

Acton WildAware Beacon Article
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Acton WildAware Bioblitz 2016

Just one week to go before the June 17-18 Bioblitz!

Acton Bioblitz 2016 is an environmental education event that encourages our connection to the natural world. Thank you for participating!

Help us to inventory all wild animals in Acton by participating anywhere and everywhere in Acton! Conservation lands, playgrounds, NARA, your neighborhood streets, ponds, swamps and woodlands and your own backyard are all habitats where a variety of species can be found and recorded.

Any time day or night from June 17-18, take walks or sit quietly and observe all manner of wild creatures: insects (bees, ants, butterflies, beetles); reptiles (snakes and turtles); birds (songbirds, hawks, owls); amphibians (frogs, toads, salamanders); aquatic mammals (beaver, otter, muskrat); mammals (deer, squirrels, woodchucks).

Write down every species you see and send an email to the Town of Acton Natural Resources Department with the results of your observations along with the address of each observation location at nr@acton-ma.gov

We have created an informative Bioblitz flier, available now in the Solarium at Acton Memorial Library. During the weekend of June 11th and 12th volunteers wearing WildAware buttons will be handing out the fliers at several locations around town including Acton Memorial Library, Acton Arboretum, NARA Park and Great Hill conservation land. To reach as many residents as possible the fliers will also be available at West Acton Citizen's Library and at Sargent Library the week before and at Acton Memorial Library there will also be a display and volunteer to answer questions at various times during the week.

Guidelines for Field Work:

- Do be a careful observer and take notes about what you find
- Do roll logs and rocks slowly over and back to the position you found them in
- Do try to identify unknown species while you're in the field.
- Do also look for animal signs such as feather, tracks, nibbled leaves and cocoons.
- Don't damage trees or other plants by digging them up, ripping off leaves or bark
- Don't reach under logs or rocks, crevices or other spaces if you can't see into them.
- Do wash your hands carefully as soon as you return inside.

Places to look: high in the sky, between trees, on the ground, in tree branches, on plant stems and leaves, under rocks, on tree trunks, in leaf litter, under and around logs, edges where forests meet meadows and land meets water. Common wildlife to watch for in your neighborhood include ants, spiders, caterpillars, worms, bees, moths, pillbugs, chipmunks, rabbits, squirrels, and birds of many kinds. If you are lucky: turtles, frogs, toads, snakes, fish, salamanders, deer, foxes, woodchucks, raccoon, skunks, hawks, and herons.

As meadow grasses and forbs grow tall and the trees leaf out, wildlife may not be as obvious and some, such as owls and crickets may be heard but not seen.

Leading up to the Bioblitz, residents are encouraged to focus their observations by mapping the site that they will survey, being as specific as possible:

- Define the borders of the site by drawing its outline
- Include built structures like your home, sidewalk, school or parking lot.
- Draw in the location of trees and shrubs.
- Are there any nests, burrows, hives, anthills and dens?
- Draw in lawn space, flower gardens and vegetable gardens.
- Does the area include fallen tree branches, rotting logs, and large boulders?

For newcomers to Acton who are not yet familiar with the flora and fauna in our town, the local children's library collections include a wide array of excellent books about local wildlife. Acton, Naturally, An Introduction to Familiar Species-Pocket Naturalist's guide is available from AB PIP at www.actonpip.org. The cost is \$6.00. All sales support AB PIP Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) K-12 education activities.

BACKYARD BIOBLITZ

REFERENCE: http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/education/Documents/BioBasics_Activity_1-3.pdf

Illinois Biodiversity Basics Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Chicago Wilderness, World Wildlife Fund Student Page Backyard BioBlitz

WATCH OUR 30 MINUTE EDUCATIONAL VIDEO WITH YOUR FAMILY

(Made at Acton Community

Television!) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QKankcVe_g

NEW!! Check out our Acton WildAware web page at Acton Trails, www.actontrails.org. Click the Acton WildAware tab located at the top of the screen!

**To learn even more, "Like" us on Facebook and Instagram.
Review the postings and videos**

Paula Goodwin is a member of the Acton Conservation Commission who introduced WildAware with Acton Natural Resource Assistant Bettina Abe. WildAware is a program sponsored by the Town of Acton Natural Resources Department that began in September and will continue through the summer of 2016. The purpose of WildAware is to educate the community about the existence and habits of wild creatures, and the goal is increased community awareness of shared habitats. For information, call

978-929-6634 or send email to nr@acton-ma.gov.