

Nature'sWeb

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Image courtesy of Susan Murphy Wickers

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Editor's Page

Welcome to the
Spring Edition of
Nature's Web!

Dear Reader,



Welcome everyone to the Spring issue of Nature's Web. In this issue John Ahern tells us what life was like as a walking tour guide and how much he enjoyed exploring nearly every corner of Ireland. Test your knowledge on the movements of animals on the shore and learn about the Red Squirrel and how it is under threat from another squirrel species. Also find out about the Crocus, a much-loved flower which has been providing us with colour throughout early spring. You can check out nature news from around the world on page 11 and enjoy a giggle with jokes on page 13.

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

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Foreign Correspondent:

Michael Ludwig

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Sherkin Island, with Cape Clear on the horizon.

© Robbie Murphy 2014

Bolts of Lightening over West Cork

Last summer, on 18th July, there was a huge electrical storm over West Cork. My brother Robbie captured some of the lightening as it stuck in Roaringwater Bay. Lightening is caused by a build of electricity in the clouds jumping to earth, like a giant spark. To see Archived Reports of Lightning Strikes over Ireland visit: www.met.ie/climate/lightning.asp.

I am really glad Robbie got a picture because I am almost embarrassed to say that I didn't see one second of it. I really don't like thunder and lightening and I had my head well hidden under the covers, hoping it would go away. There is a little part of me that regrets not taking a look ... from a safe place of course!

As GAELIGE! We are delighted to have teamed up with An Gúm, who are translating Nature's Web into Irish. Issues are now available, as gaeilge, at:

<http://www.gaeilge.ie/maidir-le-foras-na-gaeilge/an-gum/ion-dulra/>

Courtesy of Bord Bia



Crispy Whiting with Dill Mayonnaise

What you need:

- 4 x 175g skinless and boneless whiting fillets
- 2 eggs
- salt and pepper
- 200g fresh white breadcrumbs
- 25g plain flour
- 1 tablesp. olive oil
- 25g butter
- 4 tablesp. Mayonnaise
- 1 teasp. chopped fresh dill

Method:

- Heat a large frying pan. Season the flour on a plate. Lightly beat the eggs in a shallow dish with a pinch of salt and put the breadcrumbs in a separate shallow dish. Lightly dust the whiting fillets in the seasoned flour and then dip in the beaten egg, shaking off any excess. Coat in the breadcrumbs.
- Add the olive oil and butter to the frying pan and cook the coated whiting fillets for 2-3 minutes on each side until crisp and golden brown. The exact time will depend on the thickness of the fillets.
- Meanwhile, mix the mayonnaise with the dill and season to taste. Arrange the crispy whiting on warmed plates with the dill mayonnaise and some garden peas to serve.

Other fish you could use: Hake or haddock fillets

Serves 4

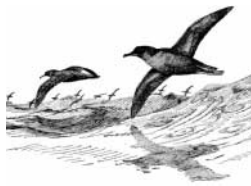
Courtesy of Bord Bia - Irish Food Board www.bordbia.ie.

Manx Shearwater

The Manx Shearwater is one of Ireland's most important breeding seabirds. Many of us know little about them because we hardly ever see them. This is because they spend most of their time at sea and only come ashore to breed, usually on the darkest of nights to avoid attack from large gulls. They gather in large groups, known as colonies, on small, inaccessible islands along the coast. Though silent at sea, in order to locate its mate in the darkness, it makes crowing calls as it returns to the colony. Its mate, which nests in a burrow, responds to the calls and guides the traveller in.

Summer Visitors

The Manx Shearwater is a summer visitor to Ireland. They arrive in March and leave in September and October to spend winter at sea in the South Atlantic off South America. It is a medium-sized bird, black on top and white underneath. It has a straight bill with a hooked tip and tube-shaped nostrils. Its wings are long and pointed and are stiffly held as it skims over the water. As its name suggests, it uses the wind and the air currents to glide over the waves in search of food. Its diet consists of small fish, plankton, molluscs and crustaceans.



What's in a name?

The origin of the name Manx Shearwater dates back to a time when there was a huge population of Manx Shearwaters occupying a small island off the Isle of Man. The Isle of Man is an island in the Irish Sea, between Ireland and Britain and the word "manx" relates to something from the Isle of Man or its people, language, or culture. For example, the manx cat is a breed of tail-less cat that originated on the island.



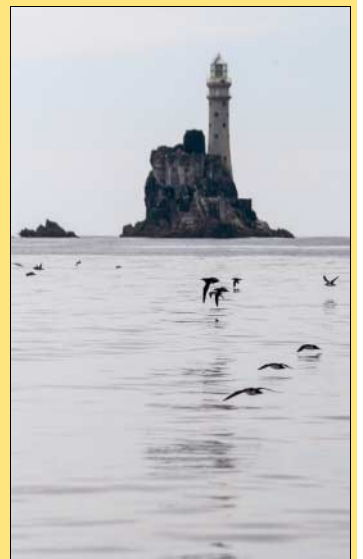
Images courtesy of Robbie Murphy

Manx Shearwaters can live for a very long time. There is a BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) record of an adult bird ringed on Bardsey Island in Wales in 1957 and recorded again on the island in 2008, making it over 50 years old!

Manx Shearwater in Ireland

Remote islands are good because the birds have fewer predators to worry about. The largest colonies in Ireland are on islands in Kerry, on the Copeland Islands in Co. Down and on the Saltee Islands in Co.

Wexford. 90% of the Ireland's breeding population breed at less than 10 sites around the country. It is for this reason that they are on the Amber list for conservation concern. Birds on the Red List are those of highest conservation concern, Amber List birds are of medium conservation concern and the Green List birds are not considered threatened. For further information on this list, which was produced by BirdWatch Ireland and the Royal Society for the Protection of Bird Northern Ireland, visit: www.birdwatchireland.ie



Manx Shearwaters passing Fastnet Rock in West Cork.

Aquatic Life

Rushing Here & There?

On the seashore, many creatures can move with great speed. Fish, crabs and prawns can move quickly by using fins, legs or tails. Other creatures, such as razor shells, can burrow quickly into sand or mud to avoid hazardous conditions or predators.

Look at the images below, can you work out whether the animal is able to move around the shore quickly, slowly or not at all.



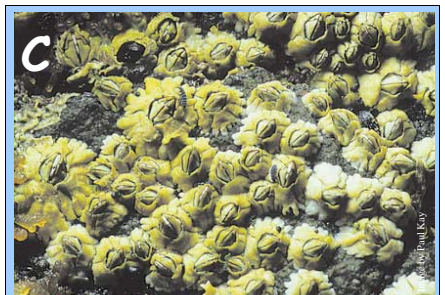
The Butterfish has a long, flexible body and slimy, slippery skin.

☐ Quick ☐ Slow ☐ Not at all



Limpets have a sucker foot, which it uses to cling to rocks and for movement.

☐ Quick ☐ Slow ☐ Not at all



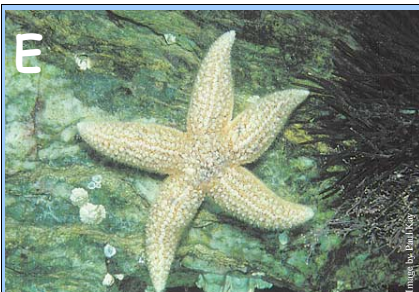
Barnacles produce a cement that 'glues' them to the rocks and other structures.

☐ Quick ☐ Slow ☐ Not at all



Periwinkles graze on seaweeds that cling to the rocks on the shore.

☐ Quick ☐ Slow ☐ Not at all



Starfish have tube-feet with a sucker on the end for moving and feeding.

☐ Quick ☐ Slow ☐ Not at all



Dolphins have streamline and powerful bodies.

☐ Quick ☐ Slow ☐ Not at all



Sponges are simple animals that permanently attach to rocks or shells.

☐ Quick ☐ Slow ☐ Not at all



A Razor Shell has a strong muscle foot, which it uses to pull itself deep into sand.

☐ Quick ☐ Slow ☐ Not at all



Crabs move sideways on the shore using its walking legs.

☐ Quick ☐ Slow ☐ Not at all

A: Quick; B: Slow; C: Slow; D: Not at all; E: Slow; F: Quick; G: Quick; H: Quick; I: Quick.

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The Red Squirrel

Scientific Name: *Sciurus vulgaris*

Irish Name: lora rua

The Red Squirrel is a small animal, with a long bushy tail and tufted ears. It is actually a rodent, which makes it a relative of the rat and the mouse. Just like its cousins, it has strong, sharp teeth that are constantly growing. For this reason, the squirrel is always gnawing on its food to keep its teeth in shape. Its diet consists of hazelnuts, pinecones, buds, shoots, mushrooms, fruit and berries. In order



to store food for winter, it feeds from morning until evening and though it does not hibernate, it does become less active during the cold winter months.

Mating occurs in January and February and young kittens are born after about 5-6 weeks. They are born naked and blind and it takes seven to ten weeks before they can feed for themselves.



The Red Squirrel has few predators in Ireland, with the Pine Marten being one of the few.



Home Sweet Home

The Red Squirrel is a secretive animal and not often seen, spending most of its time in the trees. It lives in a drey, which is a round structure built against tree trunks and constructed out of sticks and leaves.

FACT FILE

Colour: Reddish-brown in summer with white underside. The coat may turn greyish in winter.

Length: 35-45 cm.

Diet: Hazelnuts, pinecones, buds, shoots, mushrooms, fruit and berries.

Habitat: Forests and woodlands.



The Red Squirrel vs. the American Grey Squirrel

The red squirrel is the original Irish squirrel, unlike the American Grey squirrel which was introduced into Ireland at the beginning of the 20th century. Since its introduction, the presence of the Grey squirrel has become a problem in Ireland, especially for the populations of Red Squirrel. The Grey squirrel is bigger and stronger and usually out-competes the red squirrel for food. It also carries the squirrel pox virus, from which the grey squirrel can recover but if it is passed on to the red squirrel, it is usually fatal. Since the American Grey squirrel's introduction into Ireland, together with a decline in tree habitats, the Red Squirrel population has fallen dramatically in Ireland. The American Grey squirrel is now considered an alien species here.



A Walk on the Wild Side!

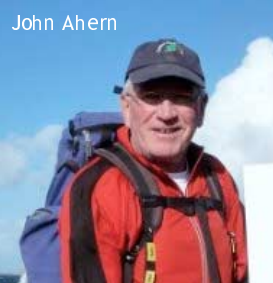


All in a Day's Work

John Ahern – Walking Guide

PROFILE

John Ahern operated South West Walks Ireland for the last 20 years, taking visitors on walking tours to some of the most beautiful and spectacular places in Ireland.



John Ahern

Image courtesy of South West Walks Ireland

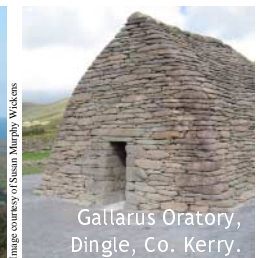
Experiencing some of the remoter parts of Ireland.



Image courtesy of Robbie Murphy



Sherkin Island and Cape Clear,
Co. Cork.



Gallarus Oratory,
Dingle, Co. Kerry.

Where do you work?

I am retired now but for the past twenty years I operated a Walking Holiday Company called South West Walks Ireland. During the winter months I travelled in Europe and the USA promoting the business and was a Walking Guide during the summer time. The best of both worlds!

How did you become interested in the outdoors?

My Dad was from East Cork and my Mom was from Kerry. I was born in Tralee in 1948 but soon after moved to Limerick. There were seven in my family, five boys and two girls. My father was in the Army and as children we moved around Munster a lot, living in Tralee, Limerick, Ennis, Cork and Galway but to mention a few. This made for an exciting youth and my love for the outdoors came from my Dad who liked nothing better than to take us as children into the fields and hills.

Have you always been interested in being a guide?

No, in my earlier years I had very little interest in the outdoors but as I got older my love of nature, history, culture, music and the people of rural Ireland grew. The best way to learn about all these things is to walk in the countryside, meet and talk with the people.

What training did you do to become a walking guide?

I did not know it at the time but my early years with my father in the countryside was like a university to me! At school I loved Irish and Irish history and both these experiences were the foundation for my knowledge and my success as a guide. I love Ireland and all its beauty so it's easy to get excited about it.

What was a typical day like?

Each day as a guide we had an early start, say 7.00 am for breakfast, to get the group ready for a full day's walking on the hills and byways of the West and Southwest Coast. A lovely evening dinner would follow and time to enjoy music in the local pub. Hard work! My goal each Walking day was to give our customer an enjoyable Irish experience, one never to be forgotten.

What is the best and worst things about the job?

Most of our walking tours were week long and it was lovely

and a joy to see the faces of the people/tourists as they walked each day in some of the most beautiful and spectacular places in Ireland. It was sad to say goodbye at the end for the week to the new friends I had made as they returned to their own countries. I loved my job and this helped in a BIG way in making the experience for the Walking visitor a real and enjoyable one.

Where did your work take you?

Over the past 20 years I have walked and visited nearly every corner of Ireland and its islands many times. Lucky me! Then in the winter I got to visit Europe and USA on tourist promotional trips with Tourism Ireland. But my first love was and is to be out in nature.

Did you work alone or as part of a team?

We had a great team in the company and this was very important as it allowed me the opportunity to be a guide and to travel. Teamwork is VERY important. All the backroom work done in the office made my days out guiding with the visitors a "piece of cake"!

What advice would you give someone interested in this type of work?

To enjoy your job you have to love what you do, be happy doing it and always try to deliver more than people expect. Always remember that saying goodbye to the visitor/customer is as important as the welcome. This advice was given to me years ago and it's something I will never forget.

What would you do if you didn't work as a guide?

During the past 48 years since I left school I have had many jobs and experiences. Some for short periods and others for longer, BUT I would do it all over again if the opportunity presented itself! Be happy, enjoy what you do and all those around you will be happy too!

<http://www.southwestwalksireland.com>

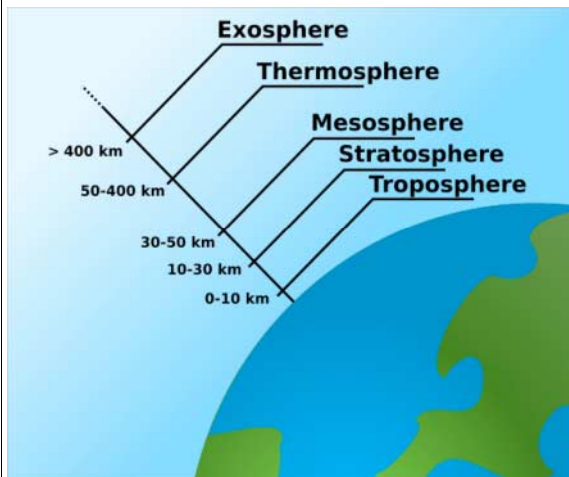
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Special Feature

The Greenhouse Effect

The layers of the atmosphere

The atmosphere is divided into 5 layers. It is thickest near the surface and thins out with height until it eventually merges with space.



The **troposphere** is the first layer above the surface and contains half of the earth's atmosphere. Weather occurs in this layer.

The **stratosphere** is the second layer. Many jet aircrafts fly in the stratosphere because it is very stable. The stratosphere contains the **OZONE LAYER**, which absorbs harmful rays from the sun.

The **mesosphere** is the next layer up. Rock segments burn up in this layer.

The **thermosphere** is the fourth layer and this is where space shuttles orbit.

The **exosphere** is the layer where the atmosphere merges into space. It is extremely thin.

What is the Greenhouse Effect?

A greenhouse is a small house made of glass that is used to grow plants. A greenhouse traps the sun's rays and keeps the heat from escaping. It is warm inside.



In the same way that the glass traps heat in a greenhouse, the atmosphere traps heat next to the earth.

Certain gases in the atmosphere such as carbon dioxide, methane and water vapour trap energy from the sun.

The natural greenhouse gases act like a big blanket around the earth, keeping it warm.

Humans can create extra greenhouse gases but this means that more heat gets trapped. This causes the temperature of the earth to rise, which results in Global Warming.

Global Warming is the recorded increase in the average temperatures of the earth's atmosphere and oceans. Global Warming affects the weather patterns on Earth and causes Climate Change.

Climate change results in higher sea levels, more rainfall and severe droughts and floods. What effect would these changes have on humans and animals?

This information is from Met Éireann's Primary School Resources page, where parents, teachers and children will find resources that have been designed for use in primary schools in Ireland.

<http://www.met.ie/education/>



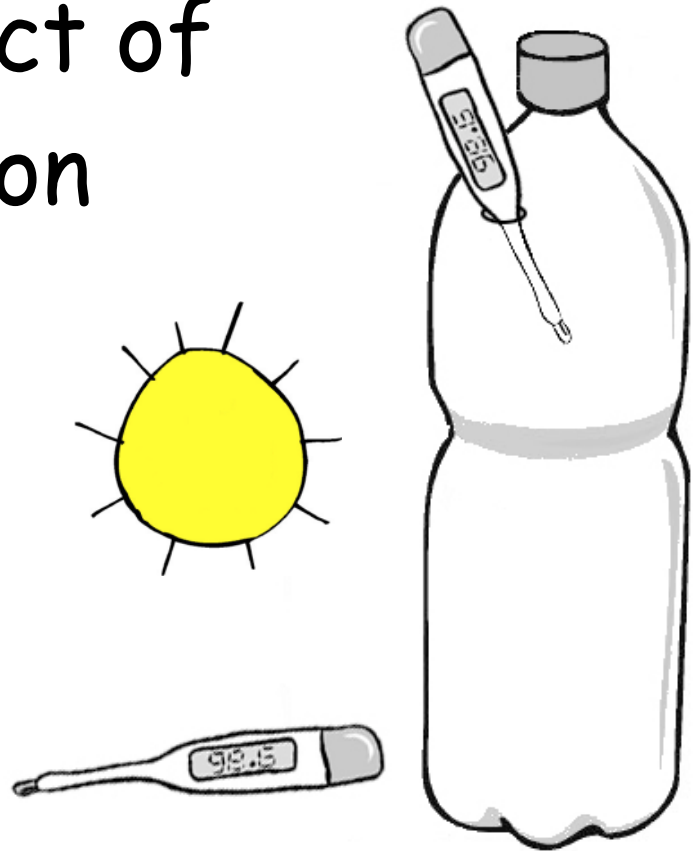
What is the Ozone Layer?

The ozone layer is a layer of concentrated ozone gas about 24km up in the atmosphere. Like a good pair of sunglasses, it protects us from the sun's harmful ultra-violet rays. This very important layer is being destroyed by CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons), which are used in industry and everyday life (e.g. aerosol cans). The chlorine in these compounds can cause ozone destruction. The hole in the ozone leaves humans and wildlife open to unsafe levels of UV light. Most nations have agreed to stop using these harmful chemicals, which is helping to reduce damage to the ozone layer.

Test the Effect of a Greenhouse on Temperature

Materials needed:

- Plastic bottle
- Nail
- 2 thermometers
- Notebook
- Pencil



Part 1:

Making a greenhouse

1. Make a hole near the top of the plastic bottle with the nail.
2. Insert the first thermometer into the hole.

Part 2:

Recording data

1. Place the second thermometer next to the bottle.
2. Make sure that the same amount of sunlight reaches both thermometers.
3. After 10 minutes, note temperature values from both thermometers.
4. Record the data in the notebook.
5. Take the temperature records again after another 10 minutes.



Part 3:

Analysing results

1. Ask the following questions:
 - Do both thermometers record the same temperature?
 - If no, which one is higher?
 - Can you explain why these two temperature records are not the same?

Read the information on the previous page about how us humans can create too many Greenhouse Gases and what effect these are having on world temperatures.

Courtesy of Met Éireann
<http://www.met.ie/education/>

The Crocus

Scientific Name: Crocus

Irish Name: Cróch

The Crocus is a familiar and much-loved flower of early spring and is often the first to bloom in the garden after winter.

The beautiful little flowers - yellow, white, purple, lilac, or mauve - provide a burst of colour, even on snow-covered ground. Not all crocus species flower in spring; many flower in autumn. There are about fifty species, mostly found in the Mediterranean region. The plant originated there and in the Middle Eastern and European mountains.

The Autumn Crocus (*Colchicum officinale*), which is not a true crocus but related to lilies, is particularly poisonous and it is best to wear gloves when planting. A rare Irish native, it has medicinal properties that relieve gout.



Crocuses peeking through the snow are often the first sign of spring!

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Crocus_sativus_01.jpg by Menerte Bloom CC BY-SA 4.0



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Crocus_sativus_01.jpg by Menerte Bloom CC BY-SA 4.0

The crocus is an easy flower to grow and produces beautiful blooms.

Growing Crocuses

Crocuses are perennial and grow from a swollen stem-base or 'corm', which has fleshy roots at the base.

The corm is actually a swollen underground plant stem and it is a means of protecting the plant during the harshness of winter. When conditions are right, the stem is ready to emerge above ground and produce its flowers.

Crocuses are easy to grow. They need well-drained soil, usually lime-rich, and will grow in full sun or in shade. For the spring flowering variety it is best to plant them in the autumn so they have time to produce new roots before winter sets in.



To plant, dig a hole that is approximately three times the depth of the corm. For example, if a corm is 2cm high, then plant it in a 6 cm deep hole. Space the corm about 3 cm apart. As the flowers are only about 6 cm high when fully grown, it is best to plant a number of corm in one area to make an impact.

The Most Expensive Spice

One species of crocus is grown as a spice. This is a particular crocus, Saffron Crocus (*Crocus sativa*), not just any crocus you find in the garden.

Saffron is the tiny red stigma (the female part of the plant) at the centre of the flower. These stigmas are harvested by hand and roasted to dry them. Small amounts of this expensive seasoning adds flavour and colour to dishes. It takes approximately 450-500 stigmas to make 1 gram of saffron. Because it is so labour-intensive to produce small amounts of the spice, it is a very expensive spice to buy.



The stigma (red parts above) are hand picked and dry-roasted to produce saffron (below).



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Crocus_sativus_01.jpg by Menerte Bloom CC BY-SA 4.0

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Crocus_sativus_01.jpg by Menerte Bloom CC BY-SA 4.0



Crocus corms, which have a net-like papery outer covering.



The World Around Us



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

When the Sun, Moon and Earth are in almost perfect alignment!

On 20th March 2015, there was an almost total solar eclipse over northern Europe. Solar eclipses occur when the Moon passes between the Earth and the Sun. Over Ireland, approximately 92% of the Sun was obscured from our view. A total solar eclipse takes place if the Sun, Moon and Earth are lined up nearly perfectly. Though they occur every year, the last time Ireland had a good one was in 1999 and the next one won't be until 2026.

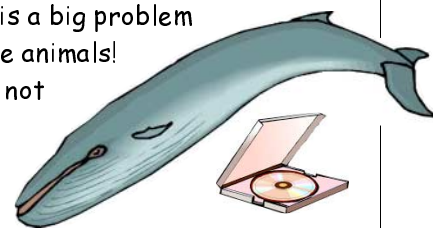


This picture of the solar eclipse on 20th March 2015 was captured through a high level welding helmet. It is extremely dangerous to look directly at the sun as it can cause permanent eye damage.

Image courtesy of Jez Wickens

Rubbish in the Sea and its affect on marine animals

In August 2014, a dead 14m Sei whale was found in the Elizabeth River, a tributary of Chesapeake Bay in Virginia, USA. When examined they found a broken DVD case in its stomach. It prevented the whale from feeding and so it starved. Then it was hit by a ship, which fractured its backbone. Marine debris can look like food and is a big problem for marine animals! Please do not litter.



....yet more marine waste!

Something that many use to clean up with is also becoming a big beach litter problem. The UK's Marine Conservation Society reports an average of 35 wet wipes were found for every kilometre of UK beach cleaned in 2014. That is 50% more than in 2013! "Wet wipes" are often just thrown away but they don't decompose (disintegrate) very fast. When flushed down toilets they can cause sewer blockages and overflow into rivers and the seas. Yeech!



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The World's Largest Container Ship

Container ships carry goods around the world. At the

beginning of the year, the "MSC Oscar", with a carrying capacity 19,224 containers, became the best container ship in the world. Built in South Korea, it is 396m long (nearly four football pitches laid end to end) and needs 16 m of water to float. Though "Oscar" is smaller than the previous largest ship, the "Globe," it can carry 124 more containers. To give an idea of her cargo space, she can carry 1.15 million washing machines!

Goats Fighting Invasive Plants in America

When plants are introduced into an environment and start to grow out of control, they are said to be invasive. To get rid of invasive plants, chemicals are often used but this can damage the soil. Digging them up can also cause erosion. One company has found a very eco-friendly solution. They have started hiring out herds of goats to clear areas of invasive plants in an eco-friendly way - by eating them! Goats eat nearly everything and a herd of 35 goats can eat half an acre of vegetation in about four days. This method doesn't get rid of the invasive plants

completely so an area has to be grazed a number of times. Eventually the plants begin to weaken and less seeds are produced over time so fewer plants grow.



Learn More



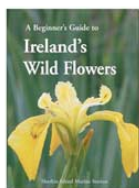
Only €2.10 each including postage or €10.50 (plus €2.00 p&p) for all seven! 32pp each

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

is 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 €10.00 plus €3.00 postage

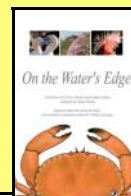


Sea Life DVD:

"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 €6.00 plus €1.30 p&p.



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.

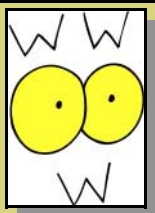
Only €8.00 inc postage



"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. Or visit: www.sherkinmarine.ie and pay by Paypal.



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:

Lightning: <http://www.met.ie/climate/lightning.asp> <http://www.lightningmaps.org/realtime>

Manx Shearwater: <http://www.birdwatchireland.ie/irelandsBirds/Tubenoses/ManxShearwater/tabid/143/Default.aspx>

Rushing Here & There?: <http://www.theseashore.org.uk/theseashore/SpeciesPages/Spp%20Thumbnails.htm>

The Red Squirrel: <http://www.wicklowmountainsnationalpark.ie/redsquirrel.html>

<http://mammals.biodiversityireland.ie/speciesinfo.php?TaxonId=119283>

Walking Guide: <http://www.southwestwalksireland.com/> <http://www.discoverireland.ie/Things-To-Do/Ideas-for-activities/Walking>
<http://www.irishtrails.ie/>

Greenhouse Effect: <http://www.met.ie/education/> <http://www.epa.gov/climatestudents/basics/today/greenhouse-effect.html>

The Crocus: <http://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/search-results?form-mode=false&query=Crocus>

Solar Eclipse: <http://www.timeanddate.com/eclipse/solar/2015-march-20> <http://www.galwayastronomyclub.ie/>

World's Largest Container Ship: <http://www.vesselfinder.com/vessels/MSC-OSCAR-IMO-9703291-MMSI-355906000>

Rubbish in the Sea: <http://cleancoasts.org/> <http://www.blueflagireland.org/>

Invasive Plants: <http://invasivespeciesireland.com/> <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30583512>

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

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 How many washing machines can fit in the container ship, the MSC Oscar?
- 2 Which layer of the atmosphere contains the ozone layer?
- 3 Do periwinkles graze on seaweed or grass?
- 4 How many stigmas are in 1 gram of saffron?
- 5 A Red Squirrel is a rodent. True or false?
- 6 How many wet wipes were found for every kilometre of beach cleaned in the UK in 2014?
- 7 What flower is in the Fancy Flower Pot on page 14?
- 8 Manx Shearwater are seabirds. True or false?
- 9 In which month was the electrical storm in West Cork?
- 10 When is the next near total eclipse of the sun in Ireland?
- 11 Where was John Ahern born?
- 12 Which animal is used in the fight against invasive plants in America?
- 13 How many feet has a limpet?
- 14 Which is bigger, Red or American Grey Squirrels?
- 15 How many thermometers are used in the experiment on page 9?
- 16 Which herb is in the dip for the Crispy Whiting recipe?
- 17 From which organisation did John Ahern retire?
- 18 What type of whale died after swallowing part of a DVD case?

Answers: (1) 1.15 million; (2) Stratosphere; (3) Seaweed; (4) 450-500; (5) True; (6) 35 per kilometre; (7) A daffodil; (8) True; (9) July; (10) 2026; (11) Tralee, Co Kerry; (12) The goat; (13) One; (14) American Grey Squirrel; (15) Two; (16) Dill; (17) South West Wales Ireland; (18) Sei Whale.

Think of a Title!

Can you think of a title for this photograph of two Black-Tailed Prairie Dog?

(Image courtesy of Alan D. Wilson
<http://www.naturespicsonline.com>)



Nature Jokes



What do you call a sleeping bull?
A bulldozer



What travels around the world but stays in a corner?
A stamp.

How do crows stick together in a flock?
Velcrow.



Did you hear about the three eggs
Too bad.

What time do ducks get up?
At the quack of dawn.



Why wouldn't they let the butterfly into the dance?
Because it was a moth ball.

What part of a fish weighs the most?
Its scales.



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Activity

Fancy Flower Pot!

Turn a flower pot into a "fancy" flower pot by decorating it with coloured tissue paper. Gifts often arrive wrapped in tissue paper so next time put some aside for this project.

You will need....



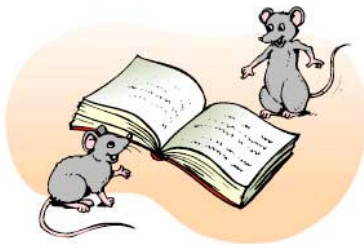
- A flower pot
- Coloured tissue paper
- PVA glue
- Paintbrush
- Scissors
- Small plastic container

- 1 Clean and dry the flower pot.
- 2 Put a few squeezes of PVA glue into a small plastic container. Add a little water and mix to make the glue slightly runny. Brush some glue on to a section of the pot.
- 3 Lay a piece of white tissue paper on the layer of glue and press the paper down using the paintbrush and more glue.
- 4 Repeat until you have built up a few layers of white paper all over the pot. Allow this white layer to dry. (By first coating the pot in white tissue paper, the next layers of coloured tissue paper will be more vivid.)
- 5 Add coloured tissue paper to decorate the pot. The more layers of one colour you add, the stronger that colour will be. Cut strips to make solid lines of colour and cut shapes out of the tissue paper to add designs: circles, stars, squares, or flowers - wherever your imagination takes you!
- 6 Once dry use it as a decorative flower pot.



Images by Susan Murphy Wickens

Nature's Web Wordsearch



Nature's Web Spring 2015 Wordsearch

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



Container Ship
Crispy Whiting
Crocus
Eclipse
Fancy Flower Pot
Goats
Greenhouse Effect
Invasive Plants
John Ahern
Lightning
Manx Shearwater
Moving on the Shore
Red Squirrel
Saffron
Sei Whale
Temperature
Walking
Wet Wipes



SOLUTIONS (Over, Down, Direction): Container Ship (18,1,S); Crispy Whiting (14,4,SW); Crocus (7,17,NE) Eclipse (16,9,W); Fancy Flower Pot (17,14,N); Goats (11,8,E); Greenhouse Effect (16,1,SW); Invasive Plants (1,15,NE); John Ahern (2,10,NE); Lightning (3,2,E); Manx Shearwater (1,1,E); Moving on the Shore (16,11,W); Red Squirrel (16,13,W); Saffron (8,9,NW); Sei Whale (16,2,S); Temperature (1,12,N); Walking (2,8,N); Wet Wipes (1,2,SW).

Nature's Noticeboard!

Spring 2015



earch a square metre of the garden using a magnifying glass. You could be surprise at the small life that goes unnoticed every day. Things you might find: insects, eggs, bites out of leaves, spider webs



lan a walking adventure this spring with your family. Perhaps a quiet country road, a local hill or a park. Pick a route that is suitable for everyone's walking ability. Remember to be prepared and be safe.



ecord the insects that visit your garden over a week. Keep your records in a notebook and draw a sketch of each animal. Even better, can you take a photograph of any of them?



identify one tree that you pass everyday on your way to school. Find out its English, Irish and scientific name, whether it is deciduous or evergreen, what shaped leaves it has and if it produces nuts or seeds.



ow that it is getting brighter, remember to turn off the lights around the house when they are not needed. This will help save on your home's energy bills.



row sunflowers seeds from mid-April until the end of May and give some seeds to a friend to see who can grow the tallest! Check the variety before you begin as its needs to be a tall variety if you are going for a record!



We appreciate support from the EPA toward the newsletter.

Sherkin Island Marine Station would like to thank the following for their help with this newsletter, especially John Ahern, John Akeroyd, Met Éireann, Michael Ludwig, Matt Murphy, Robbie Murphy and Jez Wickens.

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

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