

Time for an urban Bioblitz



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

**MIKE G
RUTHERFORD**

PORT-OF-SPAIN doesn't seem like the first place you would go if you wanted to see wildlife, but that is exactly what a large team of enthusiasts will be doing this weekend. The fifth annual TT Bioblitz is taking place from November 4 - 6 in the Botanic Gardens, Port-of-Spain.

During a Bioblitz,

scientists, amateur enthusiasts and volunteers get together to find as many different species of plants, animals and other living organisms as possible within a certain area in a certain time. This year that area will centre on the Botanic Gardens but range out as far as St Ann's Peak to the north of the city, down to the top edge of Caroni Swamp in the south, and out to the mouth of the Diego

Martin River in the west. Although this is a heavily urbanised area there are still pockets of natural habitat - mangroves skirt the coast in a few patches, clear streams flow down hidden gorges in the hills and many species of birds make their homes in the trees scattered throughout the city.

Some of the Bioblitzers will start their surveying on Friday night, searching for

bats and other nocturnal creatures. However, most of the teams will search for their species on Saturday throughout the city, then focus on the Botanic Gardens on Sunday. The surveying will stop at noon on Sunday and the final results of the Bioblitz will be announced around 1 pm.

The big draw for the public this year will be a nature fair taking place at the same time as the Bioblitz. These displays will be in the Botanic Gardens Orientation Centre and several marquees just next to the front entrance to the gardens. Over 20 different environmental groups, charities and organisations will be represented, including the T&T Field Naturalists'

Club, UWI Zoology Museum, Asa Wright Nature Centre, Fondes Amandes Community Reforestation Project, Friends of the Botanic Gardens of TT, the Environmental Research Institute Charlotteville (ERIC), TT Eco Divers Club, The Serpentarium, Pointe-a-Pierre Wildfowl Trust, TT Orchid Society, Nature Seekers, Turtle Village Trust, Caribbean Permaculture Consultants, Aqua TT, UTT Marine Sciences, IMA, EMA, Environmental Policy and Planning Division, IAMovement, Trinibats, El Socorro Centre for Wildlife Conservation, the National Herbarium of TT, the Caribbean Youth Environment Network and the Coun-

Bioblitz continues below

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Bioblitz from above cil of Presidents of the Environment. Please note that not all groups will be displaying over all three days of the Nature Fair.

At the fair these groups will be highlighting the work they do to help the environment, spread knowledge about biodiversity and help local communities to do more to protect Trinidad

and Tobago's natural habitats. There will be activities, including treasure trails through the gardens, live specimens of local creatures to see up close, and demonstrations of the equipment used during the Bioblitz.

Sustain T&T will also be at the nature fair. Their big event this year is the Green Screen Environmental Film Festival, taking place

from November 1 to 12. As a great finale to the Bioblitz weekend the festival will have a free screening on the front lawn of the Botanic Gardens from 6 pm to 9 pm on November 6. There will be a couple of short films followed by the feature *Daughter of the Lake*.

Bring a blanket to sit on and come enjoy the films (in the event of poor weather there will

be marquees in which to shelter).

The event has been sponsored by First Citizens and Atlantic LNG, with a donation of snacks from Bermudez Biscuits Ltd.

Bring your friends and family for this free event from from 9 am to 5 pm. For more information see the Facebook page T&T Bioblitz or email ttbioblitz@gmail.com.