



The World Around Us



"Foreign Correspondent"
Michael Ludwig reports on some interesting goings on in the natural world.

"Alby" the Albino Turtle

For nine years the Coolum District Coast Care Group have been monitoring marine Green turtle nests on the Sunshine Coast of Queensland, Australia. While on a recent data collecting trip, they discovered something that made headlines around the world. The very last of 122 turtle hatchlings to dig out of their mother's nest was albino, meaning it was without colour. Albino turtles are very rare so this was a special sighting. What was even more exciting was that they managed to insure the turtle (named "Alby") scuttled safely to the sea and was filmed doing it!

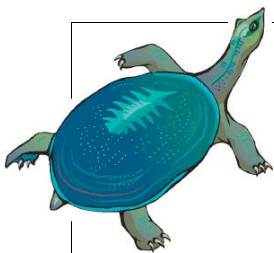


'Happy Socks' came floating back!



On 5 January 2016, Castletownbere Lifeboat were called out when a small boat was spotted drifting in Dunmanus Bay, West Cork. When located the carbon fibre rowing boat named "Happy Socks" was empty but inside it a note was discovered and it read: "Hello, if you find this boat, please contact Sarah Outen, who was picked up N4431 W029910443 due to hurricane forecast on 3/10/2015", along with her contact details. Sarah Outen is a British adventurer who set out from Tower Bridge in London on April 2011 on her *London2London: Via the World* expedition. Her goal was to row, bike and kayak around the northern hemisphere, starting in London and finishing in London, inspiring children and fundraising for charities.

One of the final stages of Sarah's expedition was to row solo across the North Atlantic Ocean from Cape Cod on the East Coast of the USA, home to the UK. With the approach of Hurricane Joaquin, bringing 60 knot (111 kph) winds and large waves, Sarah had to abandon the boat off the coast of Portugal. She sought help from a passing cargo ship and said goodbye to "Happy Socks". Amazingly, though, the carbon fibre boat, which cost about €78,000, drifted for 143 days and eventually arrive in Dunmanus Bay, still intact. It was retrieved by Castletownbere Lifeboat and returned to Sarah, much to her delighted.



Yangtze giant soft-shell turtles

Following the recent death of *Cu Rua*, the Yangtze soft-shell giant turtle that lived in Hanoi's central lake in Vietnam, there are now only three of these giant turtles left on Earth. *Cu Rua*, which means "Great Grandfather Turtle",

was estimated at being over one hundred years old and was adored in Vietnam. Of the three remaining turtles, there is both a male and female in captivity in Changsa Zoo in China and another male in a lake near Hanoi in Vietnam. Attempts are being made to produce offspring but this may not be possible.

BEE Champions!

Ireland is buzzing as 68 organisations have come together to help save our bees. They are taking part in The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020. Their goal is to find ways to stop the decline of bee populations in Ireland.

Because there are fewer and fewer wildflowers to feed the bees many of them are starving. There are 98 species of bees in Ireland, all are in trouble, and one third are threatened with extinction. Bees are pollinators, which means they carry pollen from flower to flower, fertilising the plant so that it can produce fruit and seeds. Pollination is critically important for producing our food crops so we should all be doing what we can to help the bees. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020 has a Junior Version which can be found at:

http://ark.ie/downloads/Junior_Pollinator_Plan_for_Web2.pdf

