

# All in a Day's Work

## Dr Úna Fitzpatrick – All-Ireland Pollinator Plan

Úna FitzPatrick works at the National Biodiversity Data Centre, where she looks after information on Ireland's plants and pollinators. She has recently been involved in putting together an All-Ireland Pollinator Plan [www.biodiversityireland.ie](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie)



Úna FitzPatrick

Photos courtesy of Úna FitzPatrick



Above: Pollinators.  
Right: Grown-ups learning about mining bees.



### Where do you work?

I work at the National Biodiversity Data Centre. Biodiversity is a word we use to describe all the wildlife and habitats that occur in nature. There are over 30,000 different kinds of plants and animals in Ireland! Lots of these we don't even notice, like tiny insects or fungi in soil. In the Centre we keep information of what plants and animals we have in Ireland and where around the country they occur. Importantly, we also track if their numbers are increasing or decreasing. We want to know which ones are in trouble and are at risk of disappearing from Ireland (going extinct) so that we can try to help before that happens.

### Where do you get information on Ireland's plants and animals?

A lot of our information comes from paid experts, but some of it comes from members of the public who are interested in nature. We call these people citizen scientists.

### Can I be a citizen scientist and tell you about birds, mammals or plants that I see?

Yes, if you know what animal or plant you've spotted you should let us know. That information is very useful and will be stored safely in our databases and you'll be able to see it appear on our maps. You will need to know what species you've spotted (e.g., Robin, Bluebell, Fox) and then go online and tell us where it was and what date you saw it on. You can do that here: <http://records.biodiversityireland.ie/>

### Do you work alone or as part of a team?

I am part of a great team of eight people. Some of us are experts on nature, and some of us are experts on computers and make sure that the data we collect is safely stored and can be viewed by everyone on the maps on our website.

### What is a day in your life like?

My job is very varied. I respond to a lot of emails and often teach adults how to identify different bees or plants. I also study the data to check which plants or animals are disappearing from Ireland. Recently, I have spent a lot of time working on the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan which is a plan to try and save Ireland's bees.

### Why does Ireland need a Pollinator Plan?

If we want to have fruits and vegetables to eat, or wild flowers in the countryside, we need insects to pollinate them. Bees are the most important pollinators in Ireland but unfortunately they are declining. The Pollinator Plan has come up with a big list of 81 things we could do to help. Bees need flowers to feed on and safe places to live right across Ireland, not just in the countryside. You can read about how to help in your school or garden in the junior version of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.

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

I'm very lucky. I love nature so my job is like a hobby that I get paid to do. Don't forget that you will spend a lot of your life at work. Don't just think about how much money you will make - you should find something you are interested in and will enjoy.