

# Nature'sWeb

Issue No. 44

Winter 2016

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Image courtesy of Susan Murphy Wickens

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# Editor's Page



Image courtesy of Robbie Murphy

Welcome to the  
Winter Edition of  
Nature's Web!

## A Cry for the Curlew

There is something I love about the Curlew, with its long, curved beak. For many years, I have seen Curlews wading on the edge of the water on one of our local beaches on Sherkin Island, where they peck the sand for food. I have taken this sight for granted and I never thought that someday it could be no more! Did you know that the Curlew is one of Ireland's most threatened bird species? It could become extinct in Ireland in the next ten years if conditions for them do not improve. BirdWatch Ireland, are now saying that there are only 130 breeding pairs of the bird remaining in Ireland. A number of factors have led to their decline—loss of bogs, intensive farming, predators (foxes and crows), land being abandoned and forests being planted on land which has never had trees before. Scientists have come together to set up an action plan to try to protect the known breeding grounds of curlews and to try to save them from extinction here—I hope they can find a way to save them. Every curlew I see from now on, I will appreciate even more!

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

<http://www.forasnagaeilge.ie/fuinn/an-gum/aiseanna-bunscoil/lion-an-dulra/>

### Ingredients

- 4 x175g 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

## Crispy Whiting with Dill Mayonnaise



Photo: © Bord Bia - Irish Food Board

### To Cook

- 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.

**Tips:** Small dipping bowls of soured cream or crème fraîche topped with a little sweet chilli sauce or even a simple tomato salsa would also be an excellent accompaniment for the crispy whiting.

**Other fish you could use:** Hake or haddock.

Serves 4

Courtesy of Bord Bia - Irish Food Board [www.bordbia.ie](http://www.bordbia.ie).

Dear Reader,



Welcome to the winter 2016 issue of Nature's Web. In this issue, we meet Aisling Moran who is the Community Development Worker on Sherkin, Heir and Long Island in West Cork. We learn about the work she does to help make the islands a better place on which to live and to visit. We look at the Wren—the King of the Birds—which is one of the smallest birds in Ireland. Vicky West tells us about the Snow Leopard and we learn how the walnut is a tough "nut" to crack, even though it's not actually a nut at all! You can check out nature news from around the world on page 11 and enjoy a giggle with the jokes on page 14.

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

Susan

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Michael Ludwig

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## The Wren



Images courtesy of Robbie Murphy

The Wren's habit of holding its tail straight up in the air, helps us to identify it.

**Scientific Name:** *Troglodytes troglodytes* **Irish Name:** Dreolín

The wren is one of the smallest birds in Ireland and can be found in most parts of the country. It is a very common visitor to gardens but you might not notice it as it creeps in and around bushes and trees, searching for food. It is a small, dumpy bird—almost mouse-like—and has a small tail, which it sticks up in the air. Its song is loud and powerful, which means it is more often heard than seen. The Wren's nest is dome-shaped and made by the male out of grass, moss and leaves. He will make a few nests and the female will pick the one she wants. Many wrens can often be found huddled together in a nest box to keep each other warm in winter.

## The King of the Birds

Despite its size - and yet because of it - the Wren is known as the King of the Birds. According to fable, the birds had a contest to see who could fly the highest and so be crowned King of the Birds. Unbeknownst to the Eagle, the tiny Wren rested on the Eagle's back. Naturally the powerful Eagle flew high up into the sky. However, when the Eagle tired, the Wren chose that moment to fly higher still and claimed the crown!



## The Wren in Winter

As Wrens are so small, very cold winters can be very hard on them and many can die. Thankfully however, within a few years their population can return to normal.



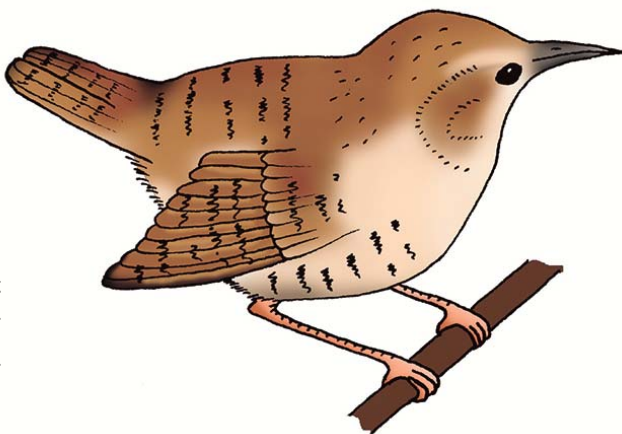
## FACT FILE

**Colour:** Brown/reddish brown. Paler underneath. Dark bars on tail and its small wings.

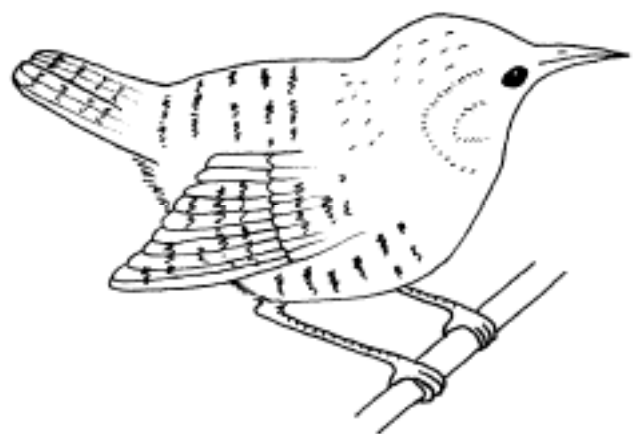
**Length:** 9-10½cm

**Diet:** Insects, spiders, larvae and seeds.

**Habitat:** Gardens, woodlands, hedges, reed beds, walls and farms.



Sketches courtesy of Audrey Murphy/Sherkin Island Marine Station



## Colour the Wren

# Snow Leopard

By Vicky West

**Scientific Name:** *Panthera uncia*

**Irish Name:** Liopard sneachta



Courtesy of Snow Leopard Conservancy  
/Jammu & Kashmir Wildlife Protection Department

Snow leopards are smoky grey in colour with white undersides. They have ringed dark grey or black markings on their coats, to help camouflage them from prey, and they have pale green/grey eyes. They are quite stocky animals, growing to 60cm in height (at the shoulder) and to 2.3m in length—up to 1m of this can be their tail.

Snow leopards originated in the mountains of Central Asia, including the Himalayan Mountains. They prefer to inhabit steep, rocky cliffs as this type of habitat provides them with camouflage for ambushing prey. Having stalked their prey, they usually use their long and powerful hind limbs to spring on them. They can leap up to 15m, up to six times their body length. Snow leopards are carnivorous and often prey on wild sheep and goats. Though they are able to kill animals up to 3 times their weight, they are also



opportunistic feeders and will eat smaller prey such as hares and game birds.

Other adaptations, which allow them to live in these harsh environments include:

- \* long, thick fur, which provides insulation;
- \* fur-covered feet, which not only keep their feet warm but act as snowshoes, preventing them from sinking into the snow and aids with grip on unstable surfaces;
- \* and long tails, which are able to store fat to keep them warm and can also be wrapped around themselves when sleeping, acting like a blanket. Their long tail is also very important to help them maintain their balance on the rocky terrain that they live in.

## An Endangered Species

Snow leopards are an endangered species and there are thought to be between 4,000- 7,000 adults left in the wild, with up 700 in Zoos. One of the biggest threats to snow leopards is humans, who illegally hunt the leopards for their fur or for their bones to make traditional Asian medicine. Conflicts between snow leopards and farmers can also arise when the leopards attack their livestock when food is short. Other contributing factors include vanishing habitat and the decline of their larger mammal prey.

## Family

The Snow leopard, despite what its name suggests, is more closely related to the tiger than it is to the leopard. Other relatives include the lion and jaguar.

Snow leopards are shy, solitary animals, however, they come together for the mating season, which often take place between January and mid-March. Gestation lasts about 3 months, with cubs being born between April and June. The female will give birth in a rocky den, which she has lined with her own fur, and will give birth to 2 or 3. The cubs, which are born blind and helpless, are able to see after 7 days, walk after 5 weeks and are fully weaned at 10 weeks. They will leave the den at 2-4 months, but will remain with their mother for up to 2 years. The shy nature of snow leopards makes it hard to determine their lifespan in the wild, but they have been known to live for as long as 21 years in captivity.



# Walnuts

Scientific Name: *Juglans regia* Irish Name: Crann gallchnó



### Walnuts in Cooking and Baking

Walnuts are not just a tasty snack on their own but are often used in cooking and baking, particularly in rich fruit cakes, such as Christmas cakes. There are a number of flavours that go well together – banana and walnut bread and coffee and walnut cake are just a few. Walnuts can also be sprinkled on salads or served with cheese. Unripened walnuts are also pickled and eaten as an accompaniment to cheeses and in recipes, such as beef dishes. To keep walnuts fresh, store the walnuts in an airtight container.

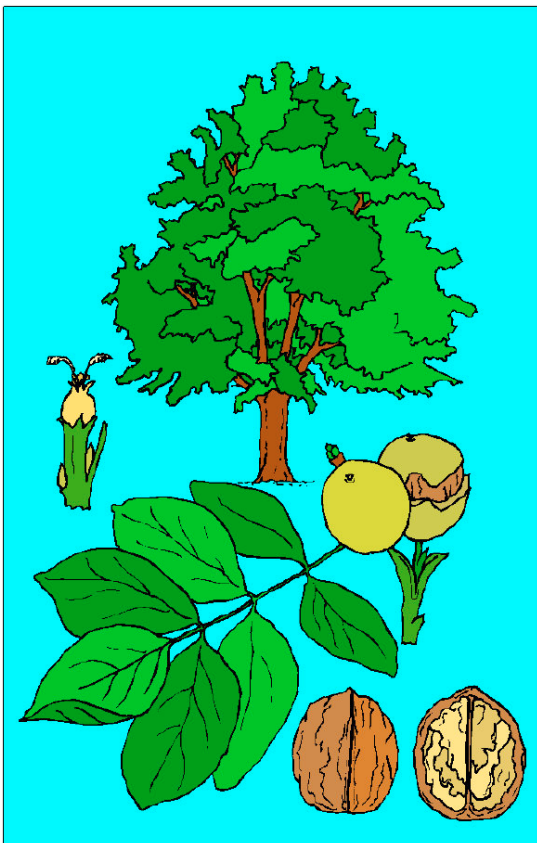


Technically the walnut is not a nut, it is actually the seed of a drupe, or stone fruit. A drupe has a fleshy outside and a hard stone inside, which eventually splits open to reveal the seed inside. What we think of as the walnut is actually the inner stone of a fruit. Other drupes include peaches, nectarines, apricots and cherries.

### A Tough Nut to Crack!

When walnuts are ripe they can be shaken off the tree or picked up off the ground. They will need to be kept for a further few weeks in a warm, dry place to fully ripen and be ready to eat.

Eating walnuts have many health benefits for humans but they are also food for animals, such as the squirrel. Walnuts have a tough outer shell and while humans need a nutcracker to open them, squirrels just use their teeth!

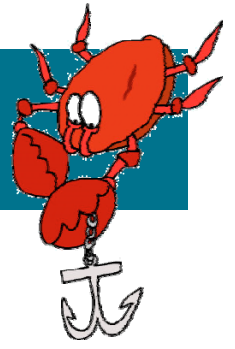


### The Walnut Tree

There are many species of walnut tree but the two most significant in Europe are the Common or English Walnut tree and the Black Walnut. Though they grow in Ireland, neither are native to here. The Common Walnut, which is also known as the Persian Walnut, originated in Persia (now called Iran) and was introduced into Britain by the Romans. The Black Walnut tree originated in North America. Walnut trees grow best in sunny, sheltered sites in deep, rich and well-drained soil. They are spreading, domed trees, and depending on the species, can grow up to 10-40m in height. All species are deciduous, which means they lose their leaves in winter time.

Walnut wood is a hardwood. Because of its stability when dried and its resistance to swelling and cracking, it is very good for furniture making, for example tables and display cases. For walnut trees to produce walnuts, it takes four to five years if grafted to a root stock or up to seven years if grown from a seedling.





## Cracking the Crab Code

Using the code on the left, fill in the blanks below to find out more about crabs and their relatives.



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

1. The outer structure of a crab.

1

2. The group of animals to which crabs and lobsters belong.

2

3. A word to describe animals that live on land.

3

4. The shell that covers the main body of the crab.

4

5. A type of crab that people eat.

5

6. A crab that lives in a discarded shell.

6

7. Crabs, lobster and crayfish used these for walking.

7

8. A type of crustacean that lives on land.

8

9. The tiny larvae of crabs that float around in the sea, belong to this group of animals.

9

10. A type of crustacean that is mostly found in freshwater.

10

(Answers on page 14)

# All in a Day's Work

## Aisling Moran – Community Development Worker

### PROFILE

Aisling Moran is a Community Development Worker for three islands in West Cork – Sherkin, Heir and Long Island. She studied English and History in University College Cork and then did a Masters in Advertising at Dublin Institute of Technology.



Aisling Moran

Images courtesy of Aisling Moran & Robbie Murphy

### Where do you work?

I work on Sherkin, Heir and Long Island. I travel on a ferry to work each morning, this means I MUST always be on time! I am the Community Development Worker. Every day I work with people on the islands to facilitate community events, business ideas and protecting the islands' environment. Our environment is made up of our people and the landscape – it all tells a story.

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

Yes, I think the communities we live in are very important. The work is very varied and I get to meet lots of different people all the time and learn new things.

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

The best thing about my job is meeting so many people. Also the places that I work are definitely some of the most beautiful in the whole of Ireland and it is important that we protect them. For example, in the past few years, bad storms

destroyed the way onto one of our beaches and now we are working on making sure that everyone with families', buggies and wheelchairs can get onto the beach. We are also testing the water to make sure that it is one of the best places in Ireland to swim.

### Do you enjoy your work?

I love it – I love that it is so different and that no day is the same. I am always learning new things!

### What equipment do you use?

There is lots of technology I rely on to send emails, take pictures, measure maps – but the most important tool I use every day is my brain and a smile. I have discovered it helps you with everything.

### Where does your work take you?

My work can take me to different islands, to farms, to art exhibitions, on the water to fish farms, to Dáil Eireann and even to the European Parliament Buildings. It is very important to ensure that all the politicians

are aware of what it means to be part of a small island, and how the islands are affected by new laws that are passed.

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

I work as part of a big team of volunteers and nothing would get done without the help of the local community. Currently we are working together to create special walks on Sherkin Island so that everyone can come and discover the island.

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

Get involved and volunteer in lots of community groups and workshops. I would say work hard and be open minded, kind



Top: Sherkin Island Ferry;



Above: Palestinian refugees visiting with the community of Sherkin



Above: Silver Strand showing erosion after a storm. Right: Looking down on Silver Strand.



and interested in everyone. Listen to everyone but always make up your own mind and never be afraid to compromise. Also, you should never stop learning. Every year I try to do a new course.

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

Don't take life too seriously and make sure to enjoy it!



Representing the islands at Government Buildings.



An Inter-Island soccer tournament!

# Water Safety in Winter



Irish Water Safety is concerned that many people planning to take part in Christmas/winter swims may take chances beyond what is acceptably safe. They are asking the public to keep the length of time they remain in the water to a minimum so as to reduce the risk of hypothermia.

"Cold shock" and hypothermia can overwhelm the fittest of swimmers but steps can be taken to remain accident free:

- \* Swimmers should "Get In, Get Out and Warm Up", avoiding extended periods of exposure.
- \* Christmas Swim organisers should ensure that they provide comprehensive details of each event to the Irish Coast Guard and local Gardaí.

- \* Check with the Safety Officer, who will advise and has the ultimate responsibility for making decisions.
- \* If the seas are rough and weather deteriorates, wait for a more suitable day to honour your charity commitment.
- \* Cold water cools muscles faster than during warmer summer swims and may cause cramp.
- \* Alcohol should be avoided before and immediately after swimming as it impairs judgment.

Ensure that you have safe access to the water and a safe place to leave the water—with appropriate shallow shelving, steps or ladders. Less agile people should be mindful that steps leading into the water might be dangerous due to the possible growth of algae. Organisers should ensure that slipways or steps have been cleaned of slime, weed and algae.

## A New Year's Resolution

Safeguarding your loved ones extends beyond Christmas swims to family walks by rivers, lakes and shorelines. Spring tides will increase the risk of stranding on our coastline. Parents can be lulled into a false sense of security when visiting relatives living close to water hazards such as slurry pits, exposed drains and canals. Safeguard your children with constant uninterrupted supervision and make a New Year's resolution to learn swimming and lifesaving skills and to always wear a lifejacket on water.



## Water Safety Advice in Case of Flooding



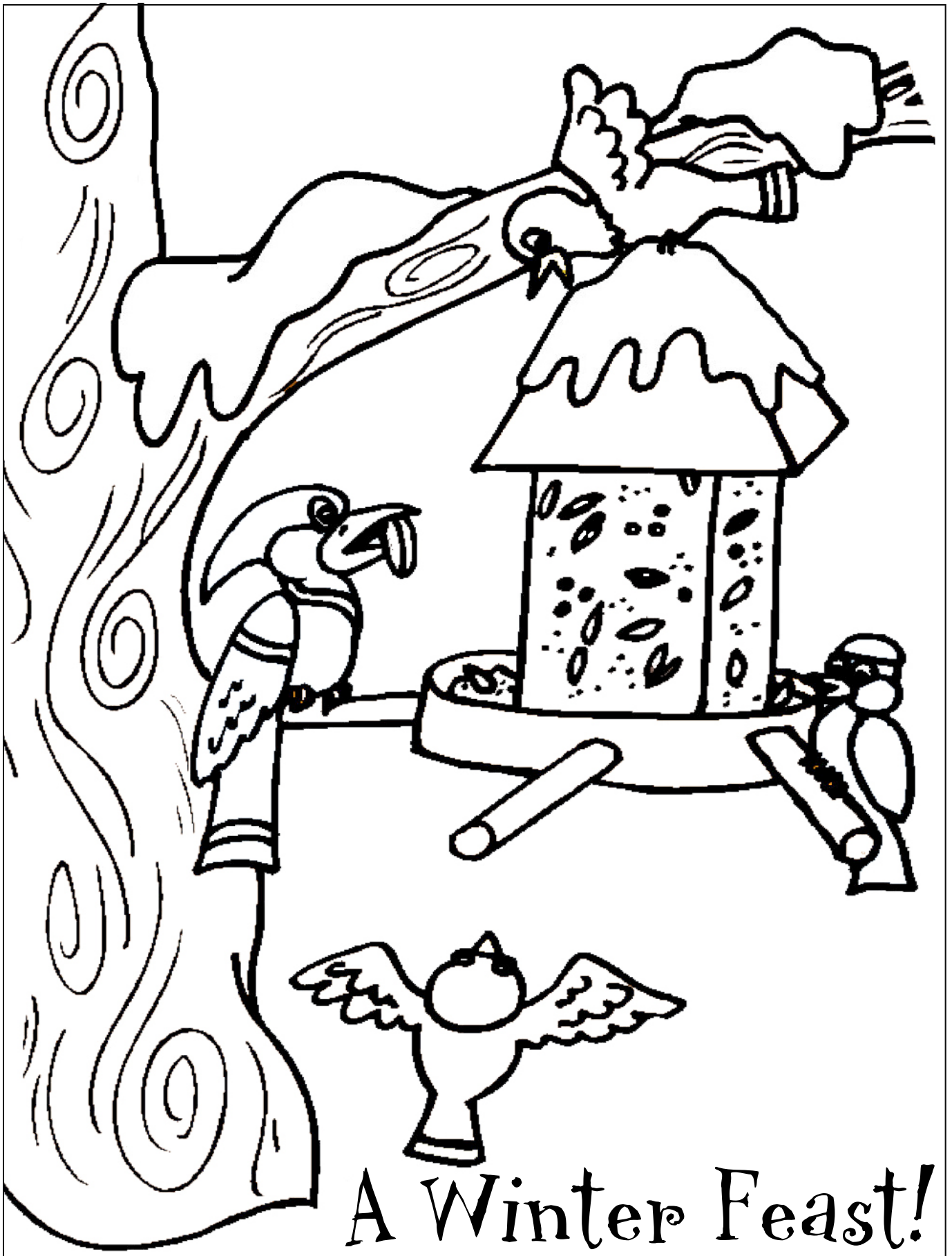
- Listen to the national and local radio for Met Éireann Updates.
- Check on neighbours particularly if they are elderly, infirm or families with young children.
- Move your vehicles to higher ground.
- Check your small craft to ensure it is well secured or moored.
- Make sure you have warm clothes, food, drink, a torch and radio.
- Block doorways and air bricks with sandbags or plastic bags filled with earth. Flood gate products will also work effectively.
- Switch off gas and electricity supplies if flooding is imminent.
- Check the time of high water in the newspaper or online.
- Never try to swim through fast flowing water.
- Carry a mobile phone at all times—call 112 in emergency.
- Wear suitable protective clothing & a lifejacket in, on or around water.
- Never put your feet down if swept away because your feet or body could become entrapped.
- Flooding on roads will be deeper at dips and around bridges.
- Manhole covers may have been moved due to the heavy flow of water.
- The dangers are multiplied during the hours of darkness.

Contact: Irish Water Safety, The Long Walk, Galway. Tel: 091 564400. For more tips on water safety visit: [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie)

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## Colour In



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# Black John - the Bogus Pirate

## Black John the Bogus Pirate



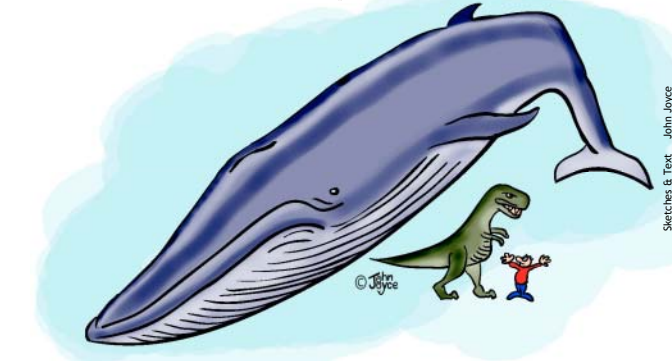
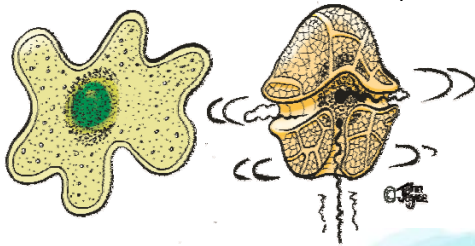
Loppy the Parrot

### The Ocean supports a great Diversity of Life and Ecosystems

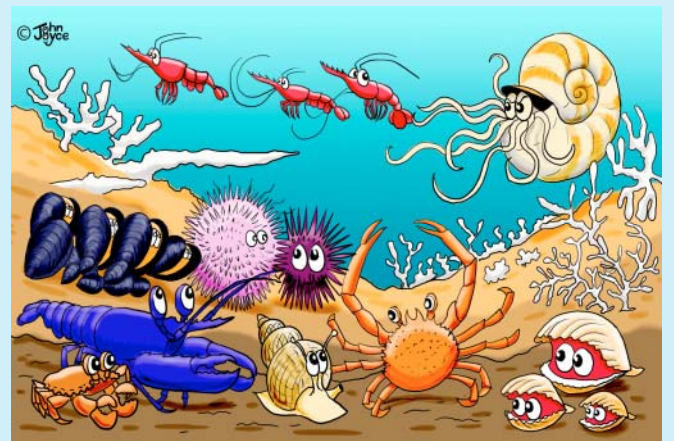
**The Fifth Principle of Ocean Literacy** tells us that the Ocean covers some 70% of our planet and is its largest physical feature. It stretches from beneath the frozen wastes of the North Pole, down through the warm waters of the Equator and southwards to the shore of Antarctica. With all that space, depth and variety of habitats, it is no wonder that the Ocean should be home to a breath-taking diversity of life.

Most of this life, both in terms of numbers and 'biomass' (weight of living matter) belongs to the trillions and trillions of microbes at the bottom of the food chain – microscopic animals and plants – that live in the Ocean. While these are so small as to be invisible to the human eye, their sheer numbers make them vitally important to life on Earth. The microscopic plants produce almost half the oxygen in the Earth's atmosphere and the microscopic animals

provide the foundation for most of the 'food chains' in the Sea.



But you won't need a microscope to see its largest inhabitant, the Blue Whale. This is the largest living thing that has EVER lived on this planet. The largest specimen ever caught was 29 metres long and weighed 158 metric tonnes. Its heart was the size of a small family car and its aorta (the large blood vessel that leads from the heart) was wide enough for a person to crawl through. The largest land animal that ever lived – the Brontosaur – was only 30 tonnes (a quarter of the size of a fully grown Blue Whale!).



In spite of its vast size, the Ocean does not contain an even distribution of life. Most of the living things that inhabit it, tend to congregate along shorelines and estuaries, around coral reefs or in dense congregations in the open ocean. This is because the microscopic animals and plants which larger animals feed on also congregate in fertile inshore waters such as coral reefs, estuaries and mangrove swamps, or as 'plankton blooms' in the open sea where nutrient rich water is heated by the Sun.

Recent advances in deep water exploration have also revealed communities of animals living in complete darkness along volcanic ridges in the abysses of the Ocean. All the energy and nutrients they need is provided not by sunlight, but by superheated seawater that brings heat and chemical nutrients from the underlying volcanic rock up into the waters of the deep ocean.

But you don't have to travel to the open ocean or dive to the mid-Atlantic ridge to see a diverse range of marine life in a small space. Pay a visit to any rocky seashore at low tide and you will see an incredible array of animals and plants all adapting to the changing conditions of temperature, salinity and exposure which takes place as the tide goes in and out.

Check out the Principles of Ocean Literacy at <http://oceanliteracy.wp2.coexploration.org/>

Follow Black John the Bogus Pirate and his crew on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/BlackJohntheBogusPirate/>

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# The World Around Us



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

## Catching a Dinosaur's Tail 99 Million Years Later!

A piece of amber from a mine in the northern Myanmar has revealed a 'treasure' from 99 million years ago—a 3.5 cm piece of a dinosaur's tail. These skeletal remains of a dinosaur are the first of its kind to have been found in amber. They not only contain bones and soft tissue but also have feathers attached. The tail belonged to a dinosaur probably no bigger than a sparrow.



Discovered at an amber market in Myanmar by Dr. Lida Xing, a palaeontologist from the China University of Geosciences at Beijing, he and his team have CT scanned the sample and studied it under the microscope. It gives them great insight into the evolution of feathers from dinosaurs to modern birds.

Amber is the fossilized plant resin from ancient forests. When the plant resin oozed down the trees it often caught bits of plants, small insects and the like, trapping them in its golden liquid. As the resin hardened and fossilized over millions of years, it turns into a beautiful gemstone, greatly prized in jewellery making, folk medicine and for making amber oil.



## Time to Prepare for Tree Week 2017!

Yes, we're in the middle of winter but early January is the perfect time to start planning for **Tree Week 2017**, which runs from Sunday March 5th until Sunday March 12th. To be part of National Tree Week, the Tree Council of Ireland invites

you to organise one or more events for the week to celebrate trees. As well as tree planting ceremonies, the range of events can include forest and woodland walks, nature trails, work-



shops, woodturning displays, talks, tree hugging, tree climbing, broadcasts, launches, poetry readings, exhibitions, competitions and tree plantations where communities are challenged to plant a target number of trees on a designated local site over a fixed time period. Don't forget to register your event, so that other people can come and join you!  
[www.treecouncil.ie](http://www.treecouncil.ie)

## 2016-2017 Storms in Ireland and the United Kingdom

The National Meteorological Services of Ireland (Met Éireann) and the United Kingdom (Met Office) will be naming wind storms again when the following criteria are met:

- a wind storm with potential for significant land-based impact has been forecast by Duty Forecasters in both Met Éireann and the Met Office.
- Severe wind events giving rise to status Orange or status Red weather warnings.
- Consideration will also be given to rain and snow events.

For an explanation of the Met Éireann weather warning system, see [www.met.ie](http://www.met.ie)

The last storm to be named in the 2015/2016 season, was Storm Katie, which occur from 25 – 28 March 2016 and mostly affected southern England. How many storms do you think Ireland and the United Kingdom will have in the winter/spring of 2016/2017?

### 2016-2017:

Angus	Kamil
Barbara	Louise
Conor	Malcolm
Doris	Natalie
Ewan	Oisín
Fleur	Penelope
Gabriel	Robert
Holly	Susan
Ivor	Thomas
Jacqui	Valerie
	Wilbert



Image courtesy of Robbie Murphy

## Ready-made Snowballs on a Siberian Beach

Imagine having ready-made snowballs for an afternoon of playing in the snow! On a 18km stretch of coast on the Gulf of Ob in northwest Siberia, locals had just that—but they were probably not the type you could chuck at your friends! Ball of ice, from the size of a tennis ball up to a 1m in diameter, were formed when small pieces of ice were rolled about by the wind and water, eventually forming into giant snowballs. Though locals had never seen an occurrence of this kind before, similar events have occurred in other parts of the world. The combination of wind, temperatures and coastal topography created special conditions for this phenomenon to happen.

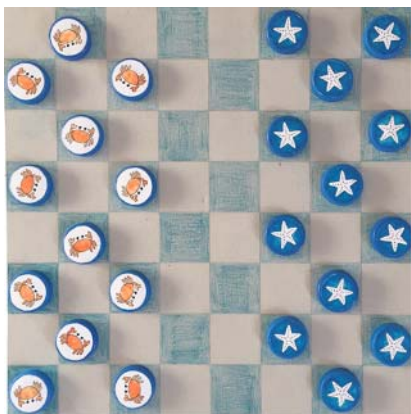




# Activity

## Draughts on the Seashore

Make a "seashore" version of the popular game of draughts, also known as checkers, by recycling milk bottle tops and cardboard!

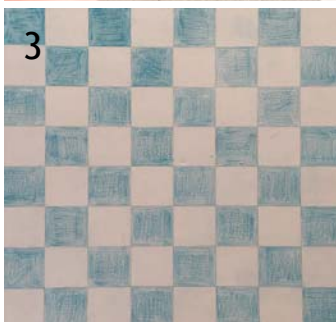
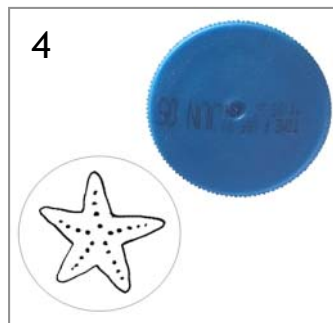
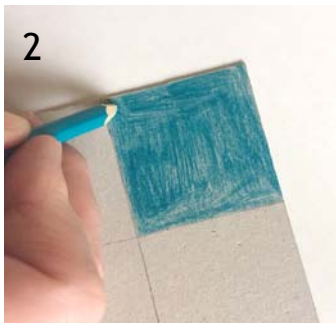


### You will need:

- Cardboard
- Paper
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Colours
- 24 Bottle Tops
- Scissors
- Glue



1. This board is designed for milk bottle tops that are 4cm in diameter. Measure and cut a piece of card 40cm x 40cm. Divide into squares of 5cm x 5cm.
- 2/3. Colour alternate squares in a dark colour until you have a finished board.
4. Print out this sheet twice (or reproduce the starfish and the crab, 12 times each).
5. Cut, colour & glue each onto the bottle tops.



For rules on how to play draughts, check out:  
<http://wiki.kidzsearch.com/wiki/Checkers>

Images courtesy of Susan Murphy Wickens

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# Learn More



Only €2.10 each including postage or €11.00 (plus €2.00 p&p) for all seven!

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.

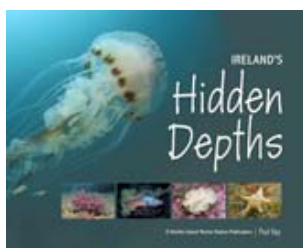
**A Beginner's Guide to Ireland's Wild Flowers** With the help of this pocket-sized guide, beginners of all ages will be introduced to the many common wild flowers found around Ireland. 206pp

Only €8.50 inc postage



**Ireland's Hidden Depths** is another Sherkin Island Marine Station publication. 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 €13.00 including postage



## Sea Life DVD:

### "On the Water's Edge"

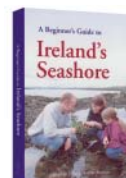
Produced by Sherkin Island Marine Station, the DVD 'On the Water's Edge', features a short film on life beside the sea.

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. 206pp

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](http://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:

## A Cry for the Curlew:

<http://www.birdwatchireland.ie/OurWork/ResearchSurveys/BreedingCurlewSurvey2016/tabid/1457/Default.aspx>  
<http://www.birdwatchireland.ie/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=8wq1Fvrxib0=&tabid=1457>

**The Wren:** <http://www.birdwatchireland.ie/IrelandsBirds/Wren/tabid/434/Default.aspx>  
<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/bird-and-wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/w/wren/>

**Snow Leopard:** <http://snowleopardconservancy.org/> <http://www.defenders.org/snow-leopard/basic-facts>

**Walnuts:** <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/common-non-native-trees/walnut/>  
<http://www.odlums.ie/recipes/banana-and-walnut-bread/>

**Cracking the Crab Code:** <http://www.mesa.edu.au/crustaceans/default.asp> <https://nrich.maths.org/2197>

**West Cork Islands:** <http://westcorkislands.com/>

**Water Safety in Winter:** <http://www.iws.ie/>

**Black John – the Bogus Pirate:** <https://www.facebook.com/BlackJohntheBogusPirate/>

## Catching a Dinosaur's Tail 99 Million Years Later:

<http://www.smh.com.au/technology/sci-tech/dinosaur-tail-found-encased-in-amber-found-at-a-market-in-myanmar-20161208-gt7bia.html>

**Tree Week 2017:** <http://treecouncil.ie/initiatives/esb-tree-week/>

**2016/2017 Storm Names:** <http://www.met.ie/news/display.asp?ID=402>

**Read-made Snowballs on a Siberian Beach:** <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37883003>

**Draughts:** <http://wiki.kidzsearch.com/wiki/Checkers>

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 The Wren is bigger than the Eagle. True or false?
- 2 On which West Cork Islands is Aisling Moran the Community Development Worker?
- 3 Tree Week 2017 is on which dates in March?
- 4 What two seashore animals are featured on the game of draughts?
- 5 Approximately how high can a Common Walnut tree grow?
- 6 In the 2016/2017 storms list, which name begins with the letter "R"?
- 7 How many birds are featured in the colouring page?
- 8 In what did scientists discover skeletal remains of a dinosaur's tail?
- 9 What unusual sight was seen on a Siberian beach?
- 10 The breeding population of which bird is in trouble in Ireland?
- 11 What supplies should you have if there is a flood warning?
- 12 From where does the Snow Leopard originally come?
- 13 What fish is in the seafood recipe?
- 14 Is the walnut a true nut?
- 15 Who give tips on water safety in winter?
- 16 What is the answer to the first code in the "Cracking the Crab Code"?

Answers: (1) False; (2) Sherkin, Heir and Long; (3) 5th-12th March, 2017; (4) Crab and Starfish; (5) 30m; (6) Robert; (7) Four; (8) Amber; (9) Snowballs; (10) The Curlew; (11) Warm clothes, food, drink, a torch and radio; (12) Central Asia; (13) Whiting; (14) No; (15) Irish Water Safety; (16) Exoskeleton. Woodlice; 9. Zooplankton; 10. Crayfish.

Answers to Cracking the Crab Code: 1. Exoskeleton; 2. Crustaceans; 3. Terrestrial; 4. Carapace; 5. Edible Crab; 6. Hermit Crab; 7. Jointed Legs; 8.

## Think of a Title

Can you think of a title for this photograph of a Sea Otter, which was taken in California, USA.



(Photo courtesy of Alan D. Wilson www.naturespicsonline.com)

## Nature Jokes

What gets wetter the more it dries?  
A towel.



Where do little fish go every morning?  
To plaice school.

What is life like for a wood worm?  
Boring.



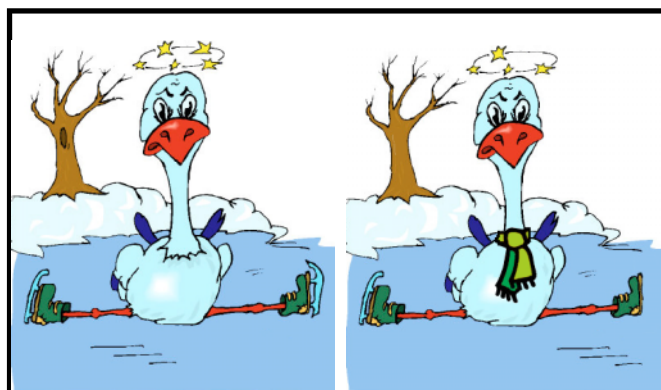
How does a Snowman get to work?  
By icicle.

Which side of a cheetah has the most spots?  
The outside.



How do we know that the Earth won't come to an end?  
Because it's round!

What did the buffalo say when his son left to go to school?  
Bison.



Spot the five differences!

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# Wordsearch



## Nature's Web Winter 2016

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

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

Aisling Moran

Amber

Black John

Crab Code

Curlew

Dinosaur

Draughts

Ecosystems

Flooding

Siberia

Snow Leopard

Storms

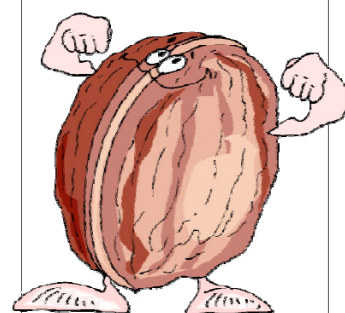
Tree Week

Walnuts

Water Safety

West Cork  
Islands

Whiting



ANSWERS: (OVER, DOWN, DIRECTION): Aisling Moran (7,1,SE); Amber (1,6,E); Black John (16,14,NW); Crab Code (7,15,N); Curlew (18,6,N); Dinosaur (10,11,NE); Draughts (1,7,E); Ecosystems (10,5,W); Flooding (10,2,SE); Siberia (14,9,SW); Snow Leopard (6,8,S); Storms (11,6,NE); Tree Week (1,10,S); Walnuts (17,13,W); Water Safety (18,1,SW); West Cork Islands (1,14,E); Whiting (17,7,NW); Wren (1,1,SE).

# Nature's Noticeboard!

## Winter 2016



If you are taking part in a winter swim, check out the advice from Irish Water Safety [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie)

Can you find a map of Sherkin, Heir and Long Islands in West Cork?

Keep track of this season's storms—name, wind speed, rainfall or snow, date of occurrence etc.. and graph them to compare their ferocity.

Start planning a tree-friendly event now for Tree Week 2017. from 5–12th March

Create your own alphabet code and make a quiz for friends, giving them the answers in code.

Try to buy items that use less packaging.

Bring your Christmas tree to a designated collection point so it can be shredded and use as compost.

New is not always better—can you repair an item rather than buying a new one?

Reuse black plastic mushroom containers from the supermarket, to grow seedlings. Make a few holes in the bottom for drainage.

At Christmas, save ribbons, bows, paper hats and colourful wrapping for your craft box during the year.

Sherkin Island Marine Station would like to thank those who have helped with this newsletter, particularly John Joyce, Michael Ludwig, Aisling Moran, Robbie Murphy, Vicky West, Alan D. Wilson and Jez Wickens.

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



We appreciate support from the EPA and the Geological Survey of Ireland toward the newsletter.

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