

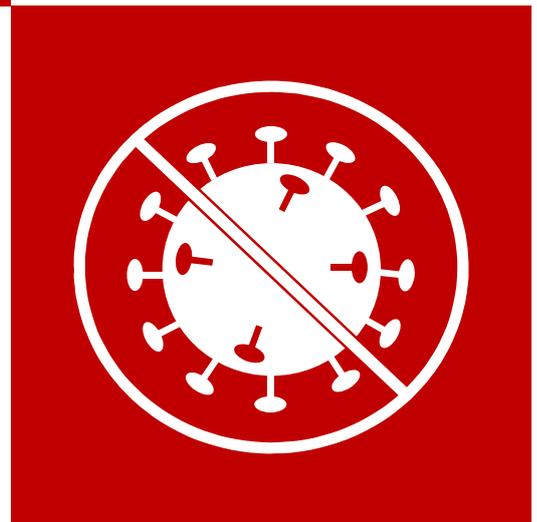
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# Book of Abstracts



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## **The Bioblitz as a tool for engaging scientists and the public in invasive species monitoring**

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### **Abstract**

Bioblitz surveys are a citizen science methodology to record all the living species in an area within a limited timeframe. Simultaneously, organizers can raise awareness on biodiversity and environmental issues and participants can learn a lot about species and scientific methodology. The survey creates opportunities for engagement and interaction between scientists, naturalists, policymakers and local communities. Bioblitzes can have different formats and target different audiences depending on the aims. We performed a review of published Bioblitzes to assess how they are organized, if they accomplished their aims and to understand how the methodology contributes to better biodiversity knowledge. In parallel, as a case study, we analysed data from a bioblitz performed by the Alien-CSI project in Akrotiri peninsula, Cyprus. This bioblitz aimed at increasing the knowledge on alien species in this protected wetland site. Our review revealed that BioBlitz events are an effective way to discover new species in an area. However, most of the BioBlitz organizers only share a checklist with the species found and do not perform any extra analysis, such as comparing the list with species previously recorded. Information on the organization of the event (aims, target audience, engagement methods) itself is often missing which hampers evaluation of their effectiveness. During the Alien-CSI BioBlitz, most users contributed with plant and invertebrate records, taxa with more species and experts represented. Nevertheless, all major taxonomic groups were represented. The BioBlitz allowed detection of new species to the area. Some of these new species were alien to Cyprus, one of the focuses of the BioBlitz. To conclude, the BioBlitz was a success and in general Bioblitz events allow to engagement of people in observing species and adding new species records to the area. Our review will serve as a baseline to propose guidelines and best practices to future BioBlitz events.