

A BioBlitz is an intense local effort to bring together experts and often lay participants to categorize biodiversity. This is typically undertaken in a single environment for macrobiota, which are observed easily and identified immediately on site. Inspired by the success of this approach, we undertook a parasite BioBlitz of fishes and invertebrates at an unexplored locality (College of Charleston's Stono Preserve, South Carolina, USA), to determine the feasibility and effectiveness of such an approach for parasites. The College's field station provided an essential controlled environment to facilitate parasite collections and record keeping. We successfully incorporated assistance from non-parasitologists and students for host collection and identification. In addition to traditional parasite discovery using dissection and microscopy, we incorporated environmental sampling of water and sediment. Our final data analyses will identify which approach is recommended for particular parasite taxa, as we discovered DNA evidence of parasite and potential host species that we did not observe directly using microscopy. We faced particular challenges and had to make enhancements to the BioBlitz concept to extend it to parasitology. These included: collection of small to microscopic biota, parasite diversity requiring additional experts, increased photographic capabilities. Furthermore, there was the need for post-Blitz funding and time for DNA data generation, taxonomy, and publication. Nevertheless, we demonstrated that a parasite BioBlitz can be effective for rapid discovery of the dimensions of parasite assemblages in a novel environment, and have developed suggestions for further improvements to this approach.