

Fly Ranch Bio Blitz, June 9th-11th

Fly Ranch is a unique property owned by Burning Man at the edge of the Black Rock Desert, 20 miles north of Gerlach. The Ranch has some of the only geysers in Nevada, along with dozens of hot and cold springs. The property is home to rare species including the Tui Chub and Fly Ranch springsnail, but access challenges had previously prevented a more thorough search. To better understand the plants and animals that inhabit this unusual landscape, the Nevada Division of Natural Heritage worked with Fly Ranch to coordinate the first ever Bio Blitz on the property.

Last weekend, NDNH staff and Fly Ranch stewards were joined by other scientists from the Springs Stewardship Institute, UNR, the Xerces society, and more—encompassing specialties including botany, ornithology, entomology, and wetland science—for an intensive three days of surveying. Over the course of the weekend, we compiled a full plant species list, set and checked a hundred small mammal traps, birdwatched, surveyed 6 springs complexes, identified moths after dark with a bright light, and collected many interesting aquatic invertebrates (including diving beetles and different types of springsnails), and more. We'll be working to finish identifying everything and compile the data collected over the next couple of months. The Bio Blitz will help Fly Ranch better understand how to conserve their unique landscape and the species that live there.

We're extremely grateful to all the experts who contributed time and expertise to the event, and to Fly Ranch for hosting us!



Scientists attempt to catch dragonflies and damselflies around a spring.



One of many hot spring complexes at Fly Ranch. Some of the spring water emerged from the ground at 150 degrees Fahrenheit!