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## **CENTRAL PARK BIOBLITZ RESULTS ARE IN** *Careful Park Management Encourages Animal and Plant Diversity*

The initial results of the Central Park BioBlitz are in, and they're exciting! While final results won't be ready until early 2014, initial results indicate that the Conservancy's long-time management has encouraged diversity in wildlife throughout Central Park.

The Central Park BioBlitz was organized by the Central Park Conservancy and Macaulay Honors College. More than 500 Macaulay sophomores and scientists from leading research institutions surveyed Central Park for 24 hours beginning August 26, identifying as many species as possible.

The **eastern chipmunk** was identified in Central Park for the first time in many years. Experts attribute its resurgence to the Conservancy's 2009 removal of trash cans from the Park's woodlands, which took away an important food source from the competing, non-native rat population. When the rats left the woodlands, the chipmunks returned.

The **bullhead catfish** and **black crappie** were identified in Central Park's ponds for the first time. Dr. John Waldman, who led fish identification throughout the Park, said that the quality of the Park's water bodies were similar to those found in upstate, remote areas thanks to the Conservancy's Soil & Water Lab, which is dedicated to the care of the Park's lakes.

A multitude of **insects** were identified for the first time, particularly in the Hallett Nature Sanctuary and other woodlands. In these areas, Conservancy crews are more likely to allow fallen limbs and trees to remain on the ground, creating a habitat for native insects. Insects feed the Park's large bird population and are a healthy part of any ecosystem.

Expert Jessica Allen, a graduate fellow at the New York Botanical Garden, observed many **lichens** in the north end of the Park, but was surprised to observe nearly as many in the south end, which receives 75 percent of the Park's 40 million annual visitors. In addition, she found lichens on nearly every tree in the Park, compared to the 1970s when nearly no lichens were present. She attributed this to the improved air quality in Central Park, thanks to the cultivation of trees and plant life.

"Central Park is pulsing with life – not just the activity of 40 million annual visitors, but an extremely diverse array of animals and plants, said **Doug Blonsky, President & CEO of the Central Park Conservancy**. "The BioBlitz is showing us the real impact of a carefully managed Park, and will continue to inform how the Conservancy cares for it in the future."

"Our students were astonished by the biodiversity they encountered in the center of Manhattan, and they were responsible for identifying many species we did not know currently live in the Park," said **Dr. Mary Pearl, Chief Academic Officer at Macaulay Honors College.**

A similar survey was conducted in 2003. The results of the 2013 BioBlitz are being compared to those of 2003 to identify changes in the Park's wildlife and inform Conservancy management practices in the future.

The Central Park Conservancy and Macaulay Honors College plan to create educational and academic programs based on the information collected, giving the public and students a richer understanding and appreciation of the Park's diversity and importance of the Conservancy's commitment to its health and maintenance.

**About the Central Park Conservancy:** The mission of the Central Park Conservancy is to restore, manage and enhance Central Park in partnership with the public, for the enjoyment of present and future generations. A private, not-for-profit organization founded in 1980, the Conservancy provides 75 percent of Central Park's \$58 million park-wide expense budget and is responsible for all basic care of the Park. For more information on the Conservancy, please visit [centralparknyc.org](http://centralparknyc.org).

**About Macaulay Honors College:** Macaulay Honors College at The City University of New York offers exceptional students a uniquely personalized education with access to the vast resources of the nation's largest urban university and New York City itself. Selected for their top high school records and leadership potential, Macaulay students receive a full-tuition scholarship, a laptop and technology support, and a \$7,500 Opportunities Fund to pursue global learning and service opportunities. A Cultural Passport provides access to museums, libraries, and other treasures around New York City. Macaulay students enroll in one of eight CUNY senior colleges (Baruch, Brooklyn, City, Hunter, John Jay, Lehman, Queens and Staten Island). For more information, see [macaulay.cuny.edu](http://macaulay.cuny.edu).

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