

# Nature'sWeb

Issue No. 26

Summer 2012

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Courtesy of Inland Fisheries Ireland

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## Editor's Page

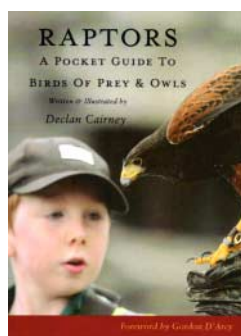
# For the Love of Birds!



Golden Eagle  
(Illustration by Declan Cairney)

Eleven-year-old Declan Cairney from County Galway loves raptors - he likes them so much that he has written and illustrated a book specifically about them. The book is called "Raptors - A Pocket Guide to Birds of Prey and Owls". Raptors are birds of prey and are very much in the news lately, particularly the White-tailed Eagles that have nested in Co. Clare (see page 11).

Declan has plenty of first-hand experience and knowledge about these birds, having spent months working with raptors in the Burren Birds of Prey Centre.



Falcons, hawks and eagles are Declan's first love, but he likes all birds and nature in general.

It is very exciting to see someone so enthusiastic about nature. Best of luck to Declan and hopefully he will sell lots of copies of his book!

"Raptors - A Pocket Guide to Birds of Prey and Owls" can be purchased directly from Declan Cairney, Campsie House, Caherglassaun, Gort, Co. Galway. The price is €7.50 plus postage (€2.70 for 1, €5 for 2, €7.50 upto 10). ISBN: 978-1-908477-76-7

Welcome to the  
Summer Edition of  
Nature's Web!

Dear Reader,



Welcome everyone to the Summer 2012 issue of Nature's Web. Angling and waterways feature in this issue. Mark Corps, Angling Advisor with Inland Fisheries Ireland gives us an insight into his working day as well as giving lots of information to those who might want to take up angling as a hobby. Angling is a great pastime and is suitable for people of all ages (see page 15). We also hear from Richard Creagh who tells us about wildlife on the Owenduff River, which flows through Ballycroy National Park. 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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## SEARED TROUT

WITH TOMATO COULIS & GARLIC VINAIGRETTE

### What you need:

- 4 x 170g / 6oz fillets of trout
- Salt and freshly milled black pepper
- Olive oil

### Tomato Coulis:

- 4 tomatoes - skinned, seeded & blended
- 25g / 1oz butter - diced
- Pinch castor sugar

### Garlic Vinaigrette:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic - crushed
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons cold water
- Juice of half lemon
- 4 tablespoons very finely chopped onion & courgette
- Chopped thyme and fennel
- 1 bay leaf



Photo courtesy of [www.bim.ie](http://www.bim.ie)

### What to do:

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in frying pan. Season trout and quickly sear/fry trout for 3 minutes each side. Remove.

### Tomato Coulis:

Cook tomatoes for 3 minutes.

Continue to cook, adding diced butter little by little. Season and add a pinch of sugar.

### Garlic Vinaigrette:

In a small saucepan mix all ingredients except onion, courgette and herbs.

Boil for 30 seconds and then remove from heat and allow to infuse for 10 minutes.

Strain, check taste and add onion, courgette, thyme and fennel.

Serves 4

Brought to you by BIM.

For more fish recipes visit [www.bim.ie](http://www.bim.ie)

\*You can substitute salmon or arctic char

Recipe created by Ciarán Carberry, Institute of Technology, Tallaght

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# The Swift

Scientific Name: *Apus apus*  
Irish Name: Gabhlán gaoithe



Courtesy of Falcot #2 CC SA 2.0

By Julian Wyllie

The word 'swift' means "Moving fast, or able to move quickly". The bird called the Swift is very well named - it is certainly able to move quickly. In normal flight, they average around 50 miles per hour and can quite easily put on a little burst to 60-ish if needed. That maybe doesn't sound that fast if you're travelling in a car, but when you're less than 20 cm long with no 'engine' as such, it's quite a feat. They quite literally live in the air - when it comes to bedtime, they simply spiral up a few thousand feet, switch off and grab a couple of hours sleep.

### FACT FILE:

**Colour:** Blackish-brown with a pale throat.

**Length:** 16-17 cm.

**Diet:** Insects, which they catch while in flight.

**Habitat:** Nests in roofs and old buildings. A summer visitor to Ireland from May to August.

### A Summer Visitor

Swifts are summer visitors to Ireland, spending their winter somewhere south of the equator, though exactly where, no-one really knows. Being highly mobile, they go where their food goes, and as they feed on flies, that can cover a very large area indeed. The first Irish Swifts begin to arrive in late April and at a glance can easily be mistaken for an all black Swallow.

Unlike Swallows, however, they have swept back wings which give them a boomerang appearance. Another difference is their preference for towns and built up areas, whereas Swallows tend to prefer a more rural environment, nesting in old barns and outhouses.

### Saving the Swifts

Swifts have tiny feet and if one happens to land on the ground, it will stay there, helpless, unless someone finds it and re-launches it in the air. The only time they come to land is to nest and because of this essential part of life, Swifts are now facing big trouble. Put simply, modern buildings and the demolition of old, unused warehouses and factories is leaving them with fewer and fewer choices when it comes to finding a place to build a nest. All that is needed is a three inch crack in a wall or a gap underneath a roofing tile, but these are becoming harder and harder to find. However, not all is lost and it is not too late to help Swifts rebuild their populations. In The Low Countries (Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg), it is now illegal to build a new house without providing a small cavity or hollowed out brick, just large enough for a Swift family to be raised. Although Ireland is somewhat behind in these forward thinking ways, the situation here is slowly improving and there are two websites dedicated to helping Swifts in their plight on [www.swiftconservation.org](http://www.swiftconservation.org) and [www.saveourswifts.co.uk](http://www.saveourswifts.co.uk) Both give advice on all ways of helping Swifts and give information on help available to those wanting to help. In return for our efforts, we could see the return of screaming parties of Swifts to our towns and villages (they make the most incredible screaming sounds in June and early August). And, perhaps best of all, they eat flies, including mosquitoes (but not bees). That sounds like a fair deal doesn't it?



Courtesy of Robbie Murphy

The body of the swallow (above) is lighter in colour and it has a longer forked tail.

# STICKING AROUND

## The Wonderful World of Barnacles



### Barnacles – A Subject of Study for Charles Darwin

The first person to fully study and classify barnacles was the world-famous biologist Charles Darwin, who published a series of scientific papers on them in 1851 and 1854, before he published his groundbreaking book - 'On the Origin of Species'. Some historians have suggested that Darwin studied barnacles as a way of putting off work on his great study of evolution. But it has been shown more recently that he studied barnacles at the recommendation of his friend Joseph Dalton Hooker so that he could

understand at least one species of animal in depth. This was in order to test his theories about natural selection and the natural world in general.

### Captain Cockle's Log



Welcome aboard shipmates!  
Together, we'll be taking a look at the world's greatest natural resource – the sea.  
Copyright John Joyce 2012  
[www.captaincockle.com](http://www.captaincockle.com)

### Barnacles – the Curse of Pirates Everywhere!

As well as bad food, scurvy and the risk of sudden death in bloodthirsty battles, pirates everywhere had to deal with the threat of barnacles. Like seaweed, tube worms and other encrusting marine life, barnacles cling to the bottoms of ships and slow them down, making them easier for the authorities to catch. To keep barnacles at bay, pirates would regularly run their ships aground and scrape the bottoms clean. Richer navies would go to more elaborate measures, like sheathing the bottoms of their ships in copper, which is toxic to marine life.

### Barnacles – Upside Down Crabs?

Barnacles, like many insects, belong to that vast group of animals, the phylum Arthropoda. Within this, they are members of the same sub-phylum as crabs and lobsters. Indeed, a barnacle may be considered to be a crab that, instead of using its legs to run around and hunt for things to eat, has chosen the easier option of lying on its back and waving its legs in the water to trap passing morsels of food. To protect themselves, barnacles have developed external shells made of six calcareous plates and two moveable plates, which protect the animal inside when it is not feeding.

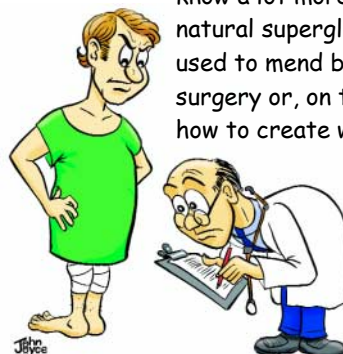


### Barnacles – A Medical Breakthrough?

A series of experiments by the Zoology Departmental NUI Galway are looking at the natural super glues used by barnacles to attach themselves to rocks or floating objects. If these experiments are successful, then we'll

know a lot more about creating a natural superglue that can be used to mend bones in human surgery or, on the other hand, how to create ways of

preventing barnacles clinging to ships and lowering their fuel efficiency.





# Pygmy Shrew



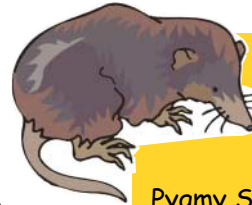
Photo courtesy of polanderechby CC BY 2.0

It is thought that Pygmy Shrews have been in Ireland since the last ice age. They are a protected species here.

**Scientific Name:** *Sorex minutus*  
**Irish Name:** Dallóg fhraoigh

The smallest mammal in Ireland is the Pygmy Shrew. It is so small it only weighs 3 to 6 grams, depending on the time of year. Shrews live alone, with each having its own territory. They are very aggressive towards each other and will fight other shrews if they meet. They live on the edges of woodland, in hedgerows, bogland, meadows and gardens where they search day and night for food. To keep their bodies warm and in order not to starve, they must eat their own body weight in food every day. Considering they are so small, it doesn't seem a lot but it is when you compare it to the amount of food larger animals eat. They have a very short life-span, living only for about 13 months.

Pygmy Shrews are insectivores, which means their diet is mostly insects. They love all creepy crawlies - flies, beetles, earwigs, spiders and small worms - but they are so small that earthworms are too big for most of them to eat!



### What are they like?

Pygmy Shrews are not rodents, like rats and mice are. They are more closely related to moles.

The Pygmy Shrew has a fur-covered body, which keeps it warm in the winter months and a long tail, relative to the size of its body. It has a pointed, whiskered snout, small eyes and ears that are partly hidden by its fur.

The Pygmy Shrew makes a very high-pitched squeak, which most people cannot hear, though some children can!



### Their Enemies



The Pygmy Shrew has a few enemies such as foxes, owls and stoats. Domestic cats also catch them but rarely eat them because the shrew has very strong scent glands that most predators don't like. Humans rarely see Pygmy Shrews and are not a threat to them, though in a roundabout way humans may kill shrews by using pesticides.

### FACT FILE

**Length:** 7-10cm

**Weight:** 3-6grams

**Colour:** Dark brown and pale grey underneath.

**Habitat:** The edges of woodland, hedgerows, bogland, gardens and meadows.

**Diet:** Lots of creepy crawlies, such as flies, beetles, spiders, earwigs and small worms.

**Young:** It has 2 to 3 litters per year, with about 6 young each time. The young are born blind and weigh only 0.25g!

# Choking the Waterways

In the Autumn 2010 issue of *Nature's Web* we talked about the 'Most Unwanted' species. Known as 'invasive species', these are certain animals and plants not native to Ireland. Once introduced here they take over their new environment, often destroying the native species that are present.

Being an island on the edge of Europe, Ireland is lucky not to have too many invasive species, but some of the worst we have are aquatic, or water-loving, plants. Our waterways can become completely choked by a single species and this can affect boating, angling and water-based recreation.



Courtesy of Inland Fisheries Ireland

**English Name:** Himalayan balsam  
**Scientific name:** *Impatiens glandulifera*  
**Irish Name:** Lus na pléisce



## Himalayan balsam

One such invasive species is Himalayan balsam. It is an attractive annual plant (each lasts one year and dies at the end of the growing season) that originated from Asia. It was first introduced to Ireland and the British Isles in 1839 as an attractive garden plant. By 1855 it had 'escaped' and was growing in the wild. It is now found along riverbanks and in other areas with damp soils, including marsh and woodland. It is widespread throughout Ireland.

Himalayan balsam grows to over 2 m high and has large, bright pink flowers and distinctive 'popping' seed heads. While a pretty plant, it can cause a range of problems in bankside habitats as it can out-compete native species for space. This hugely increases the risk of riverbank erosion by stopping the growth of native bankside vegetation. The roots of native species would usually bind the banks and hold the soil in place. In the autumn, with just balsam as the only species on the bank, it leaves bare soil when it dies. This bare soil is easily eroded and washed away by rain or floods.

For more information visit:

<http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/Invasive-Species/invasive-species.html>

## What it looks like

Himalayan balsam typically grows to 2 m high, with a soft green or red-tinged stem and slender serrated leaves, up to 15 cm long. The crushed foliage has a strong musty smell. It flowers from June and October; the plant forms seed pods which explode when disturbed, scattering the seeds up to 7 m from the parent plant. Each plant can produce up to 800 seeds. The Balsam's only redeeming factor is that the green seed pods, seeds, young leaves and shoots are all edible.

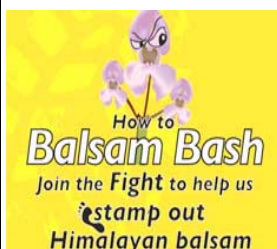
## Removal & "Balsam Bashes"

Balsam can be easily removed from the ground as it has a very shallow root ball. During Fisheries Awareness Week (in May) Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) run



Root ball

a number of 'Balsam bashes' to remove it. If you want to know how to organise and run one or where you can go to join in with a bash, please go to the Fisheries Awareness website - [www.faw.ie](http://www.faw.ie)



Information courtesy of Fisheries Awareness [www.faw.ie](http://www.faw.ie)

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# All in a Day's Work

## Mark Corps – Angling Advisor, Inland Fisheries Ireland



Mark with a specimen shad.

Mark Corps is an Angling Advisor for Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI). After university he taught Environmental Education, as well as Outdoor Education. He ended up running Residential Education centres before changing career some five years ago.

### Where do you work?

I am based in the IFI office in Swords. However the job takes me all over Ireland either coaching angling or organising visits for journalists. Sometimes I go abroad running promotional shows.

### Have you always been interested in what you do?

Yes. I did a post graduate degree in Marine Biology at Glasgow University, which included research into Bass.

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

As well as a teaching qualification I hold a variety of angling coaching awards.

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

This varies dramatically. Early in the year we tend to take part in a variety of promotional shows, mainly in Europe, to attract anglers to Ireland to fish. Later in the year I am involved in running a variety of projects such as *Fisheries Awareness Week* (see [www.faw.ie](http://www.faw.ie)) and the *Something Fishy* programme for schools ([www.somethingfishy.ie](http://www.somethingfishy.ie)). Of late I have been heavily involved in developing educational angling programmes that we will hopefully roll out in the next couple of years. A major part of my post during the game fishing season is organising / running trips for visiting foreign journalists. The aim is to promote various Irish fisheries / areas by getting suitable articles written, emphasizing what is best in Ireland. On top of this I am also involved in coaching angling, as well as some elements of research.

### What is your main aim?

To promote Irish angling to all.

### What is the best thing about your job?

The variety of the job as well as the fact that as a passionate angler this job often allows me to practice my hobby whilst at work.

### What is the worst thing about your job?

Midges.

### Do you enjoy your work?

Yes very much, but like all jobs it has its good, as well as bad points. However overall the good totally outweighs the bad.

### What equipment do you use?

Fishing rods and reels.

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

I work within an excellent team of like-minded colleagues.

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

Fish as often and as much as you can and expect to get wet.

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

Lecture in Outdoor Education.

### What is best piece of advice you have ever had?

*Treat the earth well.*

*It was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children.*

*We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our Children.*

Ancient Indian Proverb



Top: Teaching on a ghillies (fishing attendants) course; Middle: Landing a fish for a novice; Bottom: Mark Corps holding a large salmon.

Courtesy of Inland Fisheries Ireland



# Wordsearch

## Nature's Web Summer 2012 Wordsearch

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

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

Angling  
Ballycroy  
Barnacles  
Cuckoo  
Fishing  
Himalayan  
Balsam  
IFI  
Invasive species  
Little Duck  
Mark Corps  
National Park  
Orca  
Owenduff River  
Pygmy Shrew  
Rhinoceros  
Swift  
Waterways  
White-tailed  
Eagle



SOLUTIONS: (Over, Down, Direction) Angling (11,13,W); Ballycroy (16,2,S); Barnacles (2,9,NE); Cuckoo (8,6, NW); Fishing (14,1,SW); Himalayan Balsam (2,16,E); IFI (10,18,E); Invasive Species (1,1,SE); Little Duck (18,10,N); Mark Corps (5,1,SE); National Park (12,1,SW); Orca (1,6,NE); Owenduff River (17,1,S); Pygmy Shrew (13,14,W); Rhinoceros (18,16,NW); Swift (18,15,N); Waterways (2,12,E); White-tailed Eagle (1,16,NE).



# Fun Catch!



# Learn More

## A Beginner's Guide to Ireland's Wild Flowers

Have you ever wanted to put a name to the wild flowers you see about you every day, or while on a walk, or on holiday? With the help of this pocket-sized guide, you will be able to do just that. Beginners of all ages will be introduced to the many common wild flowers found around Ireland. 206pp



Only €8.50 including postage

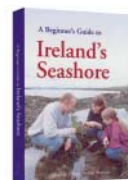
## Sea Life DVD:

### "On the Water's Edge"

Sherkin Island Marine Station has launched a dvd called 'On the Water's Edge'. It is made up of a short film on life beside the sea and is presented by Audrey Murphy. It includes 6-10 hours of interactive material for children of all ages. Available from: Sherkin Island Marine Station, Sherkin Island, Co. Cork. €6.35 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 including postage



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.



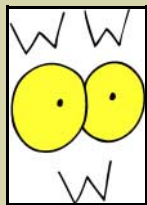
"An A to Z of Geology" explores the fascinating world of rocks and geology - a world of volcanoes, tsunamis, earthquakes, diamonds, gold and even dinosaurs! Produced by Sherkin Island Marine Station, in association with the Geological Survey of Ireland, the book aims to highlight the importance of geology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

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](http://www.sherkinmarine.ie) where you can order 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:

Raptors: [www.birdofpreycentre.com](http://www.birdofpreycentre.com) [www.goldeneagle.ie](http://www.goldeneagle.ie)

Swift: <http://www.birdwatchireland.ie/IrelandsBirds/Swifts/Swift/tabid/1127/Default.aspx>

Barnacles: [www.captaincockle.com](http://www.captaincockle.com) <http://www.marlin.ac.uk/phylumdetails.php?phylum=2326#maxillopoda>

Pygmy Shrew: <http://www.wicklowmountainsnationalpark.ie/PygmyShrew.html>  
<http://www.irelandswildlife.com/2011/07/pygmy-shrew-sorex-minutus/>

Choking the Waterways: <http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/Invasive-Species/invasive-species.html>  
<http://invasivespeciesireland.com/most-unwanted-species/established/terrestrial/himalayan-balsam>

Fisheries Awareness Week: [www.faw.ie](http://www.faw.ie) [www.fisheriesireland.ie](http://www.fisheriesireland.ie)

White-tailed Eagle: <http://www.goldeneagle.ie/portal.php?z=9>

Cuckoo: [www.bto.org/cuckoo](http://www.bto.org/cuckoo) <http://www.birdwatchireland.ie/IrelandsBirds/Cuckoos/Cuckoo/tabid/1096/Default.aspx>

Rhinoceros: <http://www.worldwildlife.org/species/finder/rhinoceros/rhinos.html> [www.museum.ie](http://www.museum.ie)

Killer Whale: <http://www.russianorca.com/index.php?lang=en>  
[http://www.iwdg.ie/species\\_profiles.asp?speciesID=2122](http://www.iwdg.ie/species_profiles.asp?speciesID=2122)

Watersheets: [www.corkcoco.ie](http://www.corkcoco.ie) > Environment > Environmental Awareness > Youth > Latest Publications

Ballycroy National Park: <http://www.ballycroynationalpark.ie/>

Angling for Children: [www.faw.ie](http://www.faw.ie)

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

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# The World Around Us



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

## Back from Extinction in Ireland

There was great excitement in Co. Clare this April. A pair of young White-tailed Eagles were found nesting on a small island on Lough Derg, near Mountshannon. It is the first documented evidence of this species breeding in Ireland since they became extinct here over 100 years ago.

You might ask, how can they be nesting in Ireland if they are extinct? Well, the Golden Eagle Trust began a re-introduction scheme in 2007, with the aim of re-establishing the birds here. As part of the scheme, young White-tailed Eagles have been taken (with permission) from nests in Norway and released in Killarney, Co. Kerry, every summer for the past five years. In total, 100 White-tailed Eagles have been released.

The breeding pair, a four-year-old male and a three-year-old female, settled in the Mountshannon area in early 2011 and in recent weeks began nest building. There is at least one egg in the nest and if everything goes according to plan, it should hatch by the end of May.



## Cuckoo... Cuckoo...!

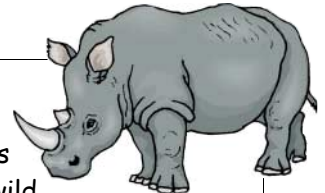


In May of last year, scientists from the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) satellite-tagged five male cuckoos in Norfolk in the UK.

When the cuckoos left the UK at the end of the summer, the information from the tags showed the birds taking a wide variety of routes across Spain or Italy, over the Mediterranean and across the Sahara desert. All the birds reached Congo and survived over winter. Once they began their migration back to the UK in the spring, they lost one bird in Cameroon and two others are still unaccounted for. Two of the cuckoos returned to the UK in the beginning of May, having completed a 10,000-mile (16,093-km) journey. You can track their journey on [www.bto.org/cuckoos](http://www.bto.org/cuckoos). The project is giving scientists lots of information on what research efforts and conservation action could be undertaken for these birds. A recent nationwide bird survey, carried out by BirdWatch Ireland, has shown an alarming drop in the number of cuckoos that visit Ireland.

## Removed from Temptation

There is an increasing amount of Rhinoceros horns being poached (illegally taken) from wild animals. Rhinoceros are killed for their horn. The horn is very valuable and illegally sold in a number of countries for use in old-fashioned medical treatments. The value of the horn has prompted thieves to steal rhino horn from museums in various parts of Europe. To protect staff, visitors and for the security of the museums from the thieves, the National Museum of Ireland made the hard decision to remove the exhibits and replace them with replicas. Meanwhile more and more countries with rhinoceros and other species thought to have magical powers are taking bigger steps to stop the poaching. The sad part is that the horn has no medical value!



## Standing out in the Crowd!

Killer Whales, or Orcas, are black and white - well usually. However, scientists at the Far East Russia Orca Project recently observed and photographed a 7m all-white male killer whale swimming with his family. Christened "Iceberg", the killer whale may or may not be a true albino (without pigment or colour) - it has a little black behind the dorsal fin. The only way



the researchers can be sure is if his eyes are pink and uncoloured. Pink eyes are the genetic "proof" of an albino.

Unfortunately, they haven't had a chance to check yet. But, "Iceberg" certainly stands out in a crowd, or his family "pod"!

## Activity

### The Story of the Little Duck's Little Adventure

Little Duck was a duckling and he liked to go on adventures. One day he decided to leave his nest in the reeds and cross the river to see what was on the other side. When he didn't come home for lunch, Mother Duck became worried and went to find him. But he was nowhere to be seen.

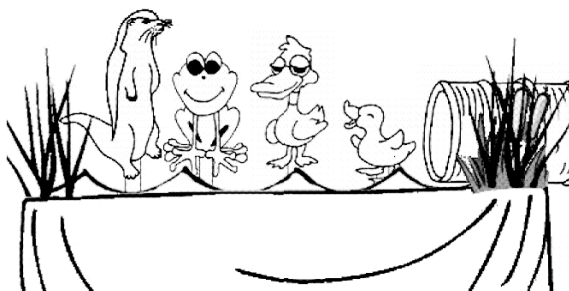
Otter, who was sitting in his holt by the side of the river, saw the very upset Mother Duck and went to see what was wrong. "What's the matter Mother Duck?" said the Otter. "My little duckling is missing!" said Mother Duck. Otter quickly swam to Frog, who was sitting on a lily pad, and asked her to help find Little Duck. Frog, Otter and Mother Duck searched high and low but could not find Little Duck.

Suddenly Otter heard a squeak coming from a large barrel floating in the river. Could Little Duck be inside? Otter had a look and there, huddled in the back of the barrel, was a frightened Little Duck. While exploring the other side of the river he had come upon the barrel and being curious, decided to have a look inside. It was very dark and he was very frightened - too frightened to find his way out again.

Little Duck was happy to be back with his mother and both mother and duckling were thankful to their friends Otter and Frog for coming to their rescue.

In time, Little Duck continued to explore the river but, from then on, he was just a little more careful!

# Play Acting!

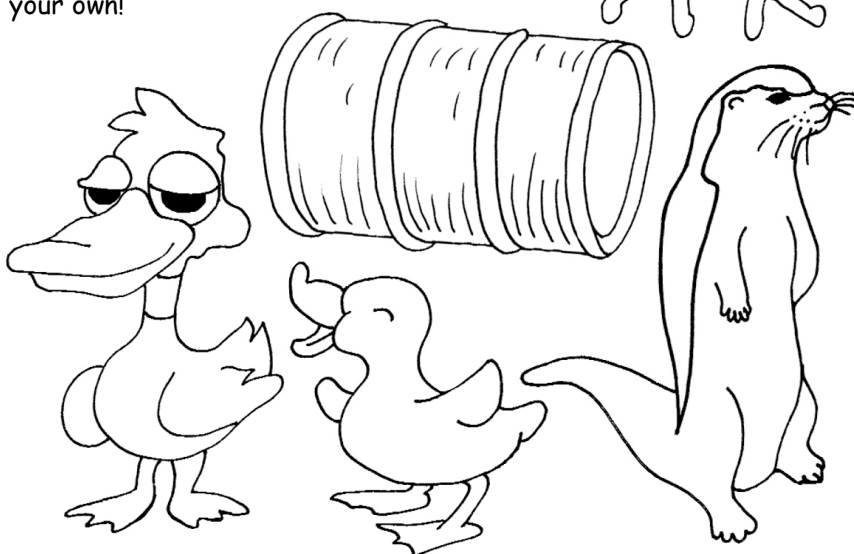


Photocopy, cut out and colour in the pictures below. Attach each one to a stick using tape, creating puppets for performing in a play.



Here is a chance to act out a story with your friends and to take part in "Little Duck's Little Adventure".

Construct a stage using a covered table. Draw waves on some card and attach them to the edge of the table, as well as reeds or twigs on either side to give the impression of a river and its banks. Read aloud "The Story of the Little Duck's Little Adventure" to you and your friends to familiarise yourselves with it. Assign a "character" to each person. You, a parent or teacher, could read the story aloud again, with you all act out the parts, or you could write a new story using these characters - better still draw characters of your own!



This activity highlights some of the animals that live on a river. It encourages children to think about these animals and how changes to the river's environment will have an effect on their lives. The activity is taken from Water Worksheet 1, produced by Sherkin Island Marine Station for the Environmental Awareness & Research Unit, Cork County Council under the Local Agenda 21 Partnership Fund, to support the Green School programme. All water worksheets are available on [www.corkcoco.ie](http://www.corkcoco.ie) > Environment > Environmental Awareness > Youth > Latest Publications.



# Fun Page

## How much did you learn?

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

- Through which national park does the Owenduff River flow?
- Where are the White-tailed Eagles nesting?
- Mark Corps is involved with Fisheries Awareness Week. What website would you visit to get more information about it?
- What is another name for an orca?
- Do swifts visit Ireland during the summer or the winter?
- Are Pygmy Shrews rodents?
- Which type of angling would you be involved in if you caught a shark?
- According to Captain Cockle, what are the curse of pirates everywhere?
- Himalayan balsam is considered an invasive plant in Ireland. True or false.
- For which organisation does Mark Corps work?
- Are barnacles more closely related to crabs or fish?
- What did the National Museum of Ireland recently remove from its exhibition, to be replaced with replicas?
- Which two animals rescued Little Duck?
- How long a journey did two of the satellite-tagged cuckoos make?
- Declan Cairney wrote "Raptors - A Pocket Guide to Birds of Prey and Owls". How old is Declan?

Answers: (1) Ballycroy National Park; (2) Lough Derg, near Mountshannon, Co Clare; (3) www.faw.ie; (4) Killer whale; (5) Summer; (6) No; (7) Sea angling; (8) Barnacles; (9) True; (10) Inland Fisheries Ireland; (11) Crabs; (12) Rhinoceros horn; (13) Otter and Frog; (14) 10,000 miles (16,093 km); (15) Eleven.

## Think of a Title

Have fun with your friends making up a caption for this picture of a crocodile.



Courtesy of US Fish and Wildlife Service.

## Nature Jokes



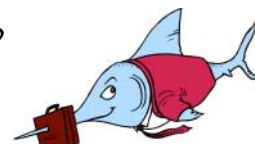
What holds the sun up in the sky?  
Sunbeams!

Where do fish wash?  
In a river basin.



What is uglier than an armadillo?  
Two armadillos!

Which fish dresses the best?  
The swordfish - it always looks sharp!

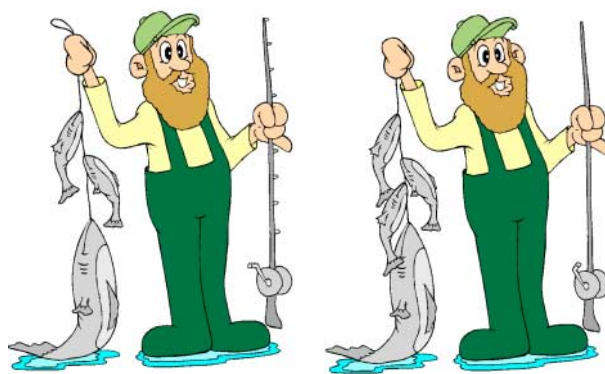


Where do fish get their money from?  
The river bank.

Why did the fish blush?  
Because it saw the boats bottom.



Why is a dog so warm in summer?  
He wears a coat and pants.



Spot the five differences!

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# Conservation

## A River in Summer



Image courtesy of Mike Brown/NPWS.

The Owenduff is an important breeding ground for Atlantic Salmon, with many places along its length providing suitable sites for redds, which are shallow nests in which eggs are laid. Brown Trout can also be found in the river.

By Richard Creagh

The Owenduff River winds its way westwards from the Nephin Beg Mountains, through Mayo's biggest area of bog. Most of the river passes through Ballycroy National Park. This 11,000 hectare park is considered special because of its huge area of blanket bog, most of which has remained unchanged since it started developing after the last ice age. The Owenduff River system is one of the last remaining large, unforested river catchments in Ireland. A river catchment catches all the water from the surrounding area, eventually bringing it downriver to the sea. This unchanged area has created a healthy environment and home for a huge variety of habitats, animals and plants, which means it has a diverse ecosystem.



SUMMER is the season of life in Ireland; long days, mild temperatures and even the odd bit of sunshine provide plenty of productivity in the natural world. From late spring the increase in plant and insect activity is easily seen on the Owenduff. The acidic nature of the bog means only acid tolerant plants occur in and alongside the river. Bogbean, with its attractive pink and white flowers, is the first plant species to flower, starting in early summer. It doesn't tolerate flowing water but it can be found alongside the river in flooded bog pools and is a food plant for Elephant Hawkmoth caterpillars. The river is also home to a very rare Irish plant, the Ivy-leaved Bellflower. The banks of the Owenduff are the only known site in Mayo for this rare wildflower, which is mostly confined to the south of the country. Its delicate lilac flowers appear in July and August.



Bogbean

Ivy-leaved Bellflower

Insect life is plentiful in summer time, with dragonfly and damselfly young (or nymphs as they are called) emerging as adults from suitable sheltered areas of the riverbed. Mayfly and stonefly nymphs can also be found, with huge numbers of midges present along the riverbank. A windless summer evening can become unbearable as they seek out any exposed skin! All of these insects provide a food source for the Dipper, an aquatic bird that walks along the riverbed in search of its prey. Its powerful legs allow it to hold position in flowing rivers and it can see underwater and hold its breath for much longer than other terrestrial birds.

### Otters on the River

Otters are plentiful along the river, which has plenty of fish for them to eat. An otter can use 20 km of river as its territory which is a lot for an animal that doesn't get much bigger than 1 m in length! Watch out for otter droppings, known as spraints, on boulders or outcrops overlooking the river.



All images courtesy of NPWS.

### A Blanket Bog

Like a huge cloak lying over the land, a blanket bog can slowly form over thousands of years as plant material decomposes on waterlogged land, creating a peaty soil.

Richard Creagh, Ballycroy National Park Visitors Centre, Ballycroy Village, Co. Mayo.  
[www.ballycroynationalpark.ie](http://www.ballycroynationalpark.ie)

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## Special Feature



# Angling for Children

by Mark Corps, Inland Fisheries Ireland

Anyone can learn to fish. Angling is an activity that is suitable for all, irrespective of race, gender or ability. You might ask at what age you can start. Well, the earlier the better as it will give you a life long interest. However anyone, of any age, can take up fishing and get enjoyment from the activity. Perhaps you and your parents or grandparents could learn together how to fish?

You don't need much equipment to start fishing. The basics would be a rod and reel, suitable footwear, a lifejacket or buoyancy aid and probably some waterproofs. Everything costs money, however it does not have to be expensive. Today perfectly functional tackle can be bought cheaply even from supermarkets. Most angling clubs have a junior section where a supply of rods and reels can be borrowed.

Some places cost to fish but the sea is free around Ireland, as are most coarse fisheries. Even if you buy season tickets to fish a stretch of river, they are very reasonable, with most for juniors under €30 a season - or the cost of one video game!



## What do you do if you catch a fish?

If? You mean when! You have two choices - unless the fishery you are fishing at has specific rules:

1. If there are surplus stocks you can keep the fish. Many anglers work to the principle that they only take a fish if they plan to eat it!

2. Most anglers today realise that to ensure future stocks for all they should return fish. It has been said that fish are too valuable to only be caught once.

A few points help ensure that the fish goes back to the water healthy:

- Use appropriate fishing tackle.
- Use a landing net.
- Use barbless hooks.
- Wet your hands before touching the fish. Dry hands burn the side of the fish.
- Try to keep the fish in water.
- Support the fish in the water (facing into the current) until it is strong enough to swim away.

## Different Types of Angling

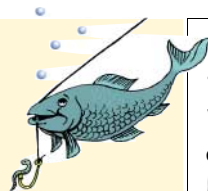
There are three main branches of angling:

**Sea** - fishing for species found in the sea such as plaice, cod and even blue shark.

**Coarse** - for fish such as perch, bream or pike.

**Game** - salmon and trout.

No matter where you live in Ireland you are unlikely to be more than 5 miles from a suitable stretch of water that will hold fish.



## Angling & Safety



Whenever one is around water one has to be aware that it is a dangerous environment. However, by following a few basic rules one can minimise the danger:

1. Preferably learn to swim and wear a suitable personnel flotation unit (lifejacket or buoyancy aid) when near water.
2. Go with an adult.
3. Always fish from a safe place.
4. Wear appropriate clothing to suit the conditions.
5. Use appropriate safety equipment such as a hat & glasses if you are fly fishing.
6. Keep out of the water.



## Where can you learn how to fish?

Many angling clubs arrange activities and events to attract people to angling. Inland Fisheries Ireland arranges a variety of events throughout the year. In particular they organise and run *Fisheries*

*Awareness Week* - this year 12-18th May [www.faw.ie](http://www.faw.ie). During this particular week events are organised and run all over the country. Also find out about your local angling clubs and see if they have a youth section. Some youth groups, such as cubs, run / teach fishing, while some summer camps also involve fishing.



# Nature's Noticeboard!

## Summer 2012



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 Mark Corps, Richard Creagh, John Joyce, Michael Ludwig, Robbie Murphy, Jez Wickens and Julian Wyllie.

Visit the Sherkin Island Marine Station website at [www.sherkinmarine.ie](http://www.sherkinmarine.ie)



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