



Northeastern University

*The Ocean Genome Legacy Center
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Martha's Vineyard Bioblitz

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On Saturday, July 30th, The Ocean Genome Legacy (OGL) of the Northeastern University's Marine Science Center would like to host a beach Bioblitz for the community members at Menemsha Beach from 1:00 PM – 2:20 PM to coincide with low tide. A Bioblitz is a scientific “scavenger hunt” for biodiversity in which citizen scientists explore the species of their local ecosystem.

Martha's Vineyard, being just south of Cape Cod, is a scientifically and educationally important target site for a marine Bioblitz. Cape Cod defines the boundary between two biogeographic regions, each with distinct marine communities, physical features, and weather characteristics: the Acadian province (northern) and Virginian province (southern). Because Martha's Vineyard is located on this important ecological boundary, it is an ideal location for monitoring shifts and changes in both Acadian and Virginian biodiversity. For example, if warmer-water species expand their range northward due to climate change, Martha's Vineyard might be one of the first locations to notice. Additionally, the island's active fishing community and recreational ties to the sea exemplify how marine biodiversity directly affects our lives and how citizens can have positive impacts on ocean conservation.

At this event, community members and OGL scientists will document all the marine species that they can find on the beach. Participants will identify specimens using field guides, compare observations, and record their findings on datasheets and posters. The Bioblitz activities will give participants hands-on science experience, and will support educational themes including biodiversity, organism structure and function, animal adaptations, and effects of human activities on ecosystems. The biodiversity data can also help scientists and the public to monitor marine biodiversity on Martha's Vineyard over time. This knowledge can be helpful in identifying and tracking invasive species, detecting changes in the coastal ecosystem, and protecting marine life.