

The Penwith Virtual Garden BioBlitz – what is it all about?

The Penwith Garden Bioblitz starts on **Friday the 15th May**, running for 24 hours from **12 noon** on Friday until **12 noon on Saturday 16th May**.

Please take part! We would like you to make a list of all the wildlife you can identify around your home and garden over that time. Everything! And then tell us.

Throughout the day, local wildlife experts will be around to help you. We'll be on the Penwith Landscape Partnership [facebook](#) through the 24 hours, and you can also keep in touch through our [twitter](#) and [instagram](#). Please send us your records by emailing us through the day at penwithbioblitz2020@gmail.com or get in touch through the PLP social media. Remember to use the [#PenwithBioBlitz](#) hashtag! Let us know you are joining us by registering at <https://www.penwithlandscape.com/events/2020-05-15/virtual-garden-bioblitz---join-us>

What is a BioBlitz?

A BioBlitz is a 24-hour event set up with the aim of identifying and recording as many wildlife species as possible. It's a fun way to look closely at nature and learn more about our local wildlife whilst generating useful information (known as biological records) that are crucial for the work of conservationists. This is citizen science at its best!

Why a Virtual BioBlitz?

A BioBlitz would usually bring wildlife experts and the general public together at a single site. The Penwith Landscape Partnership scheme, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, operates all over West Penwith (everywhere from Marazion to St Ives and westwards) but of course we are all now very limited in what we can do due to the current Covid-19 restrictions.

We've realized that what we can do under lockdown is to work with you all across West Penwith, by all carrying our own mini-BioBlitz wherever we are, and then combine all the sightings. We've arranged for local experts Derek Green & Sally Luker of the local *Budding Nature* natural history & environmental education company to help with identification 'virtually', and we know that lots of other enthusiastic and knowledgeable people will also be taking part and making sure that photos get identified as far as possible.

Where can I do it?

We want wildlife records from anywhere around your home and garden in West Penwith, whilst abiding fully by the Government Covid-19 restrictions. This might be your garden or land, or the view from your window. Even wildlife in your house can be recorded! Please also contribute any incidental records from anywhere in West Penwith that you may be going to for essential purposes, or from your permitted daily exercise. However, do not make trips out specially to record for the BioBlitz. It is vital we all keep safe, and abide fully with the Government restrictions.

What should I record?

Everything! Make a list of all wildlife you can see or hear. We want your help to record everything that's 'wild' (it needs to have got there naturally, not having been planted for instance) in West Penwith.

How should I record it?

Every wildlife sighting needs four key things to make it a really useful 'biological record':

- Who you are
- What species
- Where you saw it
- When you saw it

You can make a list and email it to us at penwithbioblitz2020@gmail.com, or contact us on social media, or post it to us at: Office above the Dog and Rabbit, North Row, St. Just TR19 7BL

You can download recording forms from our website on our events page:

<https://www.penwithlandscape.com/events/2020-05-15/virtual-garden-bioblitz---join-us>

What if I don't know what it is?

We are here to help! You can post a picture on facebook (or use twitter or Instagram) with the [#PenwithBioBlitz](#) hashtag or email a picture to us. We might not know either, but we'll have a try to help you, and through the *Budding Nature* team and the other expertise on hand, if it can be identifiable from a photo, we'll almost certainly be able to manage it!

To learn more about wildlife, there is lots of information out there online. Have a look at our list of links.

It is important to bear in mind that there are many species out there, some of which are very similar. It can be very difficult to identify some wildlife to species level, and impossible to work out some species from photos alone! We'll be keeping a running total of all the kinds of wildlife we record over the 24 hours, noting down everything we can record to species level, and also making a note of anything else that we can only identify as far as group of species (Genus) level.

How do I record where I am?

A six-figure Grid Reference is best, which you can work out from your Ordnance Survey map, or from lots of resources online. However, if grid references are not your thing, then provide your postal address, or carefully describe the location of where you've seen the wildlife. Alternatively, we can help you – why not contact us, during the event or beforehand, so we can work out where you are, and come up with the grid reference for where you are recording.

How do I let you know what I've seen?

Please email us your list to penwithbioblitz2020@gmail.com. We'll be glad to take any records of small numbers of species from social media during the event, but it will be easiest for us if you can put together a list and send it over. As we'll be keeping a running total over the 24 hours, we'd be glad to have your lists as soon as you've made them – you can always send us an updated list later on!

What will happen to the records?

We will add them all up, and let you know the grand total of how many species have been seen. This will be on our website and in our weekly volunteer newsletter. Please let us know if you are not signed up for our volunteer newsletter, as we'd love to have you on the list.

All records collected will be submitted to local and national recording databases/recording schemes. This will enable our records to make an important contribution to the understanding of the current distribution of wildlife in Cornwall. Without local biological recording like this, we'd have no way of following the changes in the fortunes of each wildlife species in the Britain. This knowledge is not just fascinating, it is also essential for targeting conservation effort.

Am I in West Penwith?

Our patch covers everywhere from Marazion to St Ives and westwards, and we'll be collating our BioBlitz 'score' for this whole West Penwith area. However, all records we receive will be passed on to the biological records centre, so as long as your list has a grid reference (or other detailed location details) on it, then that's OK.

How do I get more involved in wildlife recording?

The Penwith Landscape Partnership Scheme will continue to help build skills in wildlife identification and biological recording. Please let us know if you want to added to our mailing list. We'll be organising further training soon. We'd love to keep in touch with you!

For more on biological recording in Cornwall, please see <https://ercis.org.uk/>, <https://cisfbr.org.uk/> and <http://www.cornishbiodiversitynetwork.org/>

If you want to use a smartphone to help you record wildlife then ERCCIS have developed the ORKS app with you in mind – please see: <https://ercis.org.uk/share-sightings>

Thanks so much, enjoy and good luck – we can't wait to see what you can find!