Media FAQs

1. What is a BioBlitz?

A BioBlitz is a biological inventory conducted by both scientists and community scientists to identify as many species as possible in a defined area and period of time.

2. What is the False Creek BioBlitz, and who is leading it?

In early September 2022, the False Creek Friends Society and scientists from the Hakai Institute are organizing a BioBlitz in Vancouver’s False Creek, in collaboration with the City of Vancouver and other local organizations.

Led by scientists from the Hakai Institute, along with partners from UVic, UBC, SFU, the Beaty Biodiversity Museum, and Biologica Environmental Services Ltd biodiversity observations will be collected by:

- shoreline and intertidal surveys on foot
- subtidal surveys: plankton, soft sediment, diving observations, docks, eDNA, light traps

Observations by community scientists will also be documented through the iNaturalist app to be incorporated into the overall project (https://bit.ly/FCBioBlitz).

The BioBlitz will provide a ‘template’ for re-creating this co-designed effort in urban and non-urban areas throughout the Salish Sea as part of the Northeast Pacific Biodiversity Action Network project, a project endorsed by the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.
3. **What is the boundary of the False Creek BioBlitz?**
   The boundary used for the BioBlitz project is the historical shoreline, identified by the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, of what is now known as False Creek.

4. **Why are we conducting a BioBlitz in False Creek?**
   Heavy industrialization during the 19th and 20th century reshaped Vancouver’s shoreline, particularly in False Creek, an area that was once five times its present size. Prior habitats once included a large tidal mudflat, thick eelgrass, abundant clam beds, and dense forests of spruce, fir, and hemlock.

   Following the cessation of industrial activity, the waterway began to recover. Past photos provide evidence of its milling history, and we see evidence of pollution such as old pop cans, discarded bicycles and sunken small boats.

   Tens of thousands of people interact with False Creek every day, but it’s unlikely that many think of the basin as teeming with ocean life. While undoubtedly affected by its urban setting, False Creek is a marine ecosystem with a surprising array of species. The BioBlitz is a chance to raise awareness of the biodiversity of this unique urban area and to provide meaningful opportunities to involve the local community. This project is crucial to get a baseline of False Creek’s current ecological state and catalyze the kind of community-driven stewardship required to revitalize and protect it for future generations.

   Once the data collected through the BioBlitz are analyzed and reported, False Creek Friends Society will, with the help of government agencies, allied organizations and sponsors, create targeted conservation projects that can be undertaken by residents of Vancouver.

5. **What are the long-term goals?**
   False Creek Friends Society envisions False Creek becoming a specially-designated area — a Urban Marine Park or other form of Marine Protected Status co-managed by local Nations. The False Creek Friends Society believes the results of this project will provide necessary next steps to realizing this vision.

6. **Who is the Hakai Institute?**
   The Hakai Institute is a non-profit scientific institution conducting long-term environmental research on the coastal margin of British Columbia. Our interdisciplinary teams blend science and technology to understand and monitor environmental processes from icefields and watersheds to the nearshore and coastal oceans. We’re supported by the Tula Foundation, and partner with universities, NGOs, First Nations, government agencies, businesses, and local communities. [https://hakai.org/](https://hakai.org/)
7. **Who is the False Creek Friends Society?**

   False Creek Friends Society is a non-profit community organization that works to restore the False Creek marine environment in alignment with First Nations stewardship values and marine science, with recognition and respect for the presence and rights of all people to enjoy and use False Creek in sound and healthy environmental ways. Become a Friend of False Creek: [https://www.falsecreekfriends.org/](https://www.falsecreekfriends.org/)

8. **How is the City of Vancouver Involved?**

   The City of Vancouver is part of the planning committee for the BioBlitz. This investigation of False Creek will help inform ongoing City and Park Board work on coastal adaptation, the City’s Healthy Waters Plan, and general environmental planning.

   The City has provided advice on scientific investigation questions and methods, spaces for research activities, and communications support.

9. **Why is it important to get the community involved?**

   Despite the fact that hundreds of thousands of people travel along, over, and on it each day, local use of and connection to the False Creek waterway itself remains limited. Improving the understanding of False Creek’s current ecological state can help catalyze the kind of community-driven stewardship required to revitalize and protect it for future generations.

10. **What is the Decade of the Ocean? Is this project related to that?**

    The mission of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) is to catalyze transformative ocean science solutions for sustainable development, connecting people and our ocean. The False Creek BioBlitz is an activity within a project that is endorsed by the UN Ocean Decade, the Northeast Pacific Biodiversity Action Network. Find out more and engage with the Ocean Decade in our region: [https://oceandecadenortheastpacific.org/](https://oceandecadenortheastpacific.org/)

11. **What other projects related to the BioBlitz have been happening during the spring and summer?**

    Activities in False Creek started in April 2022 during iNaturalist’s City Nature Challenge.

    False Creek Friends joined the Sentinels of Change project, led by the Hakai Institute, which provides locally-relevant data to partners about larval Dungeness crab and broader invertebrate biodiversity. This project feeds into a growing network of approaches to support adaptive management and resilient ecosystems across borders and organizations. This spring, 24 community partners deployed light traps and received training for volunteers at 22 sites in the Salish Sea and Strait of Juan de Fuca; one of these sites was at the Heather Civic Marina in False Creek. False Creek Friends additionally deployed sea settlement plates under this effort. Local and regional gatherings will be held to discuss results and co-develop research through the project’s duration. [https://sentinels.hakai.org/](https://sentinels.hakai.org/)
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Other projects include working with:

- Sea Smart summer camp to add mini-BioBlitzes to camp content
- Fernando Lessa, an underwater nature photographer, to document False Creek and create a photography exhibit for display
- False Creek Friends youth group events to provide iNaturalist training

12. Are you working with local organizations to promote this project?
There are many local organizations participating in a variety of ways (promotion, community engagement, supporting logistics) in the False Creek BioBlitz. They include:

- Science World
- Ocean Wise
- Ocean Bridge
- Nature Vancouver
- Squamish Streamkeepers
- Swim Drink Fish and Fraser Riverkeeper
- Vancouver Maritime Museum
- False Creek Watershed Society
- False Creek Residents Association
- False Creek South Neighborhood Association

13. Have you been engaging with Indigenous communities for this project?
Vancouver is situated on the unceded traditional homelands of xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səl̓ilwətaɁ (Tsleil-Waututh). The boundary of this project is the historical shoreline, identified by the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, of what is now known as False Creek. False Creek is of significant meaning to the local First Nations who stewarded the land since time immemorial.

Hakai Institute and False Creek Friends Society reached out to the three nations early in the project planning. Tsleil-Waututh Nation provided a reply confirming their awareness of this effort, connected Hakai to work that had been done previously in the region, and their intention to be receptive to the outcomes. Project leads were not able to make contact with Squamish and Musqueam Nations at the outset of the project. All Nations will receive a copy of the project summary.

False Creek Revisited, an affiliate event during the BioBlitz, is an Indigenous-led boat tour of False Creek that will be coordinated by Ocean Bridge/Ocean Wise. The tour is free to the public and will highlight the history and ongoing presence of the local and Indigenous host nations on this land. Special presentations will feature Talaysay Tours, a local cultural and eco-tour company and Chief Bill Williams, Hereditary Chief and Council Co-Chair of the Squamish Nation.

False Creek Friends Society will continue creating opportunities to engage with Indigenous peoples to work together to forge a path to revitalizing this unique urban environment.
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14. **What is iNaturalist? How do people get involved?**
iNaturalist is a free community science app and website that provides a space for anyone to share photo observations of nature, learn about species identification, and connect with other naturalists. It is now one of the world’s most popular nature apps. A False Creek BioBlitz project was established on iNaturalist in April 2022. Participants in the BioBlitz, including members of the public who learn about the BioBlitz through community engagement activities during the BioBlitz, will be encouraged to make an account, join the BioBlitz project, and add their own False Creek observations to the iNaturalist project using the app or website. [www.inaturalist.org/pages/getting+started](http://www.inaturalist.org/pages/getting+started)

15. **What will you do with the results? What are the next steps after the BioBlitz?**
The information collected during the BioBlitz will provide an understanding of the biodiversity of False Creek to the City of Vancouver, the False Creek Friends Society, and other interested organizations.

Results will help inform ongoing City and Park Board work on coastal adaptation, the City’s Healthy Waters Plan, and general environmental planning. This will also help the City make decisions about our waterfront, land use and stormwater management.

For Friends of False Creek Society, this project is about establishing a starting point for action. False Creek Friends Society will use the results to catalyze community science projects and as a roadmap of possible activities that need to be done to help realize its vision for False Creek being declared a protected urban marine environment.

The results will be used by various organizations, such as the False Creek Friends Society, when engaging with the community to create an awareness of False Creek’s ecological value, and the importance of stewarding this unique urban environment. For False Creek Friends Society, next steps may include developing a roadmap towards the establishment of a protected urban marine park.