The World Parks Congress BioBlitz, led by the Office of Environment and Heritage was held on November 16 2014 as part of the World Parks Congress Public Festival “Planetfest” at Sydney Olympic Park, Sydney NSW. More than 500 people visited the BioBlitz basecamp marquee filled with interactive hands-on displays, with about half that number participating in actual surveys. Participants came from all over including New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, London, San Jose, Santiago, Seattle, South Korea and Washington DC.

The WPC BioBlitz offered a mix of options for participation, including participating in expert led surveys and undertaking solo surveys using the iNatualist app to record observations. The WPC BioBlitz recorded 233 species, with many of the invertebrate species identified never previously logged in that area so the event has added valuable information to Sydney Olympic Park Authority records. To find out more about the species spotted on the day check out [iNaturalist](http://www.inaturalist.org/projects/world-parks-congress-bioblitz-2014) for photos of some of the observations.

The BioBlitz was successful in forming many partnerships with both national and international partners who contributed both in-kind and financial support. The partnerships were incredibly beneficial for promotional purposes. The event was published on partner websites, newsletters, Facebook and Twitter. In addition, the event was promoted through Foxtel on the National Geographic Channel. Overall, our event was promoted on over 20 websites and posted on over 10 Facebook group pages. Our #WPC BIOBLITZ was tweeted 69 times with 114 retweets and 65 favourites. The [YouTube tv commercial](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research/bioblitz.htm) has had over 350 views with the television audience estimated at around 7 million. We also paid for one advertisement in a local Sydney Paper with an estimated readership of 87,000. Our ‘Eventbrite’ registration page had 1,800 total views over a four week period with the [event page](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research/bioblitz.htm) had 1,700 unique views over a four month period.

Prior to the event, approximately 300 people had pre-booked for guided surveys, filling nearly all the guided survey spots. As a result, many of the surveys appeared ‘sold-out’ and we are not sure if that kept potentially interested people away. About 20% of that total number of registered participants showed-up (with total numbers of participants made-up of drop-ins from the public festival event). We were unlucky with the weather with rain in the morning and strong winds in the afternoon. We have learned (especially for large free events) to expect a drop in the number of people that will actually turn up on the day (more if it’s raining). We are considering charging people a nominal fee for future events of this nature to ensure registrations reflect legitimate interest. For example, one person signed up and filled over 90 surveys spots and did not show up on the day.

Despite the lower than expected turn-out, participants rated the experience highly. Most people thought that the interaction with survey leaders was the best part of the experience. Participants had mixed reactions in terms of ease of using the iNaturalist app. Overall, the event highlighted that despite the event being held in a city, there is an amazing amount of species diversity and the events can collect valuable scientific data and help build strong partnerships and relationships with important stakeholders. Take a look at the [event summary video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6aVmM9Mwguw), it was produced by National Geographic Channel and captures all the excitement of the day.