



**September 7, 2016**  
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## **BioBlitz is Coming to Gateway's Sandy Hook**

Grab your magnifying glass and binoculars to explore nature. On September 23-24, 2016, the Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area (Gateway) will participate in the National Parks BioBlitz.

A BioBlitz is a fun, fast-paced biological survey of a park's creepers and crawlers, plants and pollinators, mammals and more. The National Park Service is celebrating its 100th birthday with more than 100 BioBlitzes around the country.

During this free, two-day event, teams of scientists, naturalists and volunteers will discover and document the biodiversity in and around Sandy Hook. This 24-hour event will start at 1 p.m. on Friday, September 23 and conclude at 1 p.m. on Saturday, September 24, 2016.

"A BioBlitz is a great way for people to learn more about all of the animals and plants at Sandy Hook," said Jen Nersesian, Gateway's superintendent. "Whether

you have a couple of hours or a whole day, there will be something for everyone."

Individuals and groups interested in volunteering should register for specific survey times. Surveys will begin at 1:00, 5:00 and 8:00 p.m. on Friday, September 23 and 6:00, 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 24. You are welcome to participate in as many surveys as you want.

Explorers of all ages are needed. There are also opportunities for volunteers who don't want to take part in field surveys.

"The Bioblitz is a rare opportunity for the general public to engage with scientists, educators, naturalists, and take part in a citizen-science based program," said Tim Dillingham, Executive Director for the American Littoral Society, which is hosting the event. "Anyone can volunteer to help with base camp setup, on-site registration, or even cooking. You can also join us just to take a walk through the Holly Forest or go seining in the bay."

No registration is necessary for nature walks and other free, family-oriented activities. Among those activities are:

- Natural history walking tour of Plum Island, 4-6 p.m., Friday, September 23
- Bay seining, 6-7:30 p.m., Friday, September 23
- Star Party, with star-gazing led by The Amateur Astronomers, Inc., NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection, and STAR Astronomy, 7:30-11 p.m., Friday, September 23
- Holly Forest Walk, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday, September 24

Use the following link to advance register as a BioBlitz volunteer:

<http://bioblitz16.ciesin.columbia.edu>

Volunteers may also register on-site the day of the event. All participants will sign in on the day of the event at the event base camp on the Fort Hancock Parade Grounds, 18 Hartshorne Drive, Highlands, NJ 07732. Sign-in is open Friday, September 23 from noon to 8:30 p.m. and Saturday, September 24 from 5:30 to 11:00 a.m.

The Sandy Hook BioBlitz is being hosted by The American Littoral Society and Gateway National Recreation Area with support from the Center for International Earth Science Information Network at Columbia University.

Special thanks to OceanFirst, the premier event sponsor for the Sandy Hook BioBlitz.

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*About Gateway National Recreation Area:*

A large diverse urban park spanning two states, Gateway combines recreational activities with natural beauty, wildlife preservation, military history and more. Visitors can hike, picnic, swim, sunbathe, bike, visit the oldest lighthouse in the nation, see an airplane collection and camp overnight, all in the New York metropolitan area. Gateway is one of the ten most visited national parks in the country. The National Park Service will celebrate its 100th birthday on August 25, 2016. Gateway will be

offering a number of events intended to invite people into the park and encouraging visitors be a part of the NPSs next 100 years. For information about Gateway's upcoming public programs, see the park's Web site at: <http://www.nps.gov/gate/index.htm>.

To join the conversation about Gateway, like us on our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/Gatewaynps](http://www.facebook.com/Gatewaynps).

*About the American Littoral Society:*

Leaders in coastal conservation since 1961, the American Littoral Society, is a non-profit organization which promotes the study and conservation of marine life and habitat, protects the coast from harm, and empowers others to do the same. The Society is headquartered on Sandy Hook in a building on Officer's Row. In addition to restoring beaches, the Society advocates for sustainable uses of the ocean and coast; educates children and adults to be stewards of the shore; and promotes programs that strive to make beaches, bays and estuaries cleaner and more resilient. Learn more at [LittoralSociety.org](http://LittoralSociety.org).

*About the OceanFirst:*

Since its founding in 1902, OceanFirst Bank ([www.oceanfirst.com](http://www.oceanfirst.com)) has built a reputation and legacy as a good neighbor and responsible corporate citizen. The Bank's strong commitment to helping families, organizations, schools and communities throughout central New Jersey meet their financial needs has spanned several generations reaching new heights in 1996 with the creation of OceanFirst Foundation. The Foundation provides grants to organizations that meet community needs within the OceanFirst market area. Since its inception, OceanFirst Foundation has contributed more than \$27 million to over 600 local charities and schools in Ocean, Monmouth and Middlesex counties. To learn more about Ocean First Foundation visit [www.oceanfirstfdn.org](http://www.oceanfirstfdn.org).

