

2018 Dalhousie Agricultural Campus BioBlitz

Information for Volunteers

Why a BioBlitz at Dalhousie University?

On September 21st 2018, we are hosting our inaugural BioBlitz on the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus. A *Bioblitz* is a term used to describe a rapid survey of the biological diversity within a fixed area and time. We will be using the platform iNaturalist to record, inventory and manage observations of the biodiversity found on campus.

We were introduced to this idea via a friendly challenge issued by Dr. Lara Gibson, an Instructor with the Faculty of Science. She and her colleague, Dr. Susan Gass, successfully organized a BioBlitz on the Studley campus in 2016. Their efforts resulted in 739 observations of 286 species. This autumn we are participating in a friendly challenge to see which campus can generate the most records (i.e. number of observations), and the more comprehensive species inventory (i.e. the most unique species). With our large campus, extensive horticultural collections, and array of habitats (e.g. rivers, forest fragments, agricultural fields, pollinator habitat, aquaculture facilities, campus barns) we are optimistic that we will find all sorts of interesting things that call our campus home.

What you need to know:

Date and time: Friday, September 21st, 8:30 am to 5:30 pm (but observations can be made before and after these times)

Location: Dalhousie Agricultural Campus

Headquarters: Student Learning Commons (upper floor of MacRae Library)

If possible, please arrive 10-15 minutes before your shift to:

- Sign in at the BioBlitz information table
- Receive your nametag and lunch ticket
- Familiarize yourself with the area

What to bring:

- Water
- Sun protection
- Rain protection
- Close-toed and supportive shoes
- Your personal computer, if you will be helping identify observations in the Bioblitz headquarters

Lunch will be provided to volunteers in Jenkins Hall from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm by way of a lunch ticket.

If you are running late or cannot make your shift, please contact Colette Wyllie at (902) 305-5885.

Your role as a volunteer:

As a volunteer, you will be assigned to either a particular zone on campus or an expert. You will be given species guides to help with identifications and a schedule to help inform participants. Your role will include:

- Providing information to participants about the overall objective of the BioBlitz
- Providing help and directions to participants (this will mainly involve directing participants to the BioBlitz headquarters in the Student Learning Commons)
- Assisting experts and participants in using the iNaturalist app, or directing them to the BioBlitz headquarters if they need further assistance
- Act as a runner between experts and BioBlitz organizers
- To the best of your ability, help participants identify species using guides provided (or discuss with participants what features might be particularly helpful in identifying the specimen)

Installing iNaturalist:

We're using the iNaturalist app to report all sightings during Dal's BioBlitz. The free app can be downloaded from Apple's App Store or through Google Play. Create an account with iNaturalist and then whenever you notice a new species, take a photo using the app. If you're in the BioBlitz zone (Agricultural Campus) on September 21st, your photos will automatically upload to Dalhousie University's BioBlitz project. Feel free to become a member of the Dalhousie University Agricultural Campus BioBlitz 2018 Project by searching for Dalhousie Agricultural Campus under "Projects" on the iNaturalist app. To learn more about getting started on iNaturalist, read their guide at <https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/getting+started>.

Emergency procedures:

In case of a life-threatening emergency, please call **Dalhousie Security at (902) 893-4190**. For any minor incident, please contact Colette Wyllie at 902-305-5885.

More information:

If you have questions about your role as a volunteer, please contact Lauren Ballantyne at lauren.ballantyne@dal.ca. We will also host a volunteer orientation on Tuesday, September 18th at 4:00 pm that will cover iNaturalist use and provide an opportunity to ask further questions.

Volunteer orientation session:

Date and time: Tuesday, September 18th, 4:00 pm

Location: BioBlitz Headquarters (Student Learning Commons boardroom, upper floor of MacRae Library)

Thank you for volunteering for the 2018 Dalhousie University BioBlitz!