




JUNETEENTH BIOBLITZ

BLACK IN NATURE

 Detroit, Michigan

Today on June 19, 2020 we acknowledge the ending of slavery in the United States. It was on June 19th, 1865 that Union soldiers finally arrived in Galveston, Texas with the news that all Black people across the country were free. This day is monumental for all Black people in America and is widely celebrated in hundreds of communities across the country.

As we commemorate this holiday, also known as Freedom Day or Emancipation Day, we cannot ignore its significance to Detroit, Michigan. The intersection of racial equity and environmental justice is exposed every day in the environmental education work in the city of Detroit and across the Nation. In honor of today's celebration, we invite you to celebrate Juneteenth BioBlitz, to discover the biodiversity in the Detroit area and learn about Black environmentalists and their contributions towards racial and environmental equity.



NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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Photos on page 3 & 13: Antonio Cosme

Tiffany Carey

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EDITED BY ANTONIO COSME**



*Habitat and Education
Coordinator
National Wildlife Federation*

Tiffany Carey is the originator and creator of the Juneteenth BioBlitz Resource Guide for Detroit, MI. Tiffany's experiences in environmental research and community programming in Baltimore and Detroit for 8+ years has led her to pursue a career that incorporates urban ecology, education and community environmental stewardship. She believes combining these disciplines and approaches can create critical avenues for long-term equitable management solutions in cities across the country. As the current Habitat and Education Coordinator at the National Wildlife Federation Great Lakes Regional Center, her role is coordinating and supporting implementation of local and regional education and habitat projects. To do this, she along with the habitat and education team at the National Wildlife Federation Great Lakes Regional Center, work alongside local partners and members of communities through these opportunities to support healthy habitats and communities. Additionally, she leads the Sacred Grounds Detroit program, which aims to connect faith-based communities with habitat projects and environmental efforts on their properties and in their neighborhood. Beyond her work, she has a strong passion for aerobiology, community based research and landscape design in the urban context.

Antonio Cosme



*Detroit Education Coordinator
National Wildlife Federation*

Antonio Cosme is the editor of the Juneteenth BioBlitz. An internationally renowned indigenous Xicana Boricua public intellectual and ecologist. He works as a public speaker, strategist, facilitator, artist, beekeeper, farmer, writer, entrepreneur, educator and organizer from Southwest, Detroit. Antonio co-founded the Raiz Up art collective in 2012, a xicano and indigenous hiphop crew building social movement on issues of public importance such as environmental racism, de/colonization, foreclosures, racism/anti-blackness #Raizup. Antonio is the Detroit Education Coordinator at National Wildlife Federation. Antonio leads the Detroit Leadership and Environmental Education Program (D-LEEP) that seeks to bridge that divide through a project-based, outdoor, environmental curriculum to help high school students connect with nature, build a more sustainable community and prepare for future success in their academic and career endeavors.

Juneteenth BioBlitz

Although this day calls for celebration, we also take time to remember, educate and reflect on key events such as the Blackburn riots and the countless Black abolitionists in Detroit like George DeBaptiste, William Webb, Tabitha Lightfoot, Caroline French, Rutha Blackburn, Thornton Blackburn who led thousands of slaves to freedom. It was Detroit's very own congresswomen, Barbara Rose Collins, who introduced a bill in 1996 that petitioned the U.S. government to make Juneteenth a federal holiday.

We must 1) center Black work and focus on Black resistance; 2) recognize oppression as the foundation of our current institutions; and 3) uplift the collective vision that we are not free unless we're all free.

The goal of the #JuneteenthBioBlitz is to recognize the resilience, tenacity and strength of our natural environment and the Black people who have stewarded our land for generations. In fact, during the early years when Black people were celebrating Juneteenth, they were prohibited to use public property for festivities and gatherings. These events were then held in rural areas near rivers and creeks where there were more opportunities for outdoor recreation such as fishing, horseback riding, barbecuing, etc. Eventually as African Americans began to buy up property they began dedicating their land to Juneteenth. One of the early land purchases and fundraisers was organized by Reverend Jack Yates which became the Emancipation Park in Houston, Texas in 1898. To this day, thousands of African Americans travel from all over the country.

In 2020, we are witnessing the world fight to end widespread systemic injustices, police violence and racism. In response, our National Wildlife Federation Great Lakes Habitat and Education team stands in solidarity with Black lives, Black ideas, Black joy, and Black healing. Through our habitat and education programming (Sacred Grounds, Detroit Leadership Environmental Education Program) in Detroit we hope to continue cultivating relationships and solutions centered in equity, inclusion, justice, solidarity and resilience.

Racial justice and environmental justice are intrinsically linked, and we will not reach the vision of healthier habitats and communities without addressing this connection and its impact. It's through this work that we urge that everyone will be bold, speak up, read up, learn, un-learn, act, donate, support and join Black people as we work to end this culture of racial oppression and strive to embed equity and justice throughout our work, relationships and lives for centuries to come.





Celebrate Juneteenth by participating in Detroit's Juneteenth BioBlitz

What is a BioBlitz? A BioBlitz is an intense period of biodiversity surveying open to all ages that aims to record all the living species within a designated area. The goal of most BioBlitzes is to get communities interested in their local biodiversity. More information and activities [HERE](#).

We encourage you to take some time today to explore your own backyard, local park, front lawn and/or small garden and find living organisms that exist nearby. Additionally, we hope you're able to take some time to reflect on the Black environmental heroes who have and/or continue to shape the way we see the natural world today. While you're enjoying and reflecting, take a picture and share some of the fascinating plants and wildlife you see! Share your photo on your social media feed using the hashtags (below). We'd love to see what you find!

#JuneteenthBioBlitz
#DetroitBioBlitz
#BlackinNature

What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity is the variety or richness of life at all levels (molecular, or genetic, species or ecosystems).

Why is biodiversity important in my community?

People and wildlife rely on biodiversity to support oxygen, improve water quality, create topsoil, buffer extreme weather events, pollinate our crops and provide emotional and mental healing. When you support native plant habitat you also support local ecosystems and build natural and social resilience.

Safety Guidelines & Tips

National Wildlife Federation advises following the latest government and local policies regarding coronavirus (COVID-19). Follow your state's mandated guidelines for area specific updates concerning outdoor activity and remember a BioBlitz can be done individually or with your family. Please find your state or territorial health department here.

Past & Current Black Environmental Heroes



George Washington Carver (1864-1943)

An agricultural scientist and early conservationist. One method he developed and promoted, which is still widely utilized, was the practice of crop rotation to improve the condition of soil depleted from growing cotton. He worked tirelessly to develop and provide resources for better agricultural practices to Black sharecroppers in the South.



Harriet Tubman (1822-1913)

A naturalist and an "ultimate outdoors woman" who used her knowledge of the local ecology and wildlife to lead one of the most significant passages in the Underground Railroad. We know her to be an American abolitionist and political activist, but she was also an environmental steward.



Marie Clark Taylor (1911-1990)

One of the first Black women to obtain a Ph.D. in botany for her work on the influence of light on plant growth. She chaired the botany department at Howard University from 1947 to 1976 and also worked with the National Science Foundation to train biology teachers.



Dr. Robert Bullard (1946-)

Called the "Father of Environmental Justice" for his role in the court case, *Bean v. Southwestern Waste Management*, which fought against the creation of a garbage dump in a primarily Black community. Dr. Bullard's research showed that in Houston, Texas a large percentage of toxic waste sites and garbage dumps were put in Black neighborhoods.



Lisa Perez Jackson (1962-)

The first Black woman to serve as Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency which is responsible for enacting laws such as the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act, among many others. A chemical engineer, she was the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Project from 2006 to 2008.



Melody S. Mobley (1958-)

The first Black woman to work as a forester with the U.S. Forest Service. Among her many projects with the forest service, she helped conduct a national watershed assessment and devise sustainable forest management strategies. Since her retirement in 2005, she has been volunteering as a science educator with schools near her Virginia home and continues to advocate for racial and gender equality in forestry.

Current Black Environmental Heroes



Photo: NWF

Dr. Mustafa Santiago Ali

@EJinaction

Vice President of Environmental Justice, Climate, and Community Revitalization for the National Wildlife Federation. Dr. Santiago Ali has a long career of advocating for environmental justice as founding member of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Justice and through his work with the Hip Hop Caucus.



Photo: outdoorafro.com

Rue Mapp

@RueMapp

CEO and Founder of Outdoor Afro, a non-profit committed to connecting Black people with nature and outdoor recreation. Outdoor Afro started as a blog about her outdoor adventures in 2009 and has since grown into an organization with national reach that helps the Black community get outdoors.



Photo: vanjones.net

Van Jones

@VanJones68

Founder of Green For All, a national organization working to get green jobs to disadvantaged communities, Jones calls for an environmental revolution that is inclusive and equitable. He argues that we need a tide of change that 'lifts all boats.' Jones is also the co-founder of Rebuild the Dream. Appointed the green jobs advisor to the Obama White in 2009.



Photo: NPS

Betty Soskin

Soskin is the nation's oldest park ranger and author of the acclaimed memoir, "Sign My Name to Freedom." Her book chronicles her experiences as a young worker in a WWII-segregated union hall, a singer, activist, mother, legislative representative, and one of the chief planners of the Rosie the Riveter museum.

“To create environmentally just policies, conservation organizations like the National Wildlife Federation and legislators must first acknowledge the disproportionate impact that climate change and pollution have on lower-income and Black and Brown communities compared to wealthier and predominantly white communities.

- *Dr. Mustafa Santiago Ali*

Michigan Environmental Heroes



Photo: Jacob Lewkow

Malik Yakini

Activist and educator who is committed to freedom and justice for African people in particular and humanity in general. Yakini is a founder and the Interim Executive Director of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, which operates a four acre farm in Detroit, called D-Town Farms. He is also the Chair of the Detroit Food Policy Council. From 1990 – 2011 he served as Executive Director of Nsoroma Institute Public School Academy, one of Detroit's leading African-centered schools. Through his work throughout the years, Yakini continues to work on alleviating the impact of racism and white privilege on the food system in Detroit and beyond. He has a continued interest in the development of an international food sovereignty movement that embraces Black farmers in the Americas, the Caribbean and Africa. Yakini presents at numerous local community meetings and national conferences on food justice and implementing community food security practices. He is also featured in the book Blacks Living Green, and the recent movie "Urban Roots."



Photo: NPS

Shelton Johnson

@SheltonRanger

Detroit native and park ranger at Yosemite National Park where he is committed to helping the Black community reconnect with nature. He is well known for telling the history of the Buffalo soldiers, and all-Black Army regiment assigned to protect national parks in California. Shelton and his research were featured in the Ken Burns documentary, The National Parks: America's Best Idea.



Photo: Loui Brezzell

Amariyanna "Mari" Copeny

@LittleMissFlint

Mari was 8 years old in 2016 when she penned a letter to President Obama that would lead to the authorization of \$100 million to repair Flint's water system. But Mari wasn't done, she began a campaign that would lead to \$500,000 donated to her Dear Flint Kids Project. Mari, now 13 years old, works to make sure America knows the water crisis isn't over, so that Flint and other towns affected aren't forgotten.

“The most effective movements grow organically from the people whom they are designed to serve. Detroit's majority Black population must be in the leadership of efforts to foster food justice and food security in our community.

- *Malik Yakini*

Biodiversity Hotspots in Detroit

J u n e t e e n

Palmer Park originated in 1893 when former U.S. Senator and U.S. Minister to Spain Thomas Witherell Palmer donated 140 acres of land to the city conditional upon the parcel being preserved in its landscape. Among the vast acreage you'll find hiking and biking trails, natural woodlands, a true oasis in urbanity, and the park boasts many interesting features, too: a historic Log Cabin dating to 1887, Butterfly and Urban gardens, a splash park for children and families, handball courts dating to 1950 (and re-opened in 2018).

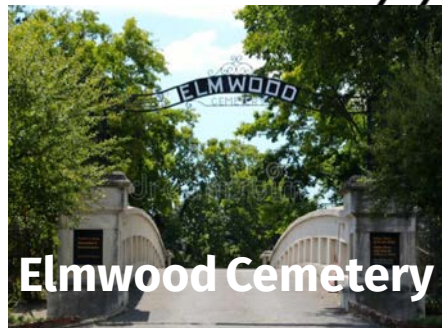


Palmer Park



Eliza Howell Park

A city park on the far west side of Detroit, and is a true hidden gem in the city. There is a loop trail running through the riparian corridor of the Rouge River and native grassland habitat, making this a good spot for both grassland and forest birds, especially during migration.



Elmwood Cemetery

Elmwood Cemetery emerged in 1846, securing its record as the oldest non-denominational, continuously operating cemetery in Michigan. In 2015, Elmwood Cemetery was certified as an arboretum, making it the first certified arboretum in Detroit. The rolling hills of the cemetery also show the natural topography of Detroit, before everything was flattened for buildings and roads.

Inspiring abolitionists George DeBaptiste, Dr. Joseph Ferguson, and Dr. William Lambert, are all buried at Elmwood Cemetery. Detroit's longest-serving (five terms in office), and first Black mayor, Coleman A. Young is also buried at Elmwood. Another notable figure buried at Elmwood is Dr. Charles H Wright, for whom the Charles H Wright Museum of African American history is named. Dr. Wright was involved in the social and political aspects of medicine and society, and fought for the integration of Detroit hospitals.



Belle Isle

Belle Isle, "Jewel of Detroit," is a 982-acre island park on the Detroit River offering views of both the US and Canada. Since the 1940s, Detroit's Black residents have hosted large family gatherings and church picnics on the island.

Along with the good memories of family reunions, Belle Isle also holds some very painful memories. The 1943 Rebellion first broke out on Belle Isle as a racially charged dispute that involved over 200 individuals on June 20th, 1943.

In summer, the lakes and ponds provide habitat for salamanders and frogs. The wetland areas attract all types of swallows (small birds) that catch bugs above the water. Belle Isle even has some beavers and nesting Bald Eagles.

BioBlitz Backyard Bingo Plants

Observe nature in and around your home. Can you get all 3 in a row or 4 in a column to make Bingo? Can you find them ALL?

Upload a photo of what you found to iNaturalist

Share this with friends and family and hashtag #JuneteenthBioBlitz

 Magnolia tree <i>Magnolia</i>	 Sumac <i>Rhus</i>	 Apple Tree <i>Malus</i>
 Oak Tree <i>Quercus</i>	 Maple Tree <i>Acer</i>	 Kentucky Coffee Tree <i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>
 Wild Onion <i>Allium</i>	Free Space	 Willow Tree <i>Salix</i>
 Clover <i>Trifolium</i>	 Red Clover <i>Trifolium pratense</i>	 Dandelion <i>Taraxacum officinale</i>

Safety Guidelines & Tips

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BioBlitz Backyard Bingo

Birds

Observe nature in and around your home. Can you get all 3 in a row or 4 in a column to make Bingo? Can you find them ALL?

Upload a photo of what you found to iNaturalist

Share this with friends and family and hashtag #JuneteenthBioBlitz

Fun fact: Birds and dinosaurs share similar features in their skeleton. Many scientists support the view that birds are a group of tetrapod dinosaurs that evolved during the Mesozoic Era. Source: *Chiappe, Luis M. (2009). Downsized Dinosaurs: The Evolutionary Transition to Modern Birds*



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BioBlitz Backyard Bingo

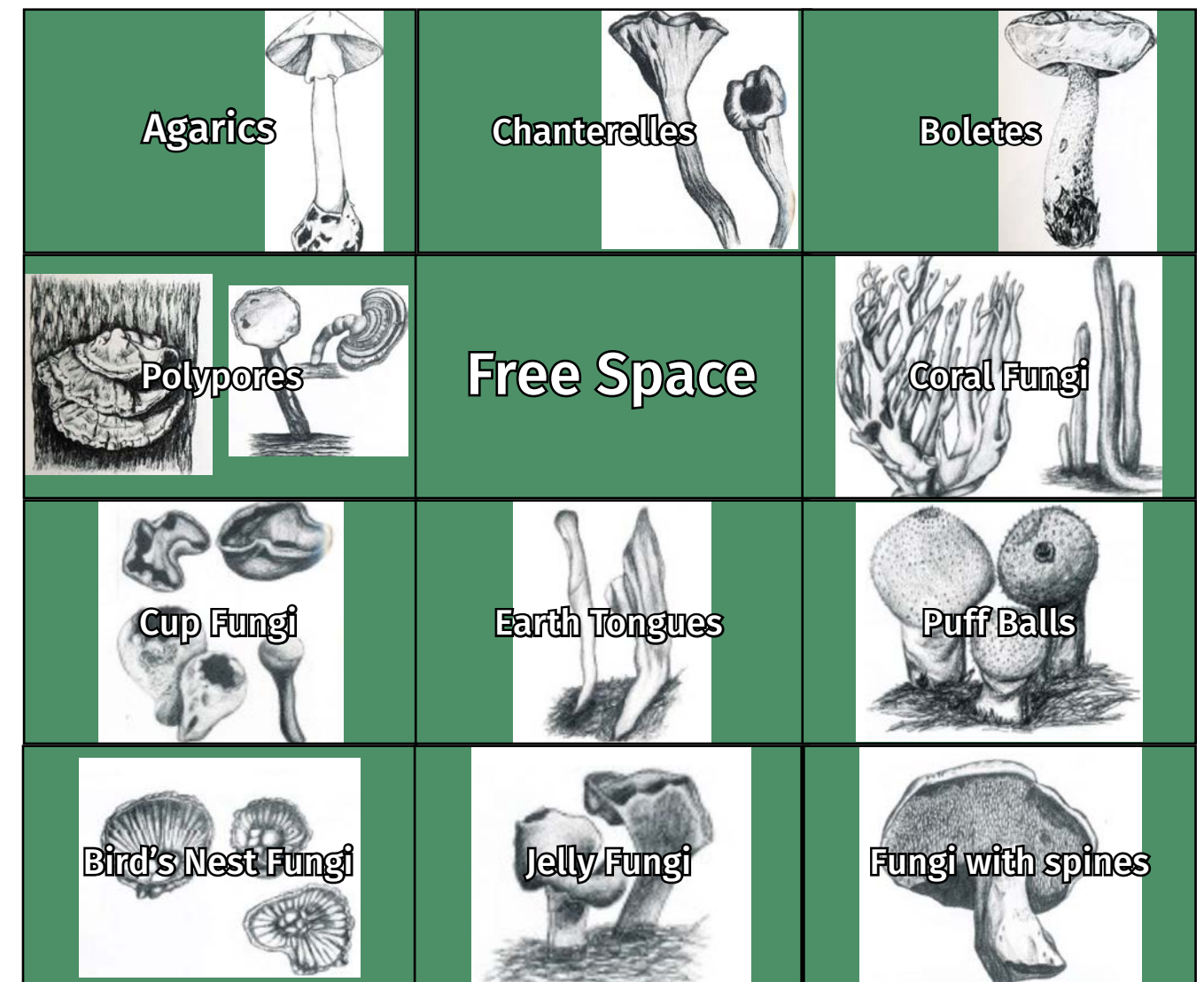
Fungi

Observe nature in and around your home. Can you get all 3 in a row or 4 in a column to make Bingo? Can you find them ALL?

Upload a photo of what you found to iNaturalist

Share this with friends and family and hashtag #JuneteenthBioBlitz

Fun fact: Living things are organized for study into large, basic groups called kingdoms. Fungi were listed in the Plant Kingdom for many years. Then scientists learned that fungi show a closer relation to animals, and are now placed in their own Kingdom. Source: *Herbarium*



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BioBlitz Backyard Bingo

Mammals

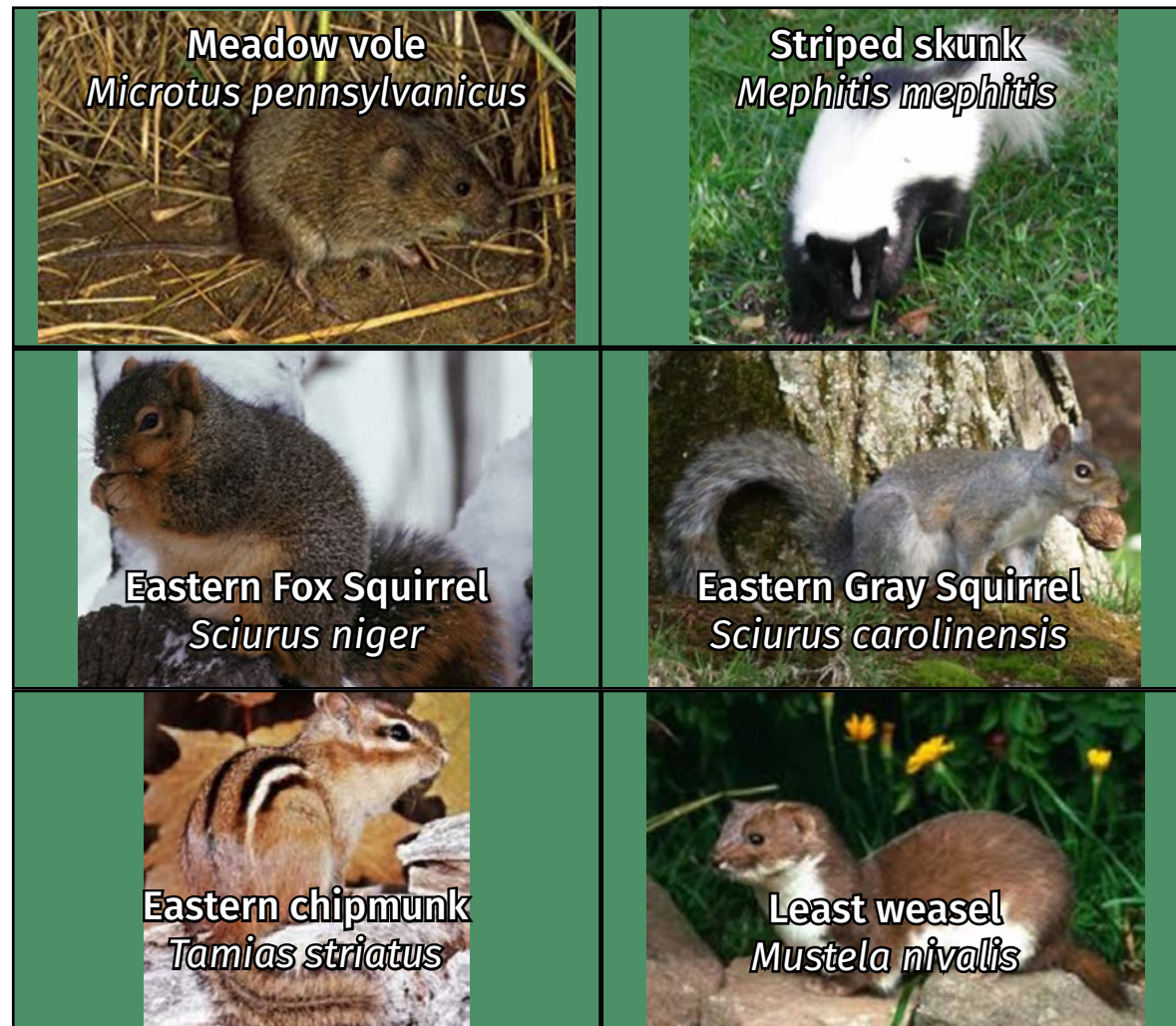
Observe nature in and around your home. Can you get all 2 in a row or 3 in a column to make Bingo? Can you find them ALL?

Upload a photo of what you found to iNaturalist

Share this with friends and family and hashtag #JuneteenthBioBlitz

Mammals have evolved physical features that lets them move efficiently in a variety of environments by allowing them to fly, glide, swim, run, burrow, or jump.

Source: University of Michigan



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Resources

Books To Read

- Ethno-Botany of the Black Americans by William Ed Grimé
- Secret Cures of Slaves: People, Plants, and Medicine in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World
- Rooted in the Earth: Reclaiming the African American Environmental Heritage by Londa Schiebinger
- To Love the Wind and the Rain: African American Environmental History edited by Dianne D. Glave Mark Stoll
- Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors by Carolyn Finney
- Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land by Leah Penniman
- Freedom Farmers: Agricultural Resistance and the Black Freedom Movement (Justice, Power, and Politics) by Monica M. White
- Trace: Memory, History, Race and the American Landscape by Lauret E. Savoy

Articles To Read (click to read)

- "This is What Adventure Looks Like" James Edward Mills | Outside Online
- "The Joys and Challenges of Exploring Nature While Black" Mythili | Grist
- "#BlackBirdersWeek Takes on Systemic Racism" | High Country News
- "How to Be an Ally in the Outdoors" | Outdoor Research
- "Dr. Robert Bullard: Lessons from 40 Years of Documenting Environmental Racism" | The Revelator
- "Unequal Impact: The Deep Links Between Racism and Climate Change" | YaleEnvironment360
- "The Black Taxidermist Who Made History at Chicago's Field Museum: A new exhibit celebrates the life & work of Carl Cotton" | Atlas Obscura
- "GirlTrek Uses Black Women's History to Encourage Walking as a Healing Tradition" | NPR

#BlackinNature Twitter and IG handles to follow (click handle)

Zoologist, Corina Newsome @hood_naturalist
Birder, Tykee James @tykee_james
Birder, Cassandra Ford @kassthefish
Birder, Jeffrey Ward @jeffreymward
Birder, Alex Troutman @n8ture_al
Birder, Jason Ward, @jasonwardny
Herpetologist, Earyn McGee, @Afro_Herper
Marine biologist, @ayanaeliza
Urban ecologist, @greenkels
Carnivore ecologist, @RaeWynnGrant
Mammalogist, @DNLee5
Birder and naturalist, @wildlifegirl09
Conservation ecologist, @aesutz
Evolutionary ecologist, @senayyitbarek
Aquarist, @Catharris15
Oceanographer, Dr. Ashanti Johnson @DrAshantiJ
Environmental engineer, @EcoGreenQueen



Virtual BioBlitz Resources

Click Below on Name to Follow Link

- iNaturalist
- Animal Diversity Web
- Michigan ZoomIN
- Native Plant Finder
- Biodiversity cards

Safety Guidelines & Tips for BioBlitz

- Don't damage trees or other plants by digging them up, ripping off leaves or tearing at the bark
- Don't put anything you find—such as berries, leaves, mushrooms and bark—in your mouth.
- Don't chase after, yell at or throw things at animals you see.
- Don't touch animal droppings, dead animals, mushrooms or human refuse such as bandages, broken glass, rusty cans or needles.
- Don't reach under logs or rocks, crevices or other spaces if you can't see into them.

Detroit References

- Detroit Almanac by Peter Gavrilovich and Bill McGraw
- Dawn of Detroit: A Chronicle of Slavery and Freedom in the City of the Straits by Tiya Alicia Miles
- Black Detroit: A People's History of Self-Determination by Herbn Boyd

Books For Youth

- Juneteenth for Mazie by Flyod Cooper
- Freedom's Gifts: A Juneteenth Story by Valerie Wesley
- All Different Now: Juneteenth, the First Day of Freedom by Angela Johnson
- Juneteenth by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson
- The story of Juneteenth: An Interactive History Adventure by Steven Otfinoski

Detroit, Michigan Environmental Groups to Follow

Click Below on Name to Follow Link

- Detroit Black Community Food Security Network
- We the People of Detroit
- Green Door Initiative
- Keep Growing Detroit
- EcoWorks
- Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision
- Detroit Audubon
- Detroit Outdoors
- Greening of Detroit
- Black to the Land Coalition
- Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition

Sources

Image References on Pages 9 -12:

Plants:

MICHIGAN FLORA ONLINE. A. A. Reznicek, E. G. Voss, & B. S. Walters. February 6455. University of Michigan.

Fungi:

Miller Jr, Orson K., and Hope H. Miller. "North American mushrooms: A Field guide to edible and inedible fungi." Falcon PressPub Company, 6446.

Mammals and Birds:

- Myers, P., R. Espinosa, C. S. Parr, T. Jones, G. S. Hammond, and T. A. Dewey. 2013. The Animal Diversity Web
- Detroit Audubon Society