

Connecticut State BioBlitz identifies 2183 species, including one new to science.

Middletown, Conn. — The internationally recognized Connecticut State BioBlitz was held in Middletown, Connecticut, June 8th and 9th, 2007 with the Wilbert Snow School serving as the "base camp" and the hub of public activity. The City of Middletown, Wesleyan University, and a number of community organizations teamed up with the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History and Center for Conservation and Biodiversity, part of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at UConn, to host this year's event.

The BioBlitz is a distinctive scientific endeavor- part contest, part festival, and part educational event. More than 170 scientists from as far as Washington State were joined by over 130 students and educators from across Connecticut to see how many species they can count in a 24-hour biological survey. An estimated 600 members of the public visited BioBlitz on Saturday, despite the heavy rain, to participate in education programs and observe the scientist in action.

A total of 2183 species were identified in Middletown, the second largest BioBlitz find just behind the world record of 2,519 species identified during the 2001 BioBlitz in Danbury. This included mammals, reptiles and amphibians, birds, fish, plants, mosses, lichens, and liverworts, algae and parasites, insects, spiders, mites, ticks, fungi and pathogenetic fungi. The species were found in places throughout Middletown, including the reservoir, the Connecticut River, traprock ridge, and the area surrounding the Wilbur Snow School.

Noteworthy finds include one species new to science, a mite, discovered by Cheol-Min Kim, an adjunct professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at UConn. Additional finds include a peregrine falcon located on the Arrogini Bridge, a mink, and rarely seen Southern flying squirrels. A colony of Anna's Tiger Moth, the only known colony in the state, was found on Higby Mountain. A population of Cobra Clubtails, a rarely-encountered canopy-dwelling dragonfly, was found alongside the Connecticut River. Populations of copperheads and ribbon snakes, both listed as species of concern by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, were found on Middletown reservoir lands.

Advancements in technology made it possible to include bacteria in the BioBlitz count. Through the involvement of Dr. Ken Noll, of UConn's Department of Molecular & Cell Biology, and 454 Life Sciences, 40,877 different types of bacteria were found and identified from samples taken from Snow School's soil, the Connecticut River, and Middletown's sewage facility.

The BioBlitz is a learning showcase as well as a science celebration. The environmental forum, *Leave No Child Inside: What Connecticut Communities and Schools Can Do*, featured a number of notable speakers. Dr. Ted Sergi, CEO of the Connecticut Science Center; Gina McCarthy, Commissioner of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection; Robert Pyle, author and world-renowned conservation biologist; Carmen Cid, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Eastern Connecticut State University; John Settlage from the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut; John Hennelly, Assistant Superintendent of Middletown Public Schools; David Wagner, award-winning science author from UConn's Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, and Connecticut Department of Education science consultants Liz Buttner and Mary Ann Butler explored the roles our schools and state science frameworks can play in addressing the disconnect youth have from outdoor activities due to technology based indoor diversions, as well as how outdoor experiences relate to our children's mental and physical well-being.

Connecticut wildlife authors also joined the BioBlitz festivities, offering talks and book signing opportunities. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's new Butterfly Atlas by Jane O'Donnell from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at UConn and Lawrence Gall from the Yale Peabody Museum was featured. John Himmelman, Connecticut author and naturalist, talked about Connecticut amphibians. Botanist and author Ken Metzler, from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, spoke about the wildflower communities of Middlesex County.

Major financial and in-kind contributors included the City of Middletown, Wesleyan University, Pratt & Whitney, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at UConn, The Rockfall Foundation, 454 Life Sciences, Comcast, the Garden Club of America, Connecticut State Museum of Natural History, Center for Conservation & Biodiversity at UConn, Wal-Mart, and the NEAG School of Education at UConn. For additional information please visit <http://web.uconn.edu/mnh/bioblitz/>