters, press releases, newspaper photocalls, etc.
- Creating a Nature Hub as a community surveying and information base (who will run it?)
 - Will this be a meeting place to enjoy refreshments and use as a meeting place before events,
 - An activity space to make nest boxes, bug hotels, fill window boxes, create crafts, etc.
 - an exhibition space (with an invitation to the species experts to bring displays or run a local wildlife art exhibition as part of the event),
 - a mini citizen science lab with loaned microscopes, pond dipping kits to lend, etc.
 - laptops to add species to iRecord/iNaturalist as results are received; explore websites or to show species videos or environmental films
- Inputting survey results into either iRecord or iNaturalist – during or after the events
- Writing a report to give feedback and enable publication of the species list
- Discussion as to how to continue engaging the local community in future events or surveys



Consider dividing the BioBlitz area into zones to help plan events © East Haven Together

APPENDICES

1. Examples of a BioBlitz Programme: [EHBioBlitzReport \(easthavenangus.com\)](https://easthavenangus.com) – page 24 and [Kirrie BioBlitz 2022 Programme \(sustainablekirriemuir.co.uk\)](https://sustainablekirriemuir.co.uk)
2. Example of a Species List - [EHBioBlitzReport \(easthavenangus.com\)](https://easthavenangus.com) – page 25
3. Example of a Community Biodiversity Action Plan (linked to the local Sustainability Strategy) - [EHBioBlitzReport \(easthavenangus.com\)](https://easthavenangus.com) – page 21
4. List of contacts/NGOs and local groups who might help in the future – *this will be arranged by the TBP soon.*
5. Further information, including a list of resources – website links, videos, etc. – *this will also be arranged soon.*
 - Tayside’s iNaturalist pages (Angus, Dundee, Perth & Kinross) - [Every Action Counts - Tayside's Local Patch Project · iNaturalist](#) / iRecord - [Home | iRecord](#)
 - Explore the annual Bulletin from the Tayside Recorders’ Forum - [2022-Tayside-Recorders-Bulletin-FINAL-9-22-CS-CL-DL.pdf \(taysidebiodiversity.co.uk\)](#)



The East Haven BioBlitz – photos © C A G Lloyd

Any queries – Tayside Biodiversity Partnership: caglloyd@pkc.gov.uk
www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk; Facebook – TaysideBiodiversity

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