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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

CELEBRATE CANADA 150 WITH ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK BIOBLITZ

GTA BioBlitz Canada event will connect Canadians with our country's wildlife

TORONTO, JUNE 24, 2017 – On Saturday June 24 and Sunday June 25, Rouge National Urban Park will host BioBlitz Canada 150 in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), one of several signature events taking place across the country to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Confederation. The event is presented in partnership with the Canadian Wildlife Federation, Royal Ontario Museum, Parks Canada, Toronto Zoo, Toronto and Region Conservation, and the Centre for Biodiversity Genomics at the University of Guelph.

A BioBlitz is an event that focuses on finding and identifying as many species of animals and plants as possible in a specific area over a short period of time (often 24 hours). At a BioBlitz, kids, families, students, teachers, scientists, community members and other 'citizen scientists' work together to provide an overall count of the plants, animals, fungi, and other organisms that live in a particular place. The record for most species counted at a BioBlitz in Canada – 1700 – was made in the Rouge in 2013, and this year's count will aim to surpass that.

This year's BioBlitz in the Rouge – which is Canada's first national urban park – will include a free celebratory Base Camp Festival with plenty of kids' activities, live music and entertainment, educational programming, food trucks, bike-powered charging stations, a free bouncy castle and climbing wall, and more!

The BioBlitz Canada Base Camp Festival takes place today – Saturday June 24 – from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Rouge National Urban Park, across the street from the Toronto Zoo. [See map for exact location.](#)

Festival components include:

- Opening kickoff at 11 a.m. for Canada's largest ever celebration of citizen science and biodiversity
- A birthday party for Chirp (from Owlkids & *CBC Kids*) with dancing and a giant cupcake
- A singing flashmob with newchoir – Toronto's top rock choir
- Appearances by *CBC Kids* hosts Tony Kim and Janaye Upshaw
- Activity Alley, featuring educational and engaging activities, games, crafts, demos and food tastings
- Free shuttle buses from downtown Toronto provided by Parkbus

Bioblitz Canada 150 events bring together thousands of Canadians from all ages, cultural backgrounds and walks of life to explore Canada's terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine environments. Public events blend science with community and youth engagement. Scientists and interested members of the public will go out together in nature to discover, identify and record as many species as possible in a given time.

Over the past two years, BioBlitz participants across the country have discovered one new type of mushroom, eight types of bats, and 33 new plants! What will YOU discover?

For more information and to watch the event unfold visit BioblitzCanada.ca

Instagram: [@ontariobioblitz](https://www.instagram.com/ontariobioblitz)

Twitter: [#OntarioBioblitz #BioBlitz150](https://twitter.com/OntarioBioblitz)

Facebook: facebook.com/OntarioBioblitz

QUOTES

“This fascinating project will engage, inspire and strengthen the environmental consciousness of Canadians all across the country. Let’s take the opportunity being offered to us to become the guardians of our Canadian wildlife, an invaluable source of wealth.”

– The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Canadian Heritage

“As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Confederation in 2017, I am delighted that Ontario BioBlitz is returning to the Rouge as one of the flagship BioBlitz celebrations happening across the country for Canada 150. I invite all Canadians to visit our country’s very first national urban park in the Greater Toronto Area to experience and learn more about the rich natural, cultural and agricultural heritage of Rouge National Urban Park.”

– The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada

“The Government of Canada is deeply committed to preserving our national parks, expanding the system of protected areas, and contributing to the recovery of species at risk. Innovative programs like BioBlitzes enable Canadians, including youth and newcomers, to get directly involved in protecting our biodiversity in fun and interactive ways. As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Confederation, the Government of Canada invites Canadians to connect with nature through the expanded BioBlitz program at Parks Canada’s places across the country.”

– The Honourable Jane Philpott, Minister of Health and Member of Parliament for Markham Stouffville

“Seeing the BioBlitz movement in Ontario grow and mature over the last six years has been very rewarding for the ROM. Our scientists and engagement specialists have been involved from the beginning, and we will continue to support this great initiative in 2018 and beyond.”

– Dave Ireland, Chair, BioBlitz Canada & Ontario BioBlitz Program, and Managing Director, ROM Biodiversity

QUICK FACTS

- The 2017 Rouge National Urban Park BioBlitz is one of five flagship BioBlitz Canada celebrations happening across the Country for Canada 150.
- The countrywide BioBlitz Canada 150 project features 35 events in urban areas, 20 community events and 10 science-intense blitzes.
- BioBlitz Canada 150 is one of 38 signature initiatives announced by the Ministry of Canadian Heritage as part of the federal Canada 150 initiative.
- Ontario BioBlitz originated in the Rouge Valley in 2012 and 2013, and then moved to the following GTA watersheds – Humber (2014), Don Valley (2015) and Credit River (2016).
- Rouge National Urban Park is home to more than 1,700 species of plants and animals, over 10,000 years of human history and cultural heritage, and some of the rarest and most fertile farmland in Canada.
- Once completed, Rouge National Urban Park will be more than 79 km² in size, making it one of the world’s largest protected areas in an urban setting – 19 times larger than Stanley Park in Vancouver, 23 times larger than Central Park in New York, and nearly 50 times larger than High Park in Toronto.

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DIGITAL MEDIA KIT: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BymKIPfQXgDrbFBjeW41X1VtTDg>

For additional media resources – quotes, partner info, bios, rich media content (photos, video, graphics, etc.)

PARTNERS

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