

Nature'sWeb

Issue No. 23

Autumn 2011

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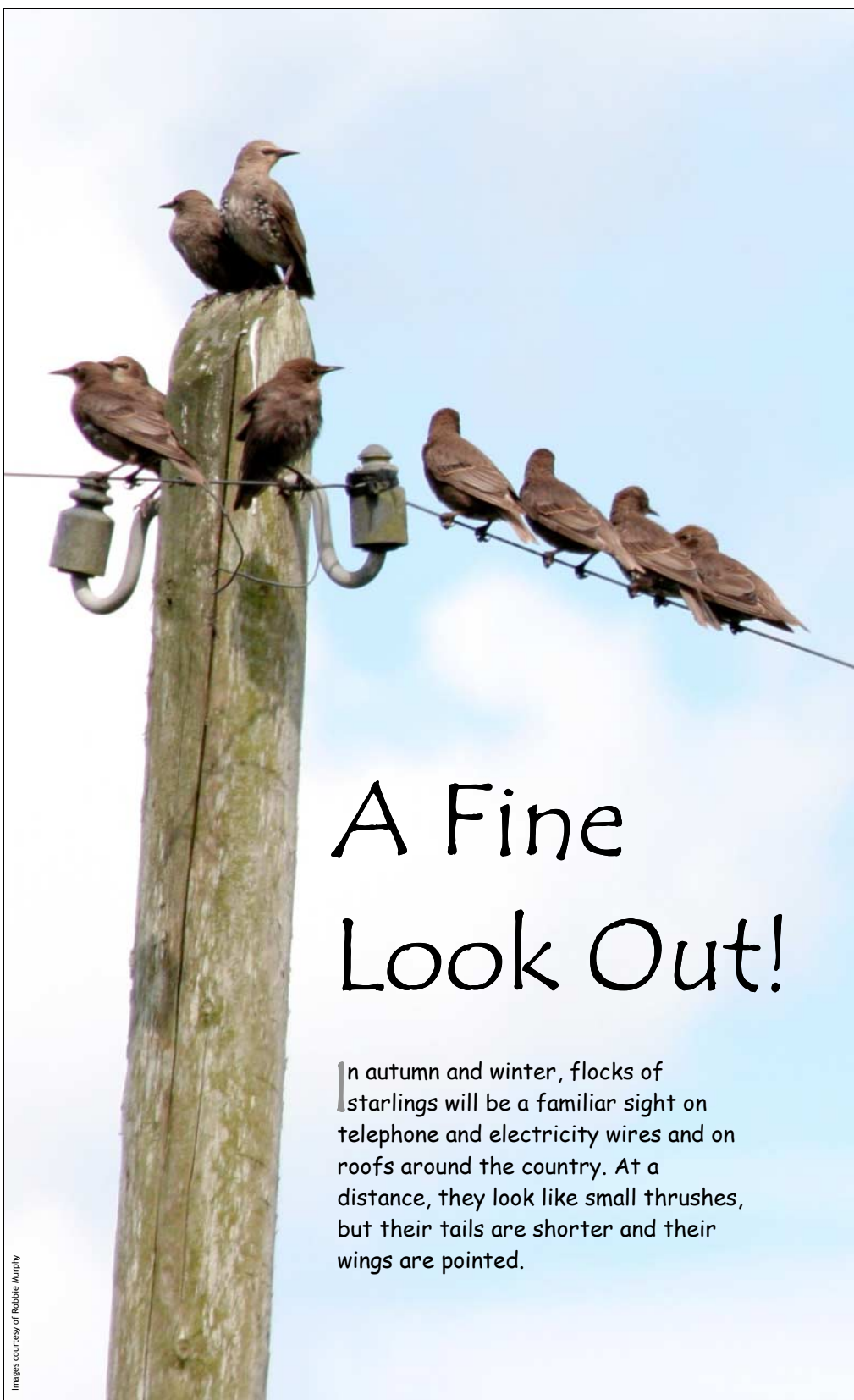
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A Fine Look Out!

In autumn and winter, flocks of starlings will be a familiar sight on telephone and electricity wires and on roofs around the country. At a distance, they look like small thrushes, but their tails are shorter and their wings are pointed.

Images courtesy of Robbie Murphy

Editor's Page

Welcome to the
Autumn Edition of
Nature's Web!

Dear Reader,



Welcome everyone to the Autumn 2011 issue of Nature's Web. In this issue we have gone a little nuts - in fact, all types of nuts, from hazelnuts, to walnuts to pistachio nuts. Mary Stack, Environmental Awareness Officer for Cork County Council tells why she is so interested in the environment and how she wants to make us all more aware of what WE can do to make our world a better place. Captain Cockle explains how sea surface temperatures around Ireland are rising and Jennifer Care gives us ideas on how to make a "natural rainbow". Check out nature news from around the world on page 11 and enjoy a giggle with the jokes on page 13.

We would love to hear your views and comments and suggestions for future articles. Have a good read!

Susan

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Sherkin Island Marine Station Exhibition

This year Sherkin Island Marine Station set up a permanent exhibition about its work, which can be seen at Murphy's Pub & The Islander's Rest on Sherkin Island. The exhibition consists mainly of display panels, which describe the various projects the Station carries out. These projects are on subjects such as plankton, rocky shore, wild flowers, birds, otters, beetles, butterflies and moths. The exhibition also includes displays of sea shells, butterflies, moths and beetles, as well as the skeleton of an Atlantic White-sided Dolphin. Next time you visit the island, drop in and have a look - admission is free!

Top: Information on the islands of Roaringwater Bay; Above: Panel displays; Left: Butterfly specimens.

SEAFOOD RECIPE

Thai Steamed Mussels

What's Needed:

- 1kg/2lb fresh mussels
- 2 tbsp oil
- Juice of a lime
- 1 tbsp light soy sauce
- Freshly chopped coriander

Finely chop the following:

- 1 red & 1 green chilli (these are hot!)
- 2 cloves garlic
- 4 scallions
- 1 tsp root ginger

What to do:

- Wash mussels and discard any with broken shells or those that do not close when tapped.
- Remove beards (byssus threads) by pulling off.
- In large wide saucepan, heat oil and gently cook chilli, garlic, scallions and ginger.
- Add mussels, lime juice and soy sauce.
- Place lid on saucepan and cook for 5 minutes over high heat until mussels open.
- Sprinkle with coriander and serve with Thai jasmine rice.



Photo: © BIM

Brought to you by BIM. www.bim.ie.

Starling

Latin: *Sturnus vulgaris* Irish: Druid

The starling, which in some parts of Ireland is also known as a stare, is a very common bird and can be seen everywhere. Many starlings live here all year round, however in the autumn they are also joined by large numbers from the continent, who come here for the winter months.

Starlings are able to mimic the songs of other birds (including chickens!) and can even copy a human whistle, a dog's bark and a phone ring. They often collect on telephone and electricity wires and on rooftops.

Blue eggs

Starlings have pale blue eggs, usually about 5-7 per nest, which they build in trees, cliffs and in buildings.



FACT FILE

Colour: Black feathers, with green and blue sheen, and many pale speckles. Yellow bill in summer, which goes darker in winter.

Length: 19-22 cm

Diet: Worms, insects, spiders, snails and berries.

Habitat: Most areas including gardens.

Did Shakespeare bring Starlings to the US?

The European Starling is considered an invasive species in America. The species was introduced there in 1890 when 100 birds were released in New York City's Central Park by an industrialist. He belonged to a group that wanted to introduce all the birds mentioned in the works of William Shakespeare into the US. The European Starlings rapidly reproduced and the range of the species quickly spread. Today the species competes with native species and destroys crops.



Sketch by Audrey Murphy

Safety in Numbers

A group of starlings is known as a "murmuration". Starlings have many other collective names, including a "filth", a "constellation" and a "scourge".

Starlings fly in formation, often early in the morning and in the evening. It can be an amazing sight to see hundreds or thousands of these birds flying together in a tight group, wheeling through the air with great precision.

One of the reasons why they fly in formation could be that there is safety in numbers. It would be harder for a bird of prey, such as a peregrine, to target one of the birds when so many are flying together.

Starlings also gather together for warmth and to share information, such as where food can be found.



A huge group of starlings, flying in formation.

Courtesy of John Holmes CC BY SA 2.0

Ocean Climate Change

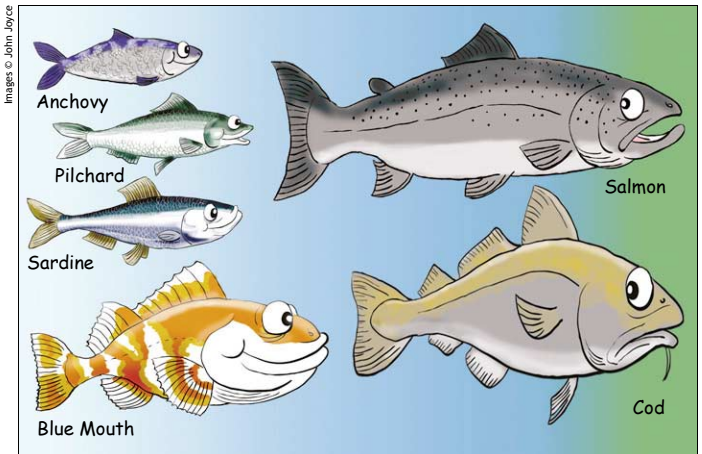
Warming Waters . . .

A recent report by the Marine Institute shows that sea surface temperature around Ireland has increased by over half a degree centigrade every ten years since 1994. The warmest sea temperatures over the last 150 years have been in 2005, 2006 and 2007.

Part of this recent increase can be linked to a natural rhythm in the ocean called The Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation. However the fact that we have recently witnessed the warmest sea water temperatures in the last 150 years may mean that other factors, such as global climate change, may be at work.

Even small increases in sea temperature have an effect on the animals and plants that live there. Fish that prefer colder water (such as cod and salmon) tend to migrate northwards where the water is cooler. Meanwhile, fish such as anchovy, pilchards, sardines and blue mouth, also migrate northwards into our waters from the south.

One potentially negative effect of these migrations is that snake pipefish, which resemble sand eels but which have a tough skin and are difficult for birds to eat, are showing up in Irish waters in greater numbers. This could result in seabirds such as Puffins trying to feed them to their chicks by mistake.



You can download the Marine Institute report "Irish Ocean Climate and Ecosystem Status Report 2009" at <http://www.marine.ie/NR/rdonlyres/E581708D-6269-4941-836F-6B012DD7A4BD/>

Captain Cockle's Log

Log on to www.captaincockle.com

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Surf's Up!

Another effect of climate change in the oceans is the increase in significant wave height (the average height of the highest one-third of all waves) off the south-west of Ireland by as much as 0.8 metres per ten years. While this might be great for surfers, it could be dangerous for other water users.

The highest wave ever recorded anywhere in the world happened on the night of July 9th, 1958 when an earthquake created a landslide at the innermost point of Lituya Bay in Alaska causing a tsunami. This monster wave then swept the entire length of the Bay, tearing away trees as high as 1,720 feet (524 metres) above sea level.



The highest natural wave ever recorded out at sea was only 112 feet (34 metres) above sea level in a Pacific hurricane on February 6th, 1933.

Pine Marten

English Name: European Pine Marten

Scientific Name: *Martes martes*

Irish Name: Cat crainn

The Irish name for Pine Marten is Cat Crainn (tree cat) and this describes it well. It has short legs, a long body and a long bushy tail. Like a cat, it has claws that can retract. Because of this, it is sure-footed and can move quickly through the branches.

The Pine Marten hunts for small mammals such as rodents (e.g. rats and mice) rabbits, frogs and birds and if near the coast it will also eat fish. It eats lots of other types of food too, such as forest fruit, nuts, mushrooms and insects, even taking hens and ducks from farms!

Pine Martens are shy creatures, rarely seen or heard, and are mostly active at night. They live in woodland areas, mainly in the west and south of Ireland. Pine martens live on their own and each adult has its own territory, which it marks with scent glands.

Pine martens generally live for 5 to 6 years in the wild but have been known to live for up to 17 years in captivity.



Courtesy of Dan Kropiwnik CC BY 3.0

Pine Martens were once found all over Ireland but its population declined in the last few centuries as the forests began to disappear.

Meet the Family!

A Pine Marten's young is known as a "kit" and it generally has one litter per year. These are usually born in late March or April, with one to five kits per litter. Born blind, the helpless kits will stay in the den for 6-8 weeks but are ready to leave home by the end of the summer.



FACT FILE

Colour: Its coat is rich chestnut brown and has a creamy throat and underside.

Length: 55-80 cm.

Diet: Rodents, rabbits, frogs, birds, farm chickens, fruit, nuts, mushrooms and berries.

Habitat: Woodland areas.

Relatives of the Pine Marten

Besides the European Pine Marten, there are several other martens, such as the American Pine Marten, the Japanese Marten and the Beech Marten.

Martens belong to the mustelid family, a group of carnivorous (meat-eating) animals that have short legs and long bodies. Other animals in this family include the otter, badger, mink and stoat.



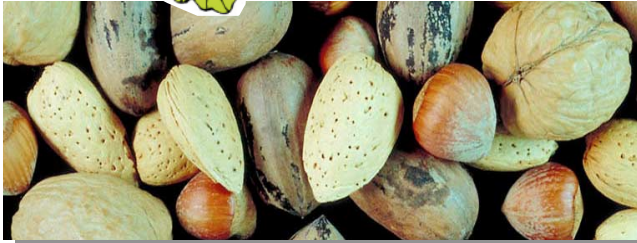
Badger



Otter



Nuts about Nuts!



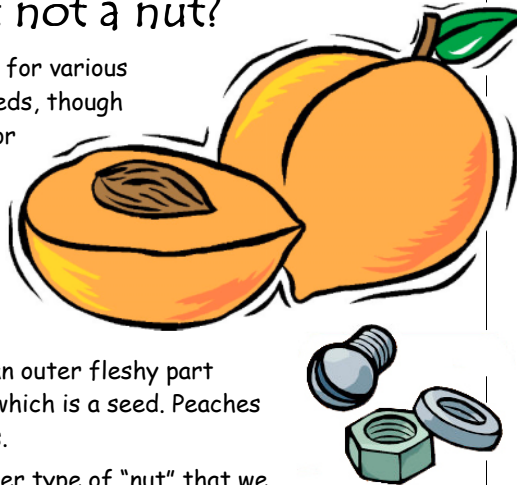
In plant biology, a true nut is a dry fruit which does not open to release its seed when mature. It contains a single seed and is covered by a thick hard shell. Examples of true nuts are acorns, hazelnuts and chestnuts.

When is a nut not a nut?

The term nut is also used for various hard-shelled fruits or seeds, though they are not true nuts. For example, pistachio, cashew and brazil nuts are really seeds.

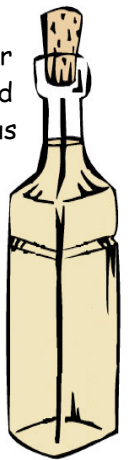
Peanuts belong to the pea family and almonds, walnuts and coconuts are drupes. A drupe is when an outer fleshy part surrounds a shell, inside which is a seed. Peaches and plums are also drupes.

Of course, there is another type of "nut" that we definitely cannot eat! Can you think what it is?



Oil in Nuts

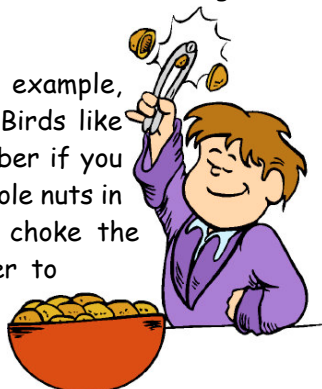
As many nuts have a high fat or oil content, they can be pressed and the oil used for various purposes. Depending on the flavour or how well they burn, nut oils can be used for cooking or for salad dressings. Others are used to make health or skin products, and in the case of walnut oil, for making artists' paints. Nuts which are harvested for their oil include walnuts, pine nuts, almonds, hazelnuts, pistachio nuts and ground nuts. The macadamia nut, which is native to Australia, has one of the highest oil content of all nuts and is used in cooking, in salad and for skin products.



Food for Humans and Animals

Many nuts are a great source of nutrition for both humans and animals. Humans eat nuts because they give us energy and contain protein (for building muscles), vitamins and minerals. Though nuts are high in fat (and too much fat isn't good for us), some nuts have fats that are good, such as walnuts and almonds.

Lots of animals feed on nuts, for example, squirrels, woodmice and pine martens. Birds like to sharpen their beaks on nuts. Remember if you are feeding nuts to birds, always put whole nuts in a mesh feeder, otherwise they could choke the young birds. Also, it is important never to feed birds with salted nuts.



Kukui nut "clock"!

The Candlenut (kukui) tree is Hawaii's State tree. Its nuts have so much oil, that the people of Ancient Hawaii used to burn them as a source of light. The nuts were strung up and burnt one by one, each burning for 15 minutes. The burning time was so accurate that they could even be used to measure time.



Courtesy of Forest and Kim Starr CC BY 3.0

All in a Day's Work

Mary Stack – Environmental Awareness Officer, Cork County Council

Mary Stack works as the Environmental Awareness Officer for Cork County Council and is based in Inniscarra, Co. Cork. She loves working with the public, especially schools, helping to raise awareness of the environment.



Images courtesy of Cork County Council staff

Have you always been interested in what you do?

I was a little jealous of my older brother and his love of scouting. I wanted to be part of all that outdoor stuff - camping, cooking on stones, hiking and the country conservation code. I joined the girl guides at a late age (13), when my friends were leaving! They thought it wasn't cool to be a guide at 13. I forgot to leave the organisation and went on to become leader of my group, a district and area commissioner and finally a high chief of Munster, with responsibility for about 3000 members from ladybirds to rangers. I still love that outdoor life and am still a member.

What training did you do to get where you are today?

I loved chemistry and three times a week, with two girl friends, had to go to the 'boys' school' across town in Cobh to join the 'boys chemistry class'. I received a distinction in my leaving certificate. From there I went to Cork Institute of Technology to do a diploma and after 5 years I received a fellowship to go to Trinity College to do a Masters in Environmental Science. Ten years later I returned to college by night to do a Ph.D. It was tough but looking back it took no time at all. Ten years after that I changed tack and fell in love with the law and undertook an honours law degree with University of London. That was fun and so different to science.

What is a day in your life like?

Each day is very varied and my work location can be as far north as Charleville or west to Bere Island or east to Youghal. It's great as I get to visit and meet all different people. It may be a school visit to promote the Green School Flag programme (which is accredited by An Taisce), meeting with Tidy Towns groups

or meeting with Council officials over various projects that I work on. From my office in Inniscarra I do a lot of my emailing and administration work. But from my car and on my travels I get my ideas and mentally plan my work load. Recently, I assisted a small village in North Cork (Coolagown - see page 15) in winning a Gold medal for a European competition, as the most sustainable village in Europe. Cork County's small village community is a shining beacon for environmental protection. I loved being a part of this and playing my part in assisting them.

What is the best thing about your job?

I like meeting communities and schools and seeing projects being launched. Seeing people and groups smiling and enjoying their successes, such as a school receiving a Green School Flag or a community increasing their marks from the previous year in Tidy Towns. I love to see good reporting of the projects and to hear from people who heard that I assisted a neighbouring village, and can they meet me.

What is the worst thing about your job?

Working in public service is difficult and frustrating. Everything moves too slowly, but I understand some of the rules that slow things down are designed to protect the spending of public money.

What advice would you give someone wanting to do your job?

Get the best education possible and read a lot. Keep yourself up to date with current issues on the environment. Find out what is happening in your own community. Assist in some project and learn through doing and get as much experience as possible. This will stand to you in the future.

What would you do if you weren't doing what you do?

I think I would follow a law career if I had a second life.

What is best piece of advice you have ever had?

In career terms, I did not follow the advice given to me 30 years ago to go out and make a name for myself. I am more of a back room person. However, I have found my role now with this very positive work on environmental awareness and engaging with the public. I hope to stay in this post for a few more years.



Top: Mary with Shanagarry NS; Above: A recycling project; Right: At Midleton Food Festival.

Best Dressed Pumpkin!

Scatty the Scarecrow is minding the crops in the garden. He won a "Best Dressed Pumpkin" competition! Can you colour him in exciting bright colours?





Nature's Web Wordsearch

Nature's Web Autumn 2011

Try out this giant wordsearch containing words found in this issue of the newsletter.

E L T R U T K C A B R E H T A E L B
L G D C A S H E W N U T N T E Q E A
A D N B G T D Z Y H X T U Q N S N S
U N N A T U G N A R O N C R T P O D
G O B L H T O H L R L N Z D P X I O
H M E C S C I Z M A E R R E N C T I
T L A C T T E A W T R E C W H O I H
E A P Z L A R T R K S Y U L X O B C
R O B V M Y P A A S N U W G O L I A
S L E S S U M D E M A E T S I A H T
U J O T H E B D X D I W V P B G X S
V O A F N B P R W A P L O I K O E I
L C M I G U E R I I E E C B U W P P
K X P Q M H A Z E L N U T N N N R F
L F T P G N I L R A T S T O A I T M
T I K O B K Q F T Q F T N K X E A A
L I C N U O C Y T N U O C K R O C R
N W B A K U J C O H F W S U C J Z O

Almond

Best Dressed
Pumpkin

Cashew Nut

Coolagown

Cork County Council

Exhibition

Hazelnut

Laughter

Leatherback Turtle

Mary Stack

Ocean Climate
Change

Orang-utan

Pine Marten

Pistachio

Rainbow

Starling

Thai Steamed
Mussels

Walnut



SOLUTIONS (Over, Down, Direction): Almond (2, 8, N); Best Dressed Pumpkin (18, 1, SW); Cashew Nut (4, 2, E); Coolagown (16, 6, S); Cork County Council (17, 17, W); Exhibition (17, 12, N); Hazelnut (6, 14, E); Laughter (1, 2, S); Leatherback Turtle (17, 1, W); Mary Stack (9, 6, SW); Ocean Climate Change (18, 18, NW); Orang-utan (11, 4, W); Pine Marten (3, 14, NE); Pistachio (18, 13, N); Rainbow (18, 17, NW); Starling (12, 15, W); Thai Steamed Mussels (18, 10, W); Walnut (9, 7, NE).

Learn More



Only €2.10 each including postage or €12.00 for all seven! 32pp each

Sherkin Island Marine Station has published a range of colouring books, guides and activity books for children. Each 32-page *Colouring & Guide Book* gives you the chance to colour, identify and learn about the wildlife around Ireland. *My Nature Diary* contains lined pages to fill in a daily record of sightings and nature news.

A Beginner's Guide to Ireland's Wild

Flowers With the help of this pocket-sized guide, beginners of all ages will be introduced to the many common wild flowers found around Ireland. 206pp

Only €8.50 inc. postage



Ireland's Hidden Depths has just been published by



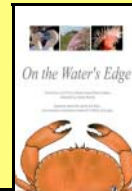
Sherkin Island Marine Station. Ireland's amazing marine life, glorious kelp forests and spectacular undersea scenery are featured in over 200 spectacular photographs by nature photographer Paul Kay. 277 x 227 mm 160 pps
Only €17.99 plus 2.00 postage

Sea Life DVD:

"On the Water's Edge"

Produced by Sherkin Island Marine Station, the dvd 'On the Water's Edge', features a short film on life beside the sea.

Presented by Audrey Murphy, it includes 6-10 hours of interactive material for children of all ages. **Only €13.30 including postage.**



A Beginner's Guide to Ireland's Seashore is a pocket-sized guide, suitable for beginners of all ages. This book will help you to explore the wonders of marine life found on the shores around Ireland.

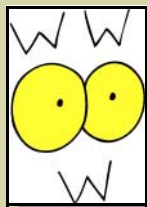
Only €8.00 inc. postage



"An A to Z of Geology" explores the fascinating world of rocks and geology - a world of volcanoes, tsunamis, earthquakes, diamonds, gold and even dinosaurs! Produced by Sherkin Island Marine Station, in association with the Geological Survey of Ireland.

Only €5.99 plus €1.00 postage

To order books, send your name and address along with a cheque or postal order made payable to Sherkin Island Marine Station to: Sherkin Island Marine Station, Sherkin Island, Co.Cork. Ireland. Visit: www.sherkinmarine.ie



Useful Web Addresses

There are lots of websites to be found on the internet that will give you further information on topics we have covered in this newsletter. Here are a few that may be of interest:

Sherkin Island Marine Station: www.sherkinmarine.ie

Starling: <http://www.birdwatchireland.ie/Default.aspx?tabid=446>
<http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/name/s/starling/index.aspx>

Ocean Climate Change: <http://www.marine.ie/home/community/education/Other+Resources+and+Courses/>

Pine Marten: <http://www.wicklowmountainsnationalpark.ie/PineMarten.html>
<http://www.askaboutireland.ie/learning-zone/primary-students/subjects/environment/posters/fact-sheets/>

Nuts: <http://www.treecouncil.ie/irishtrees/hazel.html> <http://theseedsite.co.uk/fruits.html>
<http://hawaiiikukuinutoil.com/kukui-nut-oil-history-in-hawaii/>
<http://www.walnuts.org/walnuts/index.cfm/about-walnuts/walnut-history/>

Environment Awareness Unit, Cork County Council:
<http://www.corkcoco.ie/co/web/Cork%20County%20Council/Departments/Environment%20%26%20Waste/Environmental%20Awareness>

Laughter is the best medicine: http://www.ox.ac.uk/media/news_stories/2011/111409_1.html

Leatherback Turtle: <http://www.iwdg.ie/iscope/sightings/details.asp?id=17803> <http://www.jellyfish.ie/turtle.asp>

Orang-utans: <http://www.hutan.org.my/Home/Home.html>

Colours of Nature: <http://science.howstuffworks.com/nature/climate-weather/storms/rainbow2.htm>
http://www.primaryscience.ie/maths_activities_activity_pdfs.php

Coolagown: <http://www.mycoolagown.com> <http://www.entente-florale.eu/efe>

We cannot be responsible for the content of external websites, so please observe due care when accessing any site on the internet.

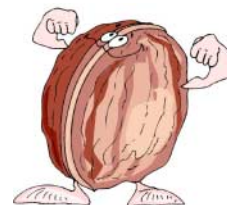
The World Around Us



"Foreign Correspondent"
Michael Ludwig reports
on interesting news from
the natural world.

Walnuts – the No. 1 nut!

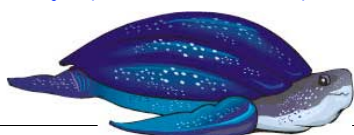
For a long time, scientists have known that nuts are important in our diet. However, scientist now believe that the walnut is the healthiest nut of all to eat. Certain nuts, such as walnuts, almonds, peanuts, pistachios and hazelnuts provide us with fibre, protein, vitamins and minerals, but a recent study by scientists in the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania, USA, have discovered that walnuts have twice as many anti-oxidants as any other commonly eaten nut. Anti-oxidants help to fight pollutants in our bodies and can improve our health. It is suggested that there should be more walnuts in our diet, but only for those who don't have a nut allergy!



Leatherback Turtles around the West Cork Coast

There have been a number of sightings of leatherback turtles in the waters around West Cork this summer. The Irish Whale and Dolphin Group reports a sighting made by Colin Barnes while onboard his whalewatching vessel, *MV Holly Jo*. It occurred about 1 mile south of Galley Head, which is near Clonakilty, in Co. Cork.

There can be as few as 30 leatherback turtles sighted each year in the waters around Ireland and Britain. The Irish Sea Leatherback Sea Turtle Project, which ran for a number of years, wanted to understand the populations, origins and behaviour of leatherback turtles in the Irish Sea. To learn more about leatherbacks in our waters, look at their final report online at <http://www.jellyfish.ie/turtle.asp>.



Orang-utan Bridges

On the Malaysian island of Borneo, orang-utan families are becoming isolated from each other and are finding it hard to get around in their forest. Human activities are the cause. These activities are destroying old trails and paths over waterways and through the forest by making roads, palm oil plantations and villages. This is causing habitats to become fragmented because the tree canopies have been removed. As the orang-utans cannot swim, they have no way of easily crossing smaller rivers, so to help them, eco-groups are building bridges for the orang-utans to cross over.

One problem the groups have encountered is that orang-utans destroy most of the materials used to make the bridges. Chester Zoo in the UK has been asked to help the Kinabatangan Orang-utan Conservation Project build bridges similar to those used in the Zoo. Those bridges are made of tough polyester webbing. It seems to be "orang-utan-proof!"



Laughter is the Best Medicine!

Most of us have heard the saying that "laughter is the best medicine" - that a good laugh makes us feel better. Now researchers from the University of Oxford believe that it really is true. Part of their research involved studying two groups of people, one watching comedy videos and the other watching boring programmes. They found those that had a good belly laugh were able to withstand 10% more pain than before they started watching the videos. Those who watched the boring programmes were actually less able to bear pain afterwards. Belly laughing (laughing so hard that you feel it in your tummy!) causes the body to release endorphins, which are chemicals that the brain produces to manage pain and make you feel good.



Up Close

Nuts

Here are some nuts that many of us are familiar with. It's interesting to see what they look like on the tree. The fruit of the cashew nut is quite a surprise! Not all "nuts" are true nuts. In fact, on this page the hazelnut is the only true nut, the rest are drupes. As explained on page 6, drupes are fleshy fruits which surround a hard shell, inside which is a single seed.

Hazelnuts – *Corylus avellana*

Hazelnuts are the nuts from the Common Hazel tree. The trees grow here in Ireland but are grown commercially in Turkey and Italy and in the USA. The nuts are used in cereals, baking, chocolates and chocolate spreads and its oil is used in cooking.



Courtesy of MPF CC BY-SA 3.0

Walnuts – *Juglans* spp.

Walnuts are the seeds from any of the *Juglans* species of tree. The walnuts we eat mostly come from the Persian Walnut Tree (also known as the English or Common Walnut). The tree is native from southern Europe, southwest and central Asia to the Himalayas and southwest China. They can be grown in Ireland but are very slow-growing.



Cashew Nuts – *Anacardiaceae*

Cashew trees are grown for their cashew nuts but also for the cashew apples - the fruit on which the single seed, or "nut", is attached. These fruit have a strong, sweet smell and taste, and are very juicy. However, the skin is delicate so they are hard to transport. Native to Brazil, the cashew tree was introduced into India and spread throughout South East Asia and to Africa.



Courtesy of Abhishek Jacob CC BY-SA 2.0

Pistachio – *Pistacia vera*

Pistachios have been eaten by humans for thousands of years. They are one of only two nuts mentioned in the Bible - almonds being the other. Grown on trees, they originally came from the dry areas of central and eastern Asia. The largest producers of pistachios are Iran, Turkey and California.



Courtesy of Sam Sheib CC BY-SA 2.5

Almonds – *Prunus dulcis*

Almond trees grow in warm, moist climates, with the largest groves in California and the Mediterranean. The flowers, which appear before the leaves in spring, are followed by fuzzy fruit in summer. The seeds are used for flavouring and for food, and their oils are used in cosmetics.



Courtesy of donareisloffer CC BY 3.0

Fun Page

How much did you learn?

The answers to all these questions can be found in the newsletter...see if you can remember!

1. The Irish name for the Pine Marten is "Cat crainn". What does this mean?
2. Which famous author is said to be responsible for the introduction of the European Starling into America?
3. Is the village of Coolagown in Co. Cork or in Co. Donegal?
4. Research believe a good "belly laugh" makes us feel better. True or false?
5. The skeleton of which type of dolphin is on display at the Sherkin Island Marine Station Exhibition on Sherkin Island?
6. Which organisation did Mary Stack join when she was 13 years of age?
7. What are they building on the Malaysian island of Borneo to help the orang-utans get around?
8. What needs to be removed from mussels before they are eaten?
9. According to the Marine Institute, are seawater temperatures on the increase or decrease?
10. The macadamia nut is native to Ireland. True or false?
11. What phrase helps us to remember the colours of the rainbow?
12. Name the two nuts mentioned in the Bible.
13. Off which headland did Colm Barnes spot a leatherback turtle this summer?
14. Does Mary Stack work as an Environmental Awareness Officer with Cork County Council or Cork City Council?
15. In Ireland, Starlings are also known by what name?

Answers: (1) Tree cat; (2) William Shakespeare; (3) Co. Cork; (4) True; (5) Atlantic White-sided Dolphin; (6) The Girl Guides; (7) Bridges; (8) Bysuss threads; (9) Increasing; (10) False; It is native to Australia; (11) Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain; (12) Pistachio and almond; (13) Galley Head, Co. Cork; (14) Cork County Council; (15) Stare.

What a Picture!

Have fun with your friends making up a title for this picture of Western Grebes, water birds in British Columbia.



Courtesy of Alan D. Wilson www.naturesweb.ie

Nature Jokes



What do you get if you cross a skeleton and a tumble drier?
Bone dry clothes.

Why are dolphins cleverer than humans?

Within 3 hours they can train a man to stand at the side of a pool and feed them fish!



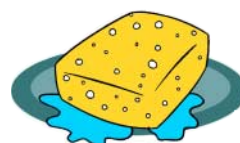
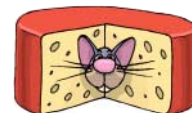
Why was the moth so unpopular?
He kept picking holes in everything.

What do you get if you cross a vampire and a circus entertainer?
Something that goes straight for the juggler!



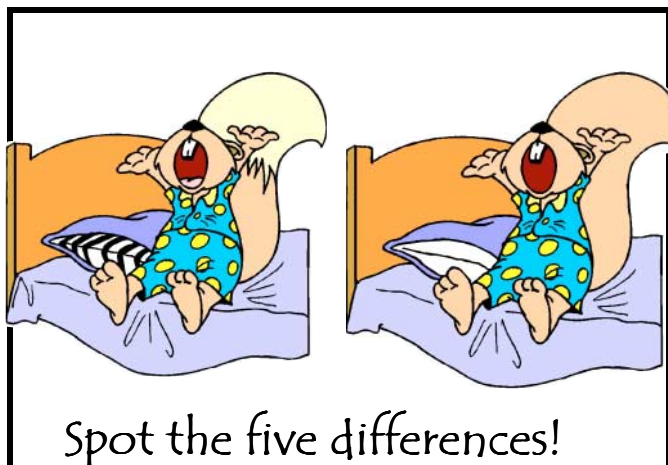
Why did the bat miss the bus?
Because he hung around for too long.

What cheese is made backwards?
Edam.



What is full of holes but can still hold water?
A sponge.

Why does a stork stand on one leg?
Because it would fall over if it lifted the other one.



Spot the five differences!

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Colours of Nature

By Jennifer Care

A "Natural" Rainbow

There are 7 colours in a rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. You could remember them with this phrase - **Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain**. Keep an eye out for rainbows when the sun is shining through light rain. To see one you'll need to stand with your back to the sun.

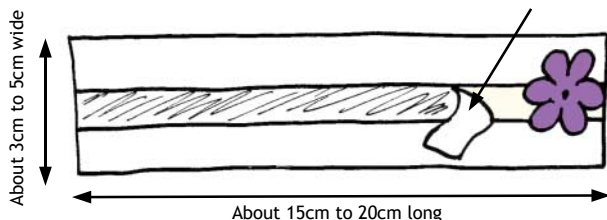
See if you can make your own "natural rainbow".

You will need:

- Cardboard
- Double-sided sticky tape
- Natural material (e.g. flowers and leaves)



Tip: if there is paper on the double-sided sticky tape, leave it where it is and peel it back as you need to.



Go around your garden and see if you can make a rainbow on your double-side tape using small leaves, petals, feathers and other natural things you find. How many different colours can you find?



Here is a simple "natural rainbow" made from flowers and leaves. Can you find other natural materials to recreate the colours of the rainbow? You can also use your imagination to create a different design.

Autumn Flipbook

Many trees change colour and shed their leaves in the autumn. You can watch the colours change over and over again by making your own flipbook of your favourite tree's autumnal display.

1. Find a camera.

2. Choose your tree (make sure it is one that sheds its leaves. Sycamores have a lovely show of colour, but holly is no good as it's evergreen and won't shed its leaves!)



3. Find a place to take your photograph from - somewhere you can find again - exactly! On a post, or a windowsill is good.

4. Take one picture every day at the same time of day, from the same place, starting on the first day you see leaves changing colour. Keep taking pictures for at least a week.

5. Print the pictures.

6. Keeping them in order, ask an adult to staple them together along the edge.

7. Enjoy your flipbook!



Courtesy of Jennifer Care

Conservation

A Village Making a Difference

Coolagown village near Fermoy in Co Cork, recently took part in a project aimed at reducing household waste. Twenty-two householders in the village set out to reduce the amount of waste they were sending to landfill, as well as conserve water and energy in their normal day.

At the beginning of the 12-month project the average household disposed of 7 kg of waste to landfill each week. By month 11, these residents had



The village reduced their waste by an amazing 74%!

reduced their waste by an amazing 74%. The annual residual waste reduced from 362 to 94 kg per household. All households signed up for home

composting systems, which include both the standard compost bin and a green cone per household.

At the beginning of the project, the waste bins in each household were examined by Council experts, who gave advice on how to find other ways of disposing of some items. Each household weighed their waste weekly and recorded their reducing weights. Various types of compost bins and food digesters were used, including greencone digesters which can be used to dispose of green



The residents of Coolagown village attended talks given by Cork County Council, which made them more aware of the environment and showed them ways to change their behaviour in order to help the environment.

kitchen waste and food scraps together. Each participant was taught the necessary skills and knowledge to divert food and other perishable waste away from the residual waste stream and into composting systems.



Perhaps you could practice some of these ideas in your home?

The village has gone on to receive a number of awards for the positive changes they have made. It's most recent and exciting is a Gold Medal in Entente Florale Europe (2011), a European competition for Towns and Villages, the aim of which is the improvement of the quality of life for local urban and village communities.

In this photograph, Dr. Mary Stack, Environmental Awareness Officer, Cork County Council and John Feeney, Chairperson Coolagown Development Group (both of whom started up the project) are receiving the 2011 Green Community Award.



Images courtesy of Cork County Council staff

Things that Coolagown Village do to help the environment:

Shopping habits

- Reduce packaging when shopping.
- Buying loose fruit and vegetables and buy what you need.
- Buying local produce to reduce air miles on purchases.
- Check use-by dates to avoid buying food that might get thrown out if not eaten immediately.



Reuse of household goods

- Use of the Cork County Council's website www.wastematchers.com and similar web sites e.g. www.freecycle.org.
- Use of charity shops and free advertiser papers
- Set up a local reuse centre in the village for the reuse of local quality household goods.



Recycling practices

- Highlighting good recycling practices such as washing and crushing items and identification of what can and cannot be recycled.



Safe disposal practices

- Give unrecyclable goods, medicines, batteries, electronic material to Civic Amenity Centres or disposal schemes.



Water Conservation

- Installing water saving devices and other water saving actions.
- Reducing how much water you use.



Nature's Noticeboard

Autumn 2011



Write notes
on the back of
an old envelope.

In your next forest
walk, see if you can
find a nut on the
ground. Take it
home to try and
identify it.

Check out
wildlife books at
your local
library.

When you eat
a peach, check out
its soft fruit and
stone inside (see
page 6).

Set up an exchange with
others in your community
and swap items that you no
longer want. (Ask parent's
permission first!)

If you don't like eating
wrinkly apples, make
a tasty dessert by
stewing them with
some berries.

Learn to
identify one
bird in your
garden.

Sherkin Island Marine Station would like to thank *PharmaChemical Ireland* for their support in making this newsletter possible. We would like to thank those who have contributed to this newsletter especially Jennifer Care, John Joyce, Michael Ludwig, Robbie Murphy, Mary Stack and Jez Wickens.

Visit the Sherkin Island Marine Station website at www.sherkinmarine.ie



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