



Nature's Web

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Seafood Recipe

Study of Birds

Seals

Otters

Marram Grass

Life as a Lifeboat
Coxswain

School Talk

Experiments

Learn More

The World
Around Us

Up Close -
Wracks

Fun Page

Water
Conservation

Beach Safety

Nature's
Noticeboard

With warmer weather and longer days, the summer gives us the chance to experience and observe nature and the sea up close.

Whether you are a keen naturalist interested in the seals and otters that play about in the tide or an avid conservationist that collects rubbish from the beach or maybe more interested in getting into the water yourself, then this is the season for you.

Early in the morning and just before dusk is a good time to go out wandering near the shore. Many creatures, such as otters and birds, take advantage of the dull light. It gives them some protection from predators and allows them to move about freely. With a huge growth of vegetation at this time of the year birds have a great supply of food and so can always be seen out foraging in the garden, along the roads and near the shore. Young birds will also be venturing out learning to fly so keep an eye out for them.

The sea is generally a few degrees warmer so now is the time to take the plunge! Borrow a pair of fins, a pair of goggles and a snorkel and spend some time searching in shallow waters for life. This is one of the best ways to observe marine life and you may see many different types of fish, crabs, seaweeds, sea urchins and starfish. Be careful though, the sea can be dangerous so only swim on safe beaches with someone looking after you. Check out page 15 in this issue on how to be safe on the beach and in the water and go out and enjoy yourself!



Photo courtesy PDPphoto.org

SURF'S UP!

Photo: Robbie Murphy

Summer Sunsets



Summer is the season with the longest days, the warmest weather, the clearest skies and the most sun. We experience summer in Ireland when the Earth is on that part of its orbit where Ireland is facing more toward the sun. When this occurs the sun rises higher in the sky, stays in the sky longer, and the sun's rays hit the ground more directly. Likewise, in winter Ireland is oriented away from the sun so therefore the sun stays low in the sky, is up in the sky for a shorter period, and its rays strike the ground less directly.