

@ FossilBlitz: Bringing the BioBlitz concept to palaeobiology



TWITCHETT, Richard J.1, BOWMAN, Vanessa C.2, CRAME, J. Alistair2, DUNHILL, Alexander M.3, FOSTER, William J.4, LITTLE, Crispin T.S.5, MCGOWAN, Alistair J.6, PUGH, Autumn C.5 and WITTS, James D.5, (1)Department of Earth Sciences, The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Rd., London, SW7 5BD, United Kingdom, (2)British Antarctic Survey, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge, CB3 0ET, United Kingdom, (3)School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT, United Kingdom, (4)Department of Geological Sciences, University of Texas at Austin, 1 University Station C1100, Austin, TX 78712, (5)School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds, LS2 9JT, United Kingdom, (6)BioGeoD, 23 Glendinning Crescent, Edinburgh, EH16 6DR, United Kingdom, r.twitchett@nhm.ac.uk

Introduction

A BioBlitz is an intense period of biological surveying in an attempt to record all the living species within a designated area, often using volunteers with support and resources from museums, universities and other pools of expertise. (<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/content/dam/nhmwww/take-part/Citizenscience/bioblitz-guide.pdf>)

In principle, the same citizen science methods can be applied to palaeontological sampling. Professor Richard Twitchett (NHM) organized a team, as part of the NERC 'Summer of Science' programme to take the BioBlitz into 'Deep Time'.

On August 1st 2015, on Monmouth Beach, west of Lyme Regis on the UNESCO Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site FossilBlitz was run as part of the NERC Summer of Science celebrations. The project was put to the participating members of the public as treating the beds as Jurassic seafloors that were being ecologically sampled.



Headline results

- 200+ citizen scientists participated
- More people engaged by team
- 87 quadrat sheets returned
- 1500+ individual fossils counted
- Data to be made available via web
- Poster at the Geological Society of America Annual meeting (<https://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2015AM/webprogram/Paper263128.html>)

Crucible collaborations sought!

- Help with CEH iRecord and Indica systems
- Suggestions for other Geoscience blitzes
- Thoughts on designing surveys forms
- Handling data and running events

Acknowledgements

- NERC Summer of Science programme for funding
- All our citizen scientists
- - Lyme Regis Powerboat Club for our 'base camp' area
- All members of the palaeontological team
- Natural England and Jurassic Coast Rangers

