

Nature'sWeb

Issue No. 28

Winter 2012

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IT'S A FLUKE!



One of the humpback whales that
visited the southwest coast of Ireland
in November/December 2012.

Photo © Robbie Murphy

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Editor's Page

A Whale Watcher's Delight!

Photo © Robbie Murphy

Following the sad story of the Baltimore whale, highlighted in the Autumn 2012 issue of *Nature's Web*, it's great to feature a good news story this time round. In recent weeks, there has been lots of whale activity reported off the south west coast of Ireland. My brother Robbie has watched many of them from high on Slievemore, on the southside of Sherkin. Using his spotting scope he has seen humpback, fin and minke whales, as well as common dolphins and bottlenose dolphins. He was also lucky enough to accompany Richard O'Flynn on a whale watching trip and saw three humpback whales (above) and three fin whales up close. There are some fantastic shots and video clips on the "Best Photos of Baltimore" Facebook site and you can also find out lots of information on these sightings from the Irish Whale & Dolphin Group website www.iwdg.ie.

AS GAELGE! We are delighted to have teamed up with An Gúm, who have begun to translate Nature's Web into Irish. The Summer 2011 issue is now available, as gaeilge: http://www.forasnagaeilge.ie/Foras_na_Gaeilge/An_Gum.asp

Smoked Cod

with Spinach, Leek & Bacon Colcannon



Photo courtesy of BIM

What you need:

- 700g / 1 ½ lbs smoked cod or pollock or haddock
- 570 ml / 1 pt milk
- 330g / 12 oz spinach - chopped
- 55g / 2oz butter
- Freshly milled pepper, finely chopped leek & bay leaf

HONEY MUSTARD SAUCE

- 25g / 1oz butter, 25g / 1oz flour - blended together
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon wholegrain mustard
- Salt and freshly milled pepper

What to do:

- Place cod in cold water - bring to boil & immediately remove.
- Place in milk with pepper, leek & bay leaf & simmer for 3-4 minutes.
- Remove fish & keep warm. Reserve liquor.
- Cook spinach in hot pan with butter for 1 minute.

SAUCE

- Add blended flour & butter to cooking liquor.
- Whisk over heat until smooth & cooked.
- Add honey & mustard, check seasoning.

COLCANNON

- 10 medium sized potatoes (boiled & mashed)
- 25g / 1oz butter
- 170g / 6oz rashers (cut into strips)
- 1 leek - finely sliced

METHOD

- Lightly fry rashers and leek in butter.
- Add freshly mashed potatoes, season & mix.
- Arrange fish & colcannon on hot plates & accompany with honey mustard sauce & hot buttered spinach. *Serves 4.*

From BIM & Elaine Kelly, DIT. For more recipes visit www.bim.ie

Welcome to the
Winter Edition of
Nature's Web!

Dear Reader,



Welcome everyone to the winter issue of Nature's Web. In this issue, Calvin Jones tells us about his work and his website www.irelandswildlife.com, which keeps us all up to date on Ireland's Wildlife. We discover the waste pyramid and ways to reduce, reuse and recycle the waste we produce. Given the time of year, we look at two festive topics – the Wild Turkey and the Christmas tree – and we also look at the **Leave No Trace** programme, which gives great tips for when out and about in the countryside.

You can 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, comments and suggestions for future articles. Have a good read!

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Wild Turkey



Courtesy of Alan D. Wilson www.naturespicofthefire.com

The Wild Turkey is a game bird and is hunted for sport or food. By the early 20th century, hunting and habitat loss nearly wiped out the Wild Turkey in the US. However, huge effort was made to restock areas of the country and Wild Turkey stocks are now thriving.

Are Turkeys from Turkey?

Turkeys do not originate from the country of Turkey. In the 1500s European explorers brought the Wild Turkey back to Europe from Mexico. At that time, the main trading route from the Americas and Asia was through Constantinople (now Istanbul), in Turkey. When the Wild Turkey arrived in England, they connected it with Turkey and that became the bird's name.



The Wild Turkey is native to North America and can be found from Mexico up into Canada. There are several sub-species of Wild Turkey, all of which have slightly different colouring and features, as well as behaviour and habitats.

Wild Turkeys are omnivorous, eating acorns and other nuts, seeds, berries and insects. Unlike the domesticated turkey, the wild turkey is a powerful flier. Its wings are designed for fast flight over short distances, however to conserve energy they usually walk.

The male of the eastern subspecies has a large body covered in bronze iridescent (blue/green sheen) feathers. Its head is featherless



head and its skin is pinkish-red with fleshy ornaments, called caruncles, on its throat and neck. During courtship, the skin turns bright blue and white and the caruncles become a bright red beard. It also puffs up its body and raises its tail feathers and makes a gobbling noise. The female is a lot slimmer and duller bird and usually does not have a beard.

Domesticated Turkeys

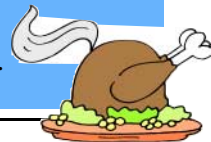
Turkeys were first domesticated over 2,000 years ago from wild birds in Mexico.

Some domesticated turkeys are white.



Valued for its meat and eggs, as well as for its decorative feathers, the European explorers brought the turkey to England in the 1500s. It became very popular there, so much so that when the English began to colonise North America, they brought the bird back with them to its country of origin! You can tell the difference between domesticated and wild turkeys from the colour of the tail tip feathers. The domesticated turkey has white tail tip feathers (a trait which goes back to the species that originated in Mexico), whereas Wild Turkeys generally have brown tail tips.

Turkey is still a popular meat in our diet and in many homes has replaced the traditional duck or goose as the centrepiece of our Christmas dinner. Turkey is also a huge part of the traditional Thanksgiving meal in the US, which is celebrated on the last Thursday of November each year.

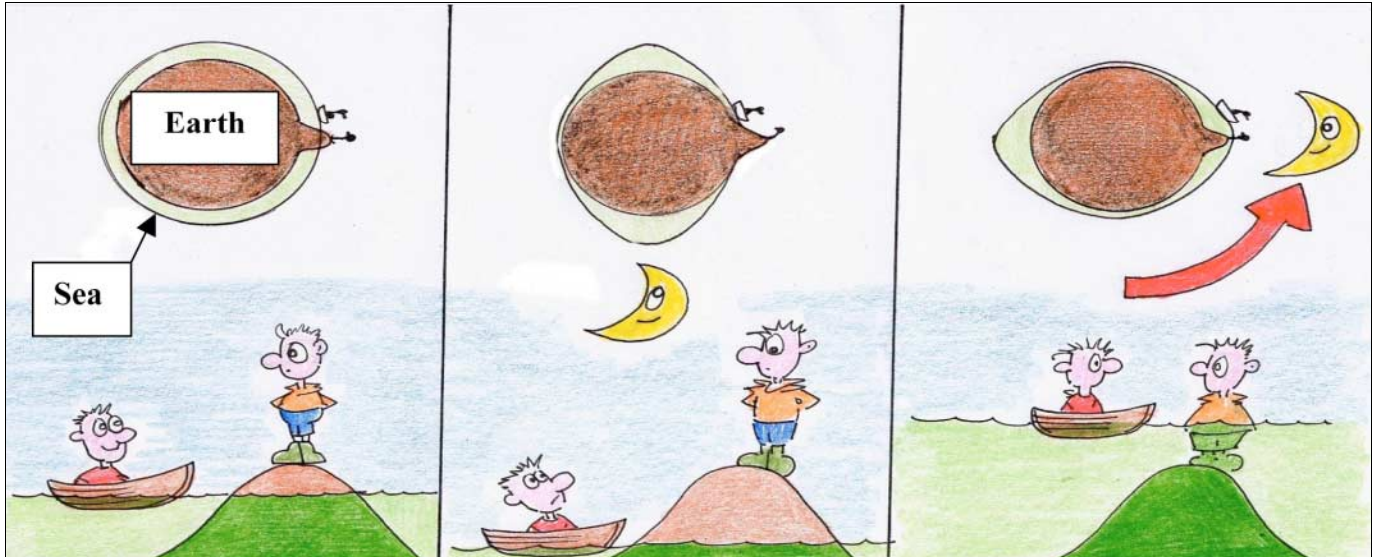


The Turkey Family

In Europe, a male turkey is known as a **stag** and in the US it is known as a **tom**. In Europe and the US, a female turkey is called a **hen** and the young turkey chick is called a **poult**.

Wild Turkeys nest on the ground in a bed of leaves or vegetation. It will lay 4-17 eggs and, as the male turkey may eat the eggs, the female hides the nest carefully. Once hatched, the young chicks follow their mother for a few days but quickly learn to fend for themselves.

Why the tide comes in . . .



No Tide

If there were no moon and no sun, the only force acting on the oceans would be the gravity of the earth.

The sea would cover the earth in a completely even coating - like the chocolate around a Malteser sweet - and there would be no high or low tides . . .

The two people in the picture, on the rock and in the boat, would always be at the same levels.

Low Tide

But because the moon is such a huge lump of rock, it has a gravity of its own, which pulls on the earth like a huge magnet.

This pulls the sea up into a bulge beneath it and also makes a bulge on the other side of the earth.

This pulls the water away from where our people are, making the boat lower than the rock.

High Tide

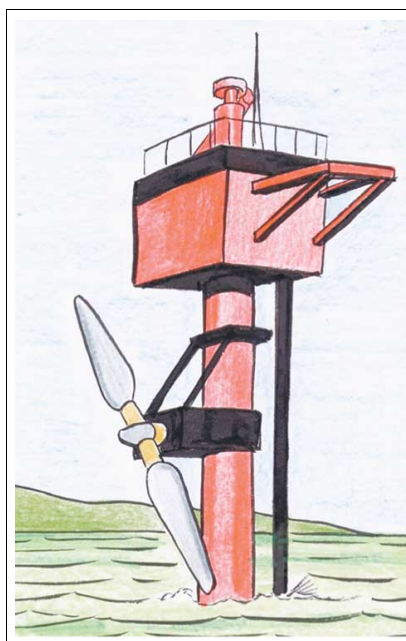
Then, as the moon rotates around the earth, the bulge of water moves to where our two people are and the boat rises above the rock. High tides occur every 12 hours and twenty five minutes because, while the Earth takes 24 hours to rotate on its own axis, the moon is also orbiting the earth once every 28 days. This means that the moon moves on ahead of the Earth's own rotation by around 50 minutes each full day ($1/28 \times 24 = 51.53$ to be precise) so that each high tide occurs approximately 25 minutes later than that last one (51.3 divided by two = 25.65 minutes).

Spring tides - very low and very high tides - happen when the sun and the moon are pulling in the same direction.

Tidal Power

In France, where the tides are very high and very low, there is enough power in the moving water to power a turbine and generate electricity.

At La Rance, a huge dam has been built across the tide which forces the incoming and outgoing tides through a turbine, which in turn, powers a generator giving up to 240 Megawatts of power.



Power from the Tides

In 2008 the SeaGen Offshore Tidal Project placed the largest and most powerful tidal turbine in the world near the site of the old Nendrum Monastery Tide Mill at Strangford Lough in Northern Ireland. This turbine employs two 16-metre diameter rotors, capable of operating on both the ebb and flow of the tide, generating up to 6,000 MWh per year - approximately the rate of energy capture of a 2.4 MW rated wind turbine.

**Captain
Cockle's Log**

Copyright John Joyce 2012

www.captaincockle.com



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The Zebra

English Name: Burchell's or Common Zebra

Scientific Name: *Equus burchelli*

Irish Name: Séabra

Zebbras, horses and asses are called "odd-toed" animals, having only one toe (or hoof) on each foot. Looking very similar to its relative the horse, the zebra has a large body, four legs, a tail and a long head. A very obvious difference is that the zebra has black and white stripes. The pattern of these stripes is unique to each zebra - just like fingerprints are unique to humans. The stripes help to protect the animal by breaking up its outline, making it harder for a predator to single one out from a herd. This is particularly important in the morning and evening when predators, such as lions, leopards and hyenas, are most active.

Zebbras are herbivores, eating grass mostly and some leaves and shoots. They also need to drink plenty of water to stay healthy.

The 'hippotigris'

Did you know that the Romans called Grevy's zebras 'hippotigris' and trained them to pull two-wheeled carts in their circuses?



Zebra Species

There are three species of zebra, the Burchell's Zebra, Grevy's Zebra and Mountain Zebra.

The Burchell's Zebra is the only zebra to have stripes under its tummy. The species is widespread and large herds, made up of many family groups, can be seen on the grassy plains in eastern and southern Africa.

The Grevy's Zebra is physically the largest species of zebra. It has large, round ears and a v-shaped marking on its nose. It is less social than the Burchell's Zebra and does not form large herds. It can be found in eastern Africa where it is an endangered species (on the brink of extinction).

The Mountain Zebra, as its name suggests, is found in mountainous southern Africa. It is a good climber and its pointed hoofs helps it scramble over rocks.

Another feature of this species is a fold of skin on its throat, known as a dewlap. It is a threatened species (likely to be on the brink of extinction in the near future). Conservation efforts are being carried out on both the Mountain Zebra and the Grevy's Zebra, with their populations being monitored and managed.



Facts for Burchell's Zebra:

Height: 1.3 m

Weight: 175 - 385 kg

Colour: Black and white.

Male: Called a stallion, it has a harem of one or more mares and their young, which he protects and herds.

Female: Called a mare, it usually has one foal at a time, which it will nurse for one year.

Young: Called a foal, it can stand after a few hours of birth.

Food: Mostly grass, some shoots and leaves.

Habitat: Grassy savanna plains and woodlands of eastern and southern Africa.

Location: Eastern and southern Africa.

Discover the Waste Pyramid

When we throw waste away, it is never really "away", it has just found a home somewhere else. To avoid having to find a home for lots of waste, it is important that we produce as little of it as possible. We can use a pyramid to help us see and understand how we should handle the waste we produce. The pyramid is upside down, to show us that the best option is at the top - that is to avoid creating it in the first place! Read on to see which options you could choose...



Avoid creating waste in the first place!

We should do everything we can to AVOID producing waste. Sometimes we may be able to avoid buying unnecessary items. For example, instead of buying bottled water, fill a reusable bottle from the tap. We can also buy goods without wrapping, which will need to be disposed of.



Reduce the amount of waste you create

You cannot always avoid creating waste but you can reduce the amount of it. Buying a large bottle of lemonade to share rather than everyone having lots of small bottles will not only save money but will also create less waste. Using both sides of a sheet of paper cuts your paper use in half!



Reuse or repair something

Do you have something you no longer need that can be used again in another way? As you get older, you may have toys that you have out-grown, which can be passed on to a younger child to play with? They might like the clothes you have out-grown as well!



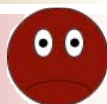
Recycle anything that can be recycled

Many items come in packaging which is necessary, such as shampoo and cereal. When these containers are empty, they can easily be recycled at recycling centres (or may be collected from your home by a refuse collector). The effort it takes to clean and store these items really helps the environment.



Energy can sometimes be produced from waste

Waste can sometimes create energy. For example, some wastes produce gases and once collected can be used to produce energy for heating homes or running machinery.



Disposing of something should be the last resort!

If we throw everything in the rubbish bin, this waste could eventually end up in a big hole and stay buried for hundreds and hundreds of years. We cannot keep digging holes to keep our rubbish in. Use the pyramid to help find ways of making a difference to the amount of rubbish we produce.

All in a Day's Work

Calvin Jones – Founder of IrelandsWildlife.com

Where do you work?

I'm very lucky to be able to work from home. We live in a converted schoolhouse, and my office was originally the old school toilets. My journey to work every morning is a 20-second walk across the back garden.

Have you always been interested in what you do?

Wildlife and writing have both been passions of mine since I was very young, so yes... I guess I've always pursued the things I love.

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

I studied Marine Biology at the University of Liverpool... but I guess that's the only "formal" training I've had. I grew up on the coast and have always been mad about wildlife and nature, so in a way I've been training for what I do now all my life.

What is a day in your life like?

It varies a lot, but usually involves a mixture of researching and writing articles for publications and for the Ireland's Wildlife website, interacting with other wildlife enthusiasts online and working on longer term writing projects. I try to set aside some time every day to get out and see some wildlife for myself.

PROFILE

Calvin Jones is a freelance writer and author based in West Cork. He writes about lots of things, but is especially fond of writing about wildlife and nature. He runs the Ireland's Wildlife website: www.irelandswildlife.com



Calvin Jones

What is your main aim?

To get outside more often... and to encourage others to!

What is the best thing about your job?

Learning things... there are very few days when I don't learn something new.

What is the worst thing about your job?

Deadlines... I hate the way they creep up on you.

Do you enjoy your work?

Absolutely: I write about wildlife... what's not to love?

What equipment do you use?

My computer and an internet connection – I can't really work without either. Good binoculars, a spotting scope, field guides and a good camera are all high on the equipment priority list too.

Where does your work take you?

I don't travel a lot for work now, preferring to stay close to home in West Cork. The great thing about wildlife is that there's always something around to inspire and delight. You don't need to go far, you just need to look a bit closer.

Do you work alone or as part of a team?

I work alone, but that's a bit of an oversimplification. I'm in constant contact with a community of wildlife enthusiasts online, and draw on their knowledge and experience every day for my work.

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

Follow your passion, not the crowd; believe in yourself and don't give up.

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

Be here now! Pay attention to the present... that's where you live your life.

Images courtesy of Calvin Jones



Left: Whale-watching off the south-west coast. Below: Spotting a Blue Tit in the garden. Bottom: A screenshot of www.IrelandsWildlife.com, the website that Calvin founded.



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Wordsearch

Nature's Web Winter 2012

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

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

Ash dieback
disease

Blue honey

Calvin Jones

Christmas tree

Hazel Dormouse

Humpback
Whale

Ireland's Wildlife

Leave no trace

Leopard shark

Moon

Recycle

Reduce

Reuse

Tide

Waste pyramid

Wild Turkey

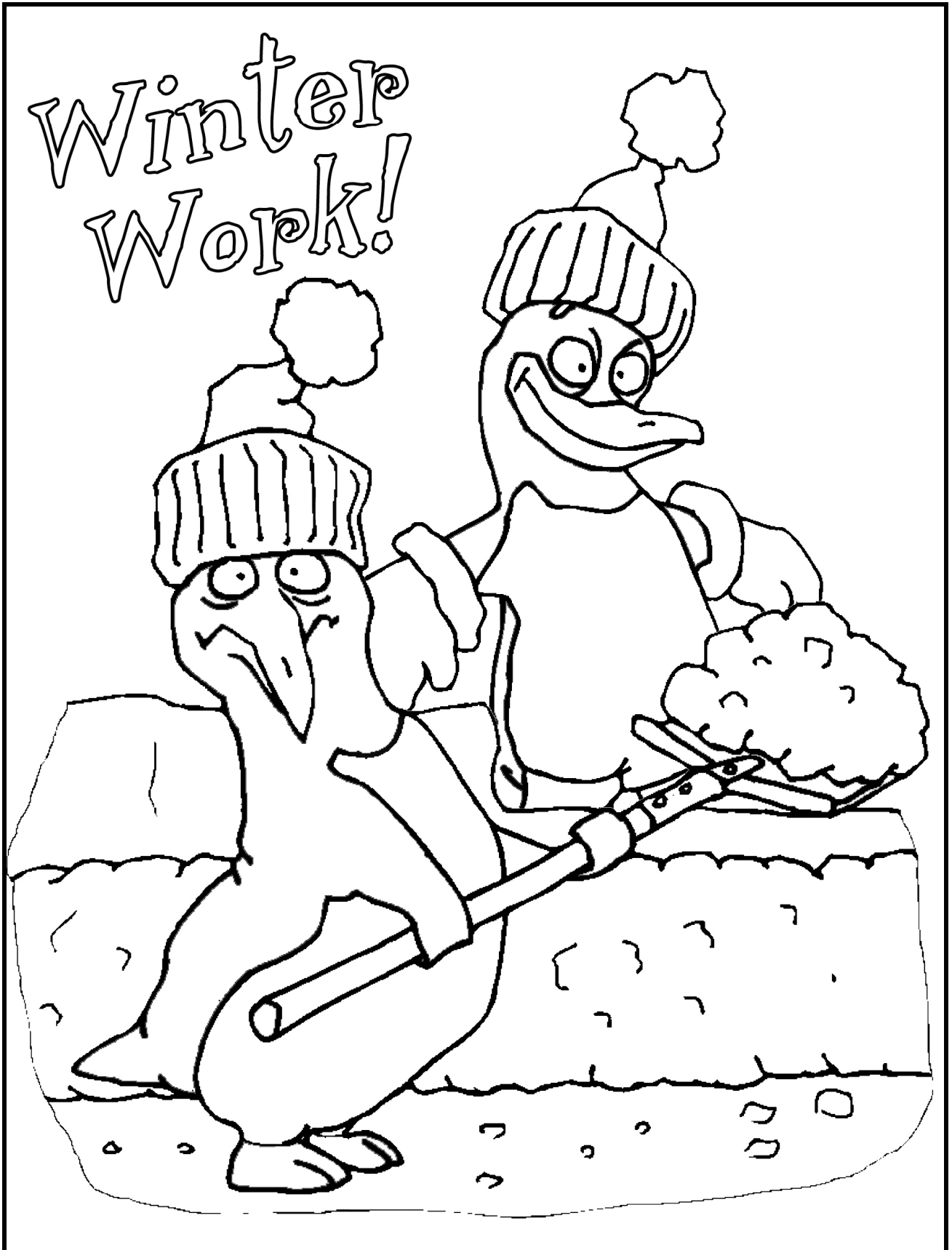
Winter work

Zebra



ANSWERS: (Over, Down, Direction): Ash dieback disease (17,17,NW); Blue honey (3,12,E); Calvin Jones (15,11,NW); Christmas tree (6,13,NE); Hazel Dormouse (1,14,E); Humpback Whale (3,1,SE); Ireland's Wildlife (18,17,N); Leave no trace (17,1,SE); Leopard shark (12,1,SW); Moon (16,4,NW); Recycle (12,9,SE); Reduce (2,3,SE); Reuse (14,3,SW); Tide (15,10,N); Waste pyramid (12,15,W); Wild Turkey (1,11,N); Winter work (5,10,NE); Zebra (5,16,W).

Colour In



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Learn More



Only €2.10 each including postage or €12.00 (plus €2.00 p&p) for all eight! 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. *Safety Sam's Activity Book* is filled with activities to encourage safety for children. *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 has just been 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 €17.99 plus €2.00 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.

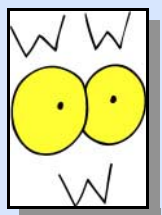
Only €8.00 inc. postage



"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. Visit: www.sherkinmarine.ie



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:

A Whalewatcher's Delight: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Best-Photos-Of-Baltimore-Ireland/121397914555716>
<http://www.iwdg.ie>

Wild Turkey: http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Wild_Turkey/id <http://www.arkive.org/wild-turkey/meleagris-gallopavo/>

Why the tide comes in...: http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/tutorial_tides/welcome.html
<http://www.marine.ie/home/services/operational/oceanography/TideGauge.htm> <http://scijinks.nasa.gov/tides>

The Zebra: <http://www.awf.org/content/wildlife/detail/zebra> <http://www.grevyszebratrust.org/index.html>
http://www.sanparks.org/parks/mountain_zebra/

Discover the Waste Pyramid: http://www.repak.ie/recycling_facilities.php#facilities
<http://www.corkcoco.ie/co/web/Cork%20County%20Council/Departments/Environment%20&%20Waste>

All in a Day's Work - Calvin Jones: <http://www.irelandswildlife.com/>

Hazel Dormouse: <http://invasives.biodiversityireland.ie/hazel-dormouse-ireland/>
<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/species/dormouse>

Shark falls from sky on to golf course: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/20092135>

Blue honey: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2012/10/pictures/121011-blue-honey-honeybees-animals-science/>

Ash trees fighting disease: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara>
<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/farmingsectors/planthealthandtrade/InfoNoteonChalarafraxinea151112.pdf>

The Christmas Tree: http://christmastreesireland.com/home_links <http://www.christmastree.org.uk/tga/>

Leave No Trace: <http://www.leavenotraceireland.org/> <http://www.leavenotraceschools.org/>

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



The World Around Us



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

The Hazel Dormouse in Ireland!

The Hazel Dormouse (also known as the Common Dormouse) is not native to Ireland and is not usually found in the wild here. However, one of these tiny animals was found recently in a treehouse in Co. Kildare. This was the second sighting of this species in the area in the last two years. As the animal is a non-native it could not be left in the wild so it is currently living in the Kildare Animal Foundation Wildlife Unit.

A dormouse looks very like a mouse but can be distinguished from other mouse-sized mammals by its thick, bushy tail. This species is native to Britain, other parts of Northern Europe and Turkey.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service are interested in hearing from you if you think you have seen this species - so if you have, please submit your sighting information on the link at <http://records.biodiversityireland.ie/index.php>



The Hazel Dormouse
(Courtesy of Danielle Schwarz GFDL CC-BY-SA-3.0)



Blue Honey

Imagine the shock you would get if there was blue honey on your toast in the morning. Well, think of the fright beekeepers in Ribeauville, Alsace, in northern France, got when they discovered not just blue, but also yellow, green and brown honey in their hives at the end of the summer! At first they could not understand what caused such unusual colours but soon it emerged that the bees were feeding on sugar waste from a nearby Mars factory that made M&Ms. The bees were feeding on the colourful sugar waste and bringing it back to the hives to make honey. When the factory became aware of the problem they sealed up the waste bins and the bees had to go back to making their golden coloured honey from the flowers!

Shark falls from sky on to Golf Course

There was an unexpected and unusual visitor at the San Juan Hills Golf Club in southern California recently, and it made an even more unusual entrance - it fell from the sky! A person working at the golf club noticed something moving around on the course and on closer inspection discovered a 2ft (0.6m) leopard shark. Puncture wounds on the side of the shark gave some clue as to how it got there - it seems it was plucked from the ocean by a bird and dropped in mid flight on to the golf course (6.5 km from the coast). The shark was quickly put in a golf cart and brought back to the clubhouse, where it was put in a bucket of "homemade" salt water. It was then brought back to the sea, where it gave a quick flip and was off!



Ash Trees Fighting Disease

It is not only animals that get diseases, plants do too. At the moment "Ash Dieback Disease", caused by the fungus *Chalara fraxinea*, is sweeping Europe. Since first seen in Poland in 1992, it has been found at 291 sites in the UK and Northern Ireland. The fungus causes general leaf loss and crown (the top of the tree) death then the whole tree dies. The first sign of disease is wilting leaves, which curl and turn brown. Forest owners in the Republic of Ireland are fearful that the disease will spread throughout their ash trees. The first confirmed case of the disease was in imported saplings (young trees) in Co. Leitrim. The infected trees were destroyed. It is hoped that action like this will stop the spread of the disease.



Symptoms of *Chalara* ash dieback, a fungal disease affecting the ash trees of Europe.

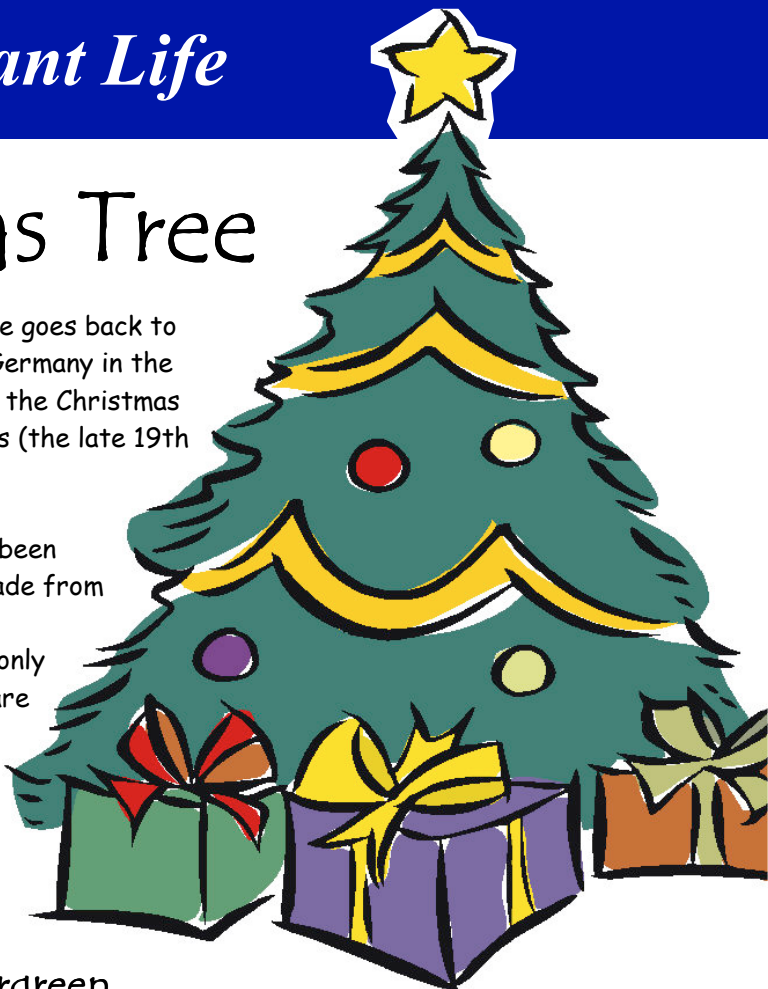
Courtesy The Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera), Crown Copyright (<http://www.fera.defra.gov.uk/copyright.cfm>)

The Christmas Tree

Bringing greenery into the house in winter time goes back to pagan times but it is believed that it was in Germany in the 16th century before a tree was used as part of the Christmas celebration. It took another few hundred years (the late 19th century) before Christmas trees became more commonplace.

Most Christmas trees are real trees that have been grown especially for this purpose. Other are made from artificial materials to look like a real tree.

There are a few species of tree that are commonly used as Christmas trees in Ireland - examples are Noble Fir, Norway Spruce, Nordmann Fir and Lodgepole Pine. Some species are more popular than others, especially the varieties that are slow to shed their leaves when they are cut and dry out.



Conifers & Cones

The type of trees used as Christmas trees are known as conifers. This means that they carry their seeds in cones. Cones vary in size and shape, depending on the species of tree, and are a safe place for the tree to make and store their seeds until they are ready to shed them. As the cones dry out, the scales of the cone open and the seeds pop out.

Cones are popular decorations at Christmas and at other times of the year.



Evergreen

A *real* Christmas tree is usually an evergreen tree, which meaning it does not shed its leaves in winter. Its long, thin, needle-like leaves slow down water evaporation so trees with these type of leaves do not need as much water. For this reason, they often grow in places where other trees cannot.



Farming Christmas Trees

Real Christmas trees in Ireland are planted especially for the purpose of harvesting them at Christmas time. They are grown like any other farmed crop and tree farmers usually replace the trees they cut down in



December with seedlings in January, starting the cycle all over again. Some people use a living tree in a pot at Christmas time, bringing the tree back into the garden when the festivities are over. Eventually the tree will outgrow the pot and will need to be planted outside. It is important to know how big the tree will eventually become as your garden might not have room for a fully-grown tree!

Recycling a Christmas tree

After Christmas, as a *real* Christmas tree no longer has a root, it will begin to wilt and decay and will need to be disposed of. Many recycling centres encourage households to bring their Christmas tree to them so that it can be shredded (broken up into really small pieces). This material is then called mulch, which is great for preventing weed-growth around trees and shrubs in the garden. This is a great example of recycling (see the pyramid on page 6). Just remember to remove the Christmas decorations first!



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 Norway Spruce and Noble Fir are used for what purpose at this time of year?
- 2 Which is the most widespread species of zebra?
- 3 What organisation is interested in hearing from people who have seen a Hazel Dormouse in the wild in Ireland?
- 4 Are Wild Turkeys carnivorous, omnivorous or herbivorous?
- 5 In the waste pyramid, what is it best to avoid?
- 6 How long does it take Calvin Jones to get to work?
- 7 Name the three different types of whale spotted off the southwest coast of Ireland recently.
- 8 What species of tree is under threat from the fungus *Chalara fraxinea*?
- 9 When we visit the countryside, which programme are we encouraged to follow?
- 10 How often do high tides occur?
- 11 The Wild Turkey is native to Turkey. True or false?
- 12 What type of shark fell on a golf course in southern California recently?
- 13 Each zebra's stripes are unique. True or false?
- 14 What unusual sight greeted beekeepers in Ribeauville, Alsace in northern France recently?
- 15 Which website does Calvin Jones run?

Answers: (1) As Christmas trees. (2) Burchell's Zebra. (3) National Parks and Wildlife Service. (4) Wild Turkeys are omnivorous. (5) Creating waste in the first place. (6) 20 seconds. (7) Humpback, Fin & Minke. (8) Ash. (9) Leave No Trace. (10) Twenty four hours and fifty minutes. (11) False. It is native to North America. (12) Leopard Shark. (13) True. (14) Blue honey. (15) www.IrelandsWildlife.com.

Think of a Title!

Have fun with your friends making up a title for this picture of a mature calf moose in Alaska, USA.



Courtesy of Alan D. Wilson www.naturesonline.com

Nature Jokes



What is black and white and red all over?
A sunburnt zebra.

Why did they let the turkey join the band?
Because he had the drumsticks.



What do you get when you cross a bush and pig?
A hedgehog.

What did the bee say to the flowers?
Hello honey.

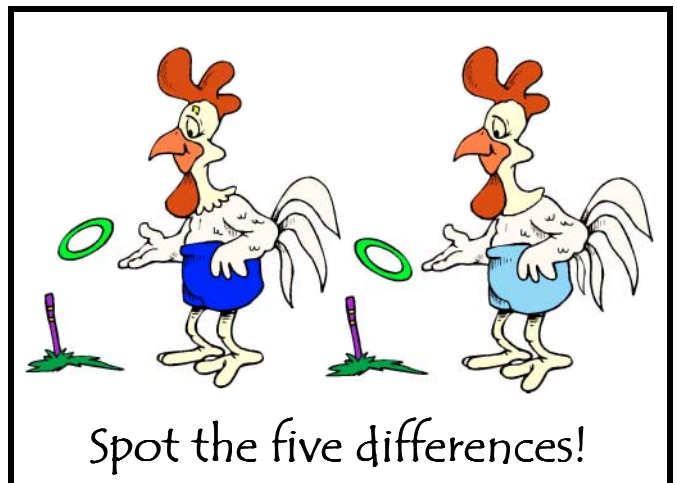


What is heavier, a full moon or a half moon?
The full moon because it's lighter!

Who invented fire?
Some bright spark!



What do you call a python with a great bedside manner?
A snake charmer.



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Activity

A Recycled Christmas

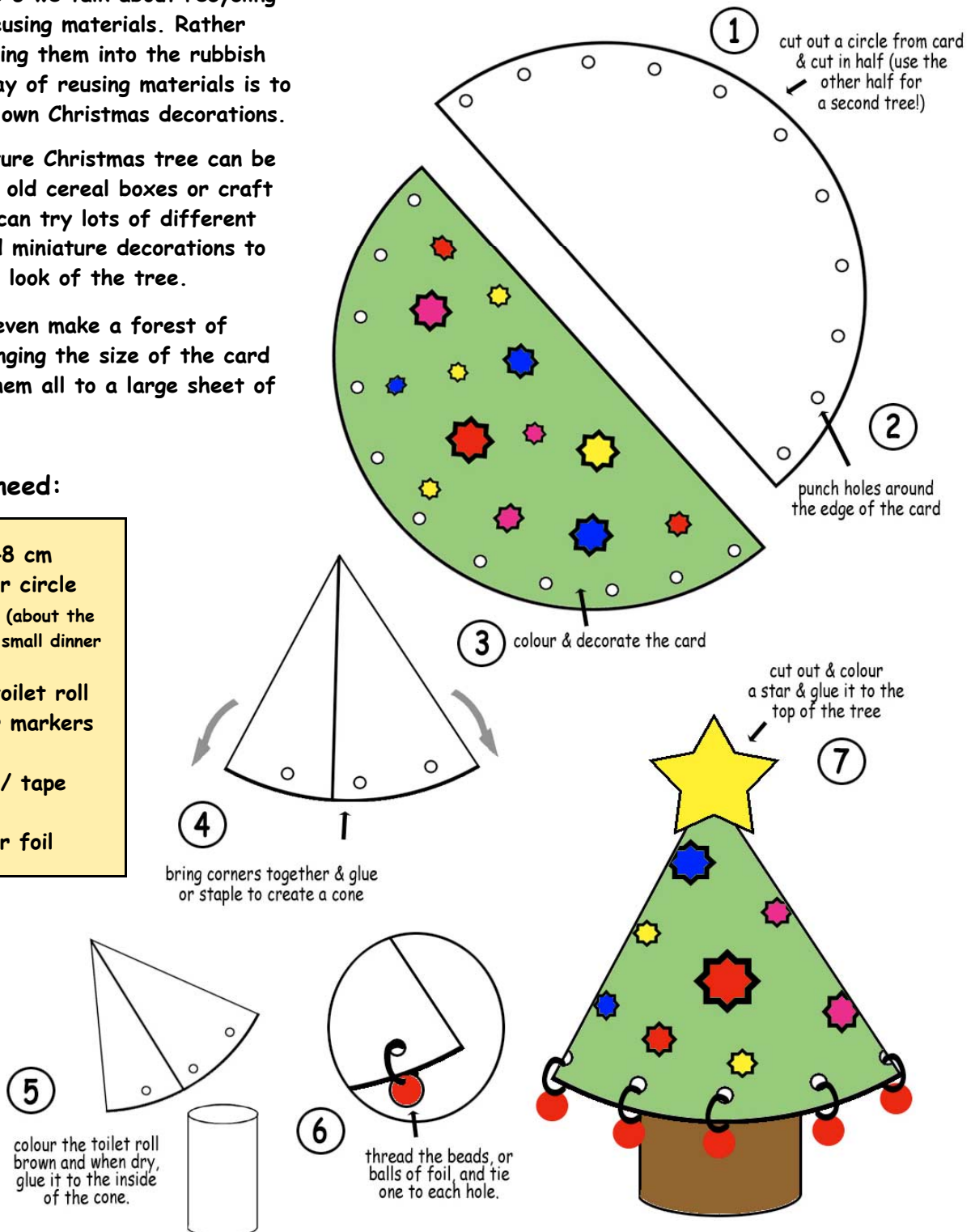
On page 6 we talk about recycling and reusing materials. Rather than throwing them into the rubbish bin, one way of reusing materials is to make your own Christmas decorations.

This miniature Christmas tree can be made from old cereal boxes or craft card. You can try lots of different colours and miniature decorations to change the look of the tree.

You could even make a forest of trees, changing the size of the card and glue them all to a large sheet of cardboard.

You will need:

- 8 in / 48 cm diameter circle of card (about the size of a small dinner plate)
- empty toilet roll
- paint or markers
- glue
- stapler / tape
- thread
- beads or foil



Leave No Trace



Image courtesy of www.leavenotraceschools.org

As more and more people go into the Irish countryside, there is a greater chance that the environment could be harmed - litter may be left behind, water polluted, flowers trampled on or farm animals and wildlife disturbed. The **Leave No Trace** programme encourages each one of us to take responsibility for the impact each of us makes on the environment, and on other people, and introduces us to ways of reducing this impact.

Fionn & Aoife are
Leave no Trace Champions!



The programme is based around 7 principles and a short explanation of each is given below. More information on these principles is available on the website: www.leavenotraceschools.org.

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare

Before starting your trip into the countryside, take time to plan ahead and prepare. Check the weather forecast and always be prepared for different weather conditions. Ensure you have the skills and equipment necessary for your activity and to cope with any emergencies that could arise. Where possible, check if access is allowed and your activity is permitted in the area you wish to visit. When you are there, respect signs and above all, leave no trace of your visit!

2. Be Considerate of Others

With so many different people using the outdoors for sports and leisure, it is important to be considerate of others. All land is owned by somebody - respect the people who live and work in the countryside. Be friendly and courteous to others you encounter by offering a friendly greeting and stepping aside to let others pass.



3. Respect Farm Animals and Wildlife

As more and more people visit the outdoors, wildlife in these areas are affected by visitors' presence. To keep wildlife wild, observe animals and birds from a distance.



4. Travel and Camp on Durable Ground

Trampling can cause soil erosion, vegetation loss and habitat destruction. In the outdoors travel and camp on durable surfaces: rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.

5. Leave What You Find

People visit natural areas for many reasons, among them to explore nature's mysteries and surprises. When we leave rocks, shells, plants, feathers, fossils, artefacts and other objects of interest as we find them, we pass the gift of discovery on to those who follow.

6. Dispose of Waste Properly

Litter not only looks unsightly, it can also have negative effects on the natural environment. We can help the environment by taking away all our rubbish.



7. Minimise the Effects of Fire

Fires can cause lasting impacts and be devastating to forests, natural habitats and farmland. Where fires are permitted and appropriate, use techniques to reduce your impact on the land.

Leave No Trace is a network of organisations and individuals with an interest in promoting the responsible recreational use of Ireland's natural environment. The website & resources for www.leavenotraceschools.org were funded by the Dept of Environment, Community & Local Government and developed by An Taisce on behalf of **Leave No Trace Ireland**. For more information about these resources and **Leave No Trace Ireland** contact them at: Leave No Trace Ireland, c/o Outdoor Recreation NI, The Stableyard, Barnetts Demesne, Malone Road, Belfast BT9 5PB, N. Ireland. Tel: 048 9030 3938 (within Northern Ireland dial 028 in place of 048) Email: info@leavenotraceireland.org Website: www.leavenotraceireland.org

Become a "Leave No Trace Champion"

Discover Ireland's natural environment (and how to care for it) with your class through fun and engaging activities. Download these resources from www.leavenotraceschools.org and when your class has completed them all you can become **Leave No Trace Champions** like Fionn and Aoife!



Nature's Noticeboard!

Winter 2012



Sherkin Island Marine Station would like to thank *Pharmaceutical Ireland* for their support in making this newsletter possible. We would like to thank those who have contributed to this newsletter especially Calvin Jones, John Joyce, Helen Lawless, Michael Ludwig, Robbie Murphy, Beverley Pierson and Jez Wickens.

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



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