**HEA Healthy Campus**  **Case Study**

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| **HEALTHY CAMPUS CASE STUDY** | |
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| **Name of Institution/ Organisation** | University of Limerick |
| **Who led the initiative?** | UL Environmental Committee (Liz Gabbett & Yvonne Ryan) & UL Environmental Society |
| **Date and timeframe of the initiative** | 16th April 2024 |
| **What was the reach of the initiative?** | This was a campus wide initiative and sought to involve the campus community, staff, and students. External engagement came from the biodiversity recorders and wildlife organisations. |
| **Initiative title** | UL BioBlitz 2024 |
| **Aims / objectives** | * Monitor and record as many species on campus as possible * Engaging the campus through public facing events * Linking student environmental societies through bioblitz * Provide training and mentoring opportunities for students through engagement with experienced biodiversity recorders * Providing a fun event and social space for the biodiversity recording community locally |
| **The rationale for the action, including any identified health needs** | Green space is important for wellbeing, more biodiverse green spaces deliver greater benefits for wellbeing. Therefore, the quality of the green space matters a great deal and a key measure of this is biodiversity. |
| **Identify all frameworks, policies, or strategies this initiative aligns to**  **(internal, local or national)** | * UL Mission-based Sustainability Framework 2030 * All-Ireland Pollinator Plan * National Biodiversity Action Plan (2023-2030) |
| **Summary** | A Bioblitz is an event that aims to record all biodiversity in a given area over a short period of time. UL Bioblitz was organised by UL’s student-led Environmental Society, with support from UL’s Environmental Committee, UL, Limerick’s Irish Wildlife Trust members and the Ballyhoura Development Company. As well as students from UL, students from Trinity College Dublin and the Technological University of Dublin participated in the Blitz.  Students were asked to document what they saw using a digital mapping app on their phone, creating a geolocation, and allowing for better identification of species of plants, insects, and wildlife. Several experienced ecologists supported the students in recording and identifying species.  Public events included a bird walk along the Shannon Riverbank public with Limerick-based ornithologists Tom Tarpey and Maura Turner.  Yvonne Ryan, Associate Professor in Environmental Science and UL Environmental Committee member led a nature walk along the riverbank highlighting environmental management issues of the Shannon, and the impact of invasive alien species on native biodiversity.  Speaking ahead of the Blitz she said: “Rachel Beck and Frank Fitzgerald of UL’s Environmental Society initiated this year’s BioBlitz, with the unique idea of connecting with other campuses and facilitating a visit to UL, recorder education, and a fun event to strengthen the links between campus environmental societies across Ireland.  The Buildings and Estates team plays a major role in facilitating and supporting BioBlitz and are eagerly awaiting the results.  “Green space is important for wellbeing; more biodiverse green spaces deliver greater benefits for wellbeing. Therefore, the quality of the green space matters a great deal and a key measure of this is biodiversity,” Associate Professor Ryan added.  The assessment conducted during the BioBlitz will aid UL’s Building and Estates team in evaluating the impact of pollinator patches established across the campus as part of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.  Elizabeth Gabbett, Laboratory Manager for UL's Geography division, said: “This event is a perfect example of citizen science in action. Citizen science is a data collection by members of the public to help answer research questions. By enabling people to be recorders, use technology and by providing support from experienced ecologists, you are giving people confidence that what they are recording is accurate. It is a fun way of getting people to understand about habitats and wildlife and practising species identification.”  The event promoted the UN’s Sustainable Development Goal 15 which is to halt and reverse land degradation and help biodiversity loss. |
| **Did you collaborate with internal and/or external stakeholders to deliver?** | INTERNAL   * UL Environmental Committee (staff) * UL Environmental Society (students) * UL Buildings and Estates   EXTERNAL   * Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland * National Biodiversity Data Centre * Irish Wildlife Trust, Limerick Branch * Ballyhoura Development * Limerick Birdwatch Group * Environmental Societies on other campuses |
| **How was the initiative organised?** | Action planning commenced Jan 24.  Several meetings  Booking of room  Booking of catering  Administration relating to payment of recorders plus catering  Formation of ArcGIS map for recording of species location |
| **What resources did you need?** | 1. Centrally located base classroom with projector and laptop 2. Refreshments - Tea and coffee, plus evening snack for participants 3. Paid for biodiversity reorders time in participation 4. Access to ArcGIS software and mobile app |
| **Has it been evaluated? How successful has it been?** | Seventeen student citizen scientists from UL and TUD, supported by seven expert local ecologists, recorded 570+ (provisional results) wildlife species on campus. The top recorder prize (86 species) went to UL student James Organ, first-year PE and Geography. Two guided nature walks, an early morning bird walk, and a lunchtime nature walk, allowed the wider campus community to learn more about biodiversity on campus. Everyone who visited UL for the first time and all of us who took part were greatly impressed and proud of our campus. |
| **Any future plans, including the sustainability of the initiative?** | Hoping to make this an annual event.  Examining possibility of moving to September to encourage greater student participation and engagement over the academic year. |
| **Key learning points** | * Local biodiversity recorders are keen to engage and be provided with a platform to meet and collaborate * Committed students will travel to engage and participate |

**Healthy Campus Framework Categories (please tick all that apply)**

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| **Healthy Campus Process** | **Whole Campus Approach** | **Topic** | **Population Group** |
| Commit | Leadership, Strategy & Governance | Alcohol | Students |
| Coordinate | Campus Environment (Facilities & Services) | Substance Misuse | Staff |
| Consult | Campus Culture & Communications | Healthy Eating / Food | Wider community |
| Create | Personal & Professional Development | Mental Health & Wellbeing | Other |
| Celebrate & Continue |  | Sexual Health & Wellbeing |  |
|  |  | Tobacco Free Campus |  |
|  |  | Physical Activity / Active Transport |  |
|  |  | Wellbeing on the Curriculum (can also fall under ‘Personal & Professional Development) |  |
|  |  | Health & Sustainability |  |
|  |  | Other |  |

**Contact Details**

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| **Contact Name/s** | Yvonne Ryan & Liz Gabbett |
| **Date** | 13th May 2024 |
| **Email Address** | [Yvonne.Ryan@ul.ie](mailto:Yvonne.Ryan@ul.ie) ; [Elizabeth.Gabbett@ul.ie](mailto:Elizabeth.Gabbett@ul.ie) |
| **Links** | Please add links to any relevant pages/ documents. Please attach any items not in a link format with your submission.  [Citizen Science in action as UL hosts intervarsity biodiversity ‘blitz’ | University of Limerick](https://www.ul.ie/news/citizen-science-in-action-as-ul-hosts-intervarsity-biodiversity-blitz)  [UL BioBlitz 2024 | University of Limerick](https://www.ul.ie/sustainability/events/ul-bioblitz-2024) |