



Biodiversity and Bioblitz Festival

Biodiversity Week

2026



Introduction

- MKO has been successfully running a Bioblitz/Biodiversity Festival since 2023.
- We have partnered with Galway County and City Councils to run the events along with local secondary schools and University of Galway
- We have also partnered with local groups, other consultancies and state agencies.
- The events have included well-attended free public educational walks and talks on bats, birds, mammal/invertebrate/aquatic surveying, conservation dogs and forest ecology, which have been carried out in addition to species counting.
- Strong emphasis on fun.



Introduction



How we ran the 2023 Schools Bioblitz

- Found school with keen science teachers
- Interaction with students
- Selection of areas to survey
- Permissions from landowners
- Insurances
- Building a team
- Promotion and marketing
- Event
- Follow up

Find school and interactions

- Approach school
- Explain the event and how it works
- Explain how it could tie in with young environmentalist's award, etc
- Arrange talks/fieldwork with transition years (or other interested parties)
- Probably a bit late to do it properly this year – but should be planning for next year
- Map main biodiversity features in the area (student project?)
- Suggest a couple of days in the field – showing students techniques prior to the event



Site selection and permissions



- Find areas that are suitable for surveying in the locality
- Public areas (e.g. Coillte Forest, nature reserves, public parks)
- Get permission in advance (permits, licences and insurances)
- Event may not be covered by school insurance (even on-site). Good idea to partner with a Council and use their insurance for all.

Building a team

- Consultancy (with ecologists)
- Local Authority Biodiversity Officer
- Third Level institution
- Any local groups (tidy towns etc.)
- Local naturalists
- Friends and experts you can lay your hands on



Promotion and marketing

- Newspaper
- Posters
- Radio
- Social media



Event



- Count centre in school – biscuits and snacks etc.
- Teams of surveyors out in local area
- Public events including dawn chorus walks/bat talks etc.
- Student participation in as many surveys as possible
- Countdown showdown
- Camera traps
- Moth traps
- Aquatic
- Bird
- Bat
- Mammal

Time/financial input



- Approx 2-3 days in school in advance of event with students
- A few hours of admin in the preparation phase
- Time for staff to participate (big cost in staff time for participation over the 24 hours)

Objectives achieved



- Introducing secondary students to career options in ecology
- Promoting university courses in related fields
- Good training and team building event for MKO staff
- Good relationship building event between MKO, Local Authorities, Universities, Communities.
- Biodiversity recording in local areas
- Raises profile of all involved
- University students who participate gain valuable experience