

 Audubon International

BioBlitz 2023



35
YEARS

1987–2023

Bay Oaks Country Club

www.auduboninternational.org



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About AI's Golf Course BioBlitz



Questions? Contact:

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Four Seasons Resort

Audubon International is pleased to announce our 7th annual Golf Course BioBlitz! BioBlitz is a species-counting competition designed to showcase the environmental value of the natural habitats found on your golf course. Participants such as golfers and their families, youth groups, community members, and local environmental experts gather to enjoy nature while identifying and counting plant and animal species located on your property. Participation is free and is open to any golf course in the world, including those not affiliated with Audubon International.

This toolkit will assist you with the logistics of setting up your BioBlitz and engaging the community around your course.

2023 Updates

June 2023 is BioBlitz month. You can choose any day that month to hold your BioBlitz event.

Submissions – This year we will be using the compiled list submission method from previous years.

Awards – We will be presenting awards to regional winners and a Grand Prize winner in three categories: Most Species, Highest Participation, and Best Photo.

Golf and Wildlife Activity Book – You can further engage the children at your event by distributing Audubon International's Golf and Wildlife Activity Books. These educational books contain coloring pages of wildlife and natural habitats found on golf courses, nest box instructions, and activities including a word search and maze. You may order up to 25 copies for your event, free of charge. Shipping costs may apply.

Golfer Wildlife Scorecard – Don't forget to involve all of your golfers in BioBlitz by distributing the Golfer Wildlife Scorecards through your starters and at your ProShop.

Getting Started



Harbour Ridge Yacht and Country Club

Use the BioBlitz logo to spread the word!

Add it to your website and newsletters to tell the story, even create your own signs with your course logo!



1. Establish a Date

Given the differences in golf course distribution and seasonal presence of biodiversity, AI is offering a one month time frame for you to choose based on your location. Your event can occur on one day during the month of June. In order to participate in the competition, your event cannot be longer than one day. However, if you are not able to participate in AI's BioBlitz, feel free to host your own event at a time best suited for you!

2. Identify a BioBlitz Coordinator

You will need someone on staff to take the lead in organizing and implementing the event. Make sure he or she has support of course leadership and the time to handle the logistics.

3. Choose Participants

Will it just be your course members or the community as a whole? What experts will you invite? The involvement of experts, who can aid in species identification, is a key part of your event. Nature groups often have experts who can identify local species.

4. Consider Partners and Sponsors

Partnerships and sponsorships from your community can help promote the event before and after BioBlitz. Sponsorship opportunities could involve local businesses providing lunch or snacks for the participants.

5. Advertise the Event

Once you have decided on participants and arranged partnerships and sponsors, it's time to start advertising the event. Your BioBlitz toolkit includes a press release template for local media and posters to put up at your golf course and around town. Consider posting your event to community event online calendars and social media sites. Ask local businesses if you can put up posters at their locations. Write a blog post and send emails to your mailing list. Be creative in getting your message out!

Organizing Your Event



Illah Country Club

Getting kids involved

Young kids can be involved too! Encourage their participation by creating a sheet with pictures of well-known plants and animals in your area, and have them circle the organisms they see during the count!



1. Create a Meeting Spot or Headquarters

This could be your clubhouse or a tent outside and will have instructions for attendees, species recording sheets, and a sign-in sheet. The sign-in sheet will be important for Audubon International to award the prize for most participants!

2. Organize Groups

The ideal way to set up a BioBlitz is to create groups among the participants. It is great to have an expert leader in each group to help identify plants and wildlife, while teaching others as they go. Groups can be assigned to certain types of species (i.e. plants, birds, reptiles) or you can have each group find as many species in all areas as they can.

3. Give Out Prizes

Recognize groups or specific participants for a job well done. Print the certificates included in your BioBlitz toolkit to reward groups that record the most species or volunteers who went above and beyond. Remember to thank your community experts who got involved!

4. Gather the Lists

Collect the lists composed by your participants and compile them into a single list to submit to Audubon International. You may want to assign a few volunteers to complete this task, as it may be a big one depending on the number of species counted! You will also want to work with your experts to see if you identified any rare or endangered species. Understanding that your course is home for these species is important to your management plan and the biodiversity of your course.

Your species list is a great way to display your efforts to members and community. Find creative ways to post your lists or create a nature guide to your course! Create a press release describing your event, participants, and the species you found on your course. Keep tabs on your species counts over the years to see how the numbers change. Your hard work shouldn't go unnoticed! Share your information with AI or contact us for ideas or support!

Rules for Counting

Nighttime Critters

Don't forget about the animals that come out at night! Nighttime creatures can add a huge number of species to your list, and you could dedicate a volunteer group to go out in the later evening for some species ID.

- **Count Number of Species**

Each species can only be counted once. For example, if five bluebirds are seen during the event, bluebird should be recorded and counted as one species.

- **All Species Count**

All species can be included: plants, animals, fungi, and insects.

- **Wanted Dead or Alive**

Any dead species found may also be recorded.

- **Identify by Sight, Sound, or Animal Track**

If you have a knowledgeable participant who can identify species by the song, call, or track print, it is acceptable to record those species. This is especially helpful for hard to see species or counting at night.

- **Time Period**

All species counted must be seen or heard on your course during a one-day period during the time frame of your choosing.

- **Photos Not Required**

Though it is a good idea to encourage your participants to take photos during the event, photos are not required to prove the sighting of a species. However, photos may be very useful for identifying species and, of course, as entries for the photo contest!



Resources for Identifying Species



Correctly identifying species is one of the most important parts of your BioBlitz! The following resources will help make sure you are accurately recording your species and provide a great learning opportunity for your volunteers. Take photos of species that are hard to identify and share with an expert or look them up online when you return to the event headquarters.

Community Experts

Reach out to your community to engage local experts to assist with the BioBlitz species identification. Great places to look are:

- Local cooperative extensions
- Local schools, colleges, and universities
- Local government environmental departments
- Local birding, nature, or gardening groups

Online Resources and Apps

This event is a great way to draw in the wonderful resources of the internet. Plenty of smart phone apps and websites exist that participants can download to assist their search. Some are free and some cost a few dollars to download, which may be worth it to your BioBlitz team, depending on your ability to engage experts in the community. Here are a few with brief descriptions:

- **iNaturalist** (free app): An app and website that uses the social network to assist with identifying species. You can even start your own BioBlitz event to track all your participants' finds and make submission easier! <http://www.inaturalist.org>
- **Audubon Birds of North America** (free app): A wealth of resources on birds including photos, maps and identification tips. <http://www.audubon.org/apps>
- **Encyclopedia of Life** (website): A massive database containing 1.8 million species, including photos and basic information. www.eol.org
- **National Resource Conservation Service** (website): USDA's database of plants in the US and territories. <http://plants.usda.gov/>
- **Leafsnap** (free app): Leafsnap is the first in a series of electronic field guides being developed by researchers from Columbia University, the University of Maryland, and the Smithsonian Institution. This free mobile app uses visual recognition software to help identify tree species from photographs of their leaves. <http://leafsnap.com/>



Submission Instructions



Following your event, submit these documents to Kelsey King by email at kelsey@auduboninternational.org within one month of the completion of your event.

1. Compiled List

Create a spreadsheet of your compiled list of species seen during the BioBlitz, taking care to eliminate duplicate species. Include the total number of species recorded at the top of the page.

2. Participant Count

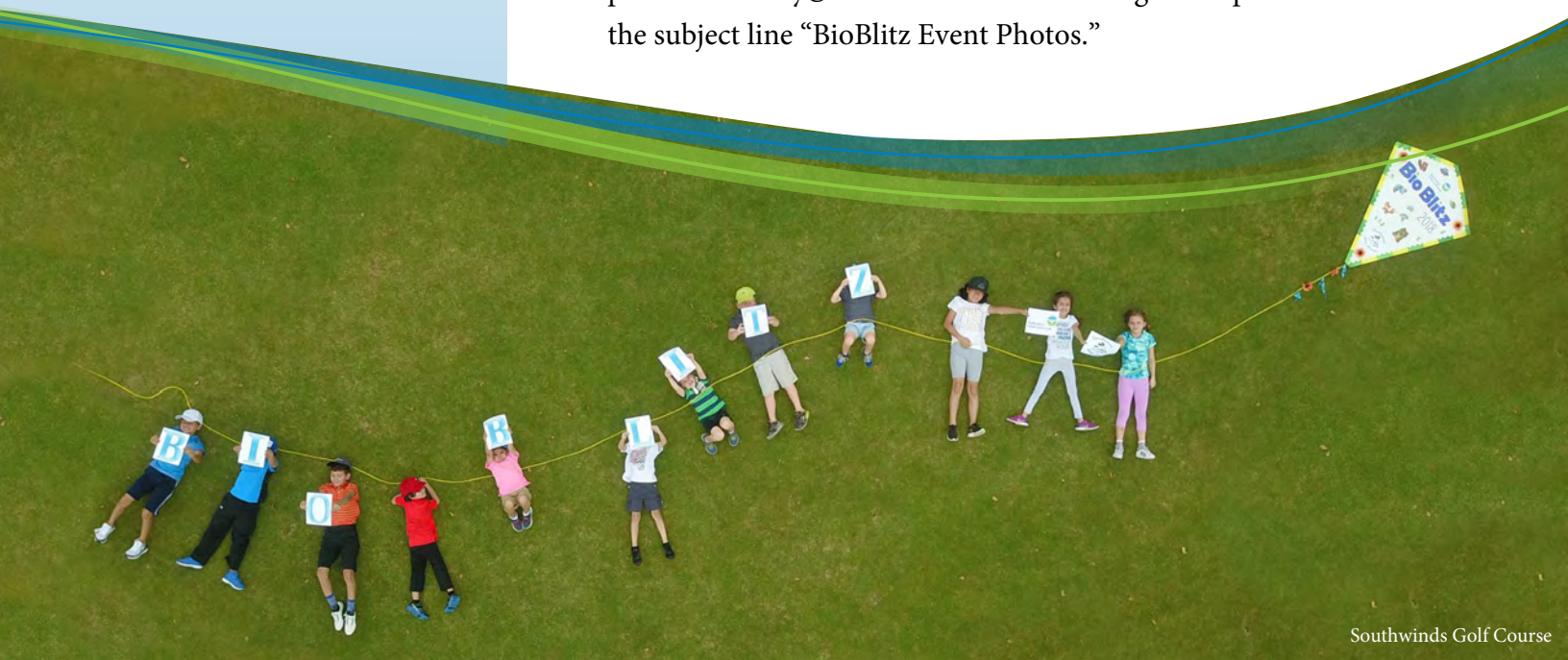
In the body of the email, please mention the number of participants in your BioBlitz and attach a scanned copy of your participant sign-in. Email to brian@auduboninternational.org

3. Species Photos

Taking photos is not mandatory but you may submit up to five photos for consideration in the Best Photo competition. Please send photos to kelsey@auduboninternational.org in a separate email with the subject line “BioBlitz Photo Contest.” Please include the name of the photographer and golf course so we can provide credit.

4. Event Photos

AI is always looking for promotional-quality photos of people participating in outreach programs. We invite you to submit event photos to kelsey@auduboninternational.org in a separate email with the subject line “BioBlitz Event Photos.”



Awards



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Can I use this program to help my golf course achieve certification?

Yes! Your participation in Audubon International's BioBlitz can help you advance your certification and recertification in both Wildlife and Habitat Management and Outreach and Education within the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf. Please contact Frank LaVardera, Frank@auduboninternational.org or call 518-767-9051 ext 102 for more information.

Audubon International will be presenting **Grand Prize** and **Regional Awards** in three categories: Biodiversity, Community Engagement, and Best Photo. Please submit your documents to Audubon International within one month of your event (July 31, 2023 is the absolute deadline) to be eligible for the following awards:

- **Biodiversity Award**

The golf course with the highest number of species counted during a one-week period will receive the Biodiversity Award.

- **Community Engagement Award**

The golf course that involved the highest number of participants during a one-week period will receive the Community Engagement Award. A scanned copy of your sign-in sheet must be submitted to be eligible for this award.

- **Best Photo Award**

The best photo submitted, as judged by the staff of Audubon International, will win the Best Photo Award.



2019's Winner for Best Photo

Red Fox

Southwinds Golf Course, Florida, USA