

Washington-area BioBlitz a success

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A U.S. National Park Service project aimed at collecting biological specimens in the Washington area has uncovered some seldom seen wildlife.

The 30-hour "BioBlitz" -- co-sponsored by the Arlington, Va.-based, environmental organization Nature Conservancy -- revealed more than 1,000 species living in the suburban and urban environments of the Potomac River Gorge, National Geographic News reported Wednesday.

The specimens collected included a rare species of snail, a beetle new to Virginia and a species of fly never before found east of Iowa.

"A BioBlitz is part contest, part festival, part educational event, and part scientific endeavor," U.S. National Park Service educator Giselle Mora-Bourgeois told NGN. The goal of such events is to provide a quick snapshot of species diversity in and around a specific area.

Started in 1996, dozens of BioBlitzes have been conducted to highlight biodiversity in or near urban areas across the nation, National Geographic News said.

The Washington event last month involving 145 volunteer scientists was focused on the Potomac River Gorge, a 15-mile-long area stretching from Great Falls, Va., to the Georgetown area of the nation's capital.

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