

# WILDLIFE TRAVEL

## THE BURREN

27<sup>th</sup> May to 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2023





## The Burren 2023: trip report and species lists

#	DATE	LOCATIONS AND NOTES
1	27th May	Arrive Lisdoonvarna; Settle in at the Wild Honey Inn
2	28 <sup>th</sup> May	Poulsallagh; Ballyvaughan; Caher River Valley
3	29 <sup>th</sup> May	Mullaghmor and Lough Gealain; Lough Bunny; Kilfenora; Bobby's Bog
4	30 <sup>th</sup> May	Cliffs of Moher; Caherconnell Ring Fort; Poul nabrone portal tomb
5	31 <sup>st</sup> May	Keelhill (Slieve Carran/Eagle's Rock) National Nature Reserve; Corcomroe Abbey
6	1st June	Inisheer Aran Islands
7	2nd June	Cappanawalla; Fanore Beach; Caher Bridge Garden
8	3 <sup>rd</sup> June	Depart Lisdoonvarna

### Leader

Charlie Rugeroni

Dorset



Cover: Bloody Crane's-bill, Poulsallagh. Above: Thrift, Cliffs of Moher

**Day 1 Saturday 27th May. *Meet at Wild Honey Inn, Lisdoonvarna***

We arrived in north-west County Clare by a variety of means and routes and gathered at the Wild Honey Inn where Kate welcomed us. After introductions and a quick background to the Burren, we made our way to the Roadside Tavern where we enjoyed a lovely supper of Doolin fish and chips and the fabulous Burren Brewery's micro-crafted Irish beers – Burren Black, Red and Gold, full of as much character as we, by the end of our meal and a hot long travelled day, were of tiredness. With the night still bright we retired to our hotel looking forward to collapsing onto fresh-pressed white bed linen, wondering if the weather would be kind to us in the coming week.

**Day 2 Sunday 28th May. *Poulsallagh; Ballyvaughan, Caher River Valley***

Blue skies, not a renegade cloud in sight. The day began with a sumptuous Wild Honey Inn breakfast. The full Irish was almost *de rigueur* after the homemade fresh berry compote with yoghurt and granola and the most delightfully petite *pain aux raisins*, *pain au chocolat* and mini scones, with hotel made jams on toast. Peter Mooney who for years had been driving Wildlife Travel groups around the Burren and up and down Corkscrew Hill, arrived at 0900 on the dot.

At Poulsallagh, a species-rich coastal stretch of limestone pavement, we came face to face with what the Burren does best - surprise. Here was the perfect introduction to the Burren flora: a beautiful mix of coastal, Mediterranean, Atlantic and Arctic-Alpine species found cheek by jowl in a natural karst setting: almost rock garden-like. Bright and sunny, with a light off-shore breeze, warm to hot; Meadow Pipits, Skylarks, Pied Wagtails, Rooks and a Cuckoo called. The heavy erosional work during the ice age was evident in the surface patterning, and clints and grykes defined the rocky outcrops. Here the limestone met the sea in a series of irregular pavements and wave-cut platforms; this was our stomping ground for the next few hours with the smell of the sea, salt and seaweed in the air. We first explored the landward stretch of grey incised pavements, with their patchy grasslands dredged in Heath Spotted-Orchids, mostly dotty or dashed white, a few light pink, their broad lips frilly edged. Some Common Spotted Orchids were also seen here. Early Purple Orchids were still in flower but the most ubiquitous and vivid purple-pink-magenta came from the Bloody Crane's-bill plentiful in the grassy areas and in between the pavements and swallow holes. Meanwhile mats of pink Wild Thyme, with Burnet Rose (character species of these parts) in its shades of cream, with Hoary Rockrose (rare in Britain, one of the Burren's 'Alpine' plants), Carline Thistle and Creeping Willow, all of which hugged the rock and grassy surfaces. A closer inspection revealed a richness of many other flowers – the yellows of Goldenrod, Kidney-Vetch, Bird's-foot Trefoil, the hairy Irish type of Common Lousewort (*ssp. hibernica*), Mountain Everlasting, Mountain Avens in flower and in curled or ruffled seed-heads, and the diminutive Limestone Bedstraw. The grykes, deep and shady places, revealed their lush green ferns, like Hart's-tongue, Male-fern and Maidenhair Spleenwort.

On crossing the road to look at the seaward pavements it was as if we had entered another habitat, similar yet very different. A patchwork of open soft grassy areas interspersed with rock outcrops leading to sculpted darker limestone cliffs, sharp and angular in places, facing the North Atlantic and beyond that, Newfoundland. The low sea-cliffs revealed Sea-Milkwort, Sea Plantain, Sea Fern-grass, and cushions of Thrift or Sea Pink, outstanding against the darker grey limestone. Below them crystal clear water and after a little searching, deep in dark damp grykes, Sea Spleenwort. Here too was Rock Samphire and we heard and saw our first Northern Wheatear. Swallows were observed, Rock Pipits called, and over the sea Shags flew north. We came across a desiccated Weaver Fish on the rocks.

Back on board our bus we headed north and skirted and admired the mix of Burren hill and coastal scenery, backed up by Gleninagh Mountain, and as we rounded Black Head there stood its forlorn looking but still functioning lighthouse, flashing its white and red lights every five seconds at night. Galway Bay opened up in front of us. Way below us, auks flew right and left, north and south, we imagined empty beaked one way and beak-filled the other. Just before our lunch break we pulled in at the Pinnacle Well and came upon Fairy-Foxglove growing on its walls and roof.

By now breakfast was but a distant memory and appetites were opened once more as we walked into the Tea and Garden Rooms in Ballyvaughan. The garden had a mix of exotics and native plants, including Bogbean in the pond. Soups, sandwiches and cakes kept us here for a little while before itchy feet and plants to see got us on our way once more. We scanned the edge of the harbour and its sea-wall, where more Sea-Milkwort, Fern-grass and Thrift had bedded in.

We then re-traced our steps part of the way and drove up the Caher Valley, with its mostly dry river and large water-filled rock pools. This is the only water course in the Burren which runs its full course above ground. We stopped at the stone bridge from where we meandered down to the chapel where Peter waited. On the way, initially under some Hazel scrub and Ash trees shading Sweet Woodruff, Sanicle, Primrose, the dusky pink flower heads of Water Avens and the delicate Pignut, we came upon three Ravens which kept us intrigued and entertained with their antics, coming very close to us, as they gargled calls at one another. On the sunny verges, beautifully backlit mountain avens mingled with Early Purple Orchids and Twayblade. A little lower down by a gate and over a stone wall, on a grassy mound on the banks of the River Caher, where Marsh Marigold grew, we saw a cluster of bright blue, not unlike the blue of milkwort, but more strident: a small group of Spring Gentian, their five propeller-shaped petals hiding long sepal tubes ending in white frilly discs. Here was one of the Burren's striking botanical stars. There were more of them lower down the valley, this time by the side of the road and up a bank next to Mountain Avens. The first leaves of Dark Red Helleborine were coming through, still a while from flowering. We had several sightings of an Irish Dipper flying up and down over the river ferrying food to hungry mouths: a unique subspecies found only in Ireland which can be distinguished by a rusty brown band where the bib ends on the breast. Grey Wagtails were seen too as was a hovering hunting Kestrel. Stonechats chatted away at the mouth of the valley where Peter waited. The Hawthorn hedge was in places covered in the silken tents of Lackey moth caterpillars.

Returning, we decided to go up and over the coastal hills. This route gave us a spectacular view up to Galway Bay and down to the Atlantic, with the Aran Islands in mid distance; seen from this height, the islands siblings were more easily distinguished one from the other. Entering Lisdoonvarna from the north we headed straight for the local supermarket and placed our orders for tomorrow's picnic lunch. Showered, refreshed and after a recap of our day's sightings, we sauntered to the Roadside Tavern for a superb evening meal. Tonight crab claws in a wine sauce made an appearance at our table as did a fish pie with prawns and scallops. The sound of live Irish music performed by local musicians rounded off an enjoyable first day in the 'Boireann': this rocky place where flowery representations of the Mediterranean, Alps and the Arctic tundra combined in their own eclectic way, just as they had done since the last ice age.

**Day 3 Monday 29th May. Mullaghmore and Lough Gealain; Lough Bunny; Kilfenora; Bobby's Bog**

This blue sky morning, with clouds seemingly on strike, a Sedge Warbler, Wren, Blackbird and a Cuckoo sang hidden in the dense vegetation opposite our hotel. After our splendid breakfast and the later start of 9.15 we headed in a south-easterly direction with our Mace's picnics safely packed in our bags. Today we drove to the concave massif of Mullaghmore, meaning Great Summit, via Kilfenora and Corofin. First we looked at Leamaneh Castle, close to Kilnaboy, once the 17<sup>th</sup> century home of 'Maire Rua' (Red Mary – Máire Nic-Mhathúna). Peter waxed lyrical about her life, her red-haired ghost legend, her forthright character and her notorious past. The ruins included both a 15<sup>th</sup> century castle complete with arrow loops and the 17<sup>th</sup> century add-on manor, which today housed quarrelsome Jackdaws, skirling Swifts and Rusty-back Ferns. Also within its grounds, some Yellow Iris and Ragged-Robin.

As we continued on our way House Martins flew alongside and in front of our bus, and another aspect of the Burren opened up in front of us, greener, more rolling with rocky outcrops and much Hazel scrub. Just before we got to Lough Gealain we pit-stopped for a plant-stop at a flowery meadow full of promise. The place buzzed with bees, buzzed on nectar, and swarmed with Garden Chafers, bumbling their way over the meadow and hedgerow blossom; the females ovipositing every now and then. This place was also alive with what looked like tiny flying poppies, which on closer inspection were a combination of Transparent Burnet and Six-spot Burnet Moths, eager to find mates, much like folk at the Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival. Ant-hills were topped with Marjoram and Thyme. Cowslips, buttercups, Common Spotted and Early Purple Orchids of every shade of purple, with Bugle, Twayblade and Tormentiall littered this meadow, with Four-spotted Chasers, frogs, Common Blue and Meadow Brown butterflies flitting or jumping around. There were several Thyme Broomrape among the orchids. One or two Yellow Shell moths were also seen here with Small Blue butterflies, before we too moved a little way on and entered a small quarry. Here we found and marvelled at numerous pristine Fly Orchids, rising delicately above their rocky habitat: such a delightful plague of flies. As we were about to leave this field we came upon several Bee Orchids, and once out on the road walking back to the bus there on the roadside edge, under the hazel scrub, where the tall stems of another orchid, Broad-leaved Helleborine, their leaves arranged spirally and widely spaced.

We continued on to Lough Gealain with its borrowed view of Mullaghmore (591m ASL), where six Hooded Crows flew over the turlough, a Reed Bunting sung from the top of Common Reed and a Cormorant and two Common Gulls sat on a large boulder island. Turloughs are low lying areas on limestone which become flooded in wet weather through the welling up of groundwater from the rock. However, Lough Gealain is one of the more semi-permanent turloughs: fed and drained by underground channels, it has a large draw-down zone covered in 'stable but sticky' marl and algal mud, like porridge, over which we walked, and a central area which remains under water. The limestone pavements sloped gently into the lough, with a wide zone that floods in winter and is dry by early summer. It was in this shore zone, where Bloody Crane's-bill grew here and there, that we found a new characteristic plant for the trip, the yellow flowered Shrubby Cinquefoil – a twiggy Burren speciality, often flooded in winter. Between the cinquefoil and in pockets of grass we found the first of the marsh orchids. These were mostly the purple-pink form of the Early Marsh-Orchid and among them, rising out of a grassy 'kamenitza' (a solution depression rising from slightly sloping pavements), one single specimen of the much rarer and restricted Flecked Marsh-Orchid, with its leaves heavily spotted above and a little below, with mid pink flowers with dark flecks and some loop markings; typical of western Ireland. There were several marsh orchids too that had hybridised and enticed one

to hypothesize as to their lineage. Whatever their origins, they came across as beautiful plants in a unique setting. Our first Lesser Butterfly Orchid, with parallel pollinia was found here. Wood Sage, something of a misnomer, as it is not restricted to woods, poked its green stems out of crevices in the limestone as did the maroon-purple tinged Wall Lettuce, with its tiny yellow flowers. Other grykes contained Alder Buckthorn and prostrate Juniper. Four-spotted Chasers were here in good numbers as were Blue-tailed Damselflies. Over the road and on classic examples of limestone pavement, where the heat of the morning bounced off it and came back at us, there were some dwarf specimens of Guelder Rose in full flower and more grand looking Bloody Crane's-bill.

A short drive east took us to a second turlough where the limestone ran straight into its clear shallow waters, where the grass got wet too as did some of the orchids. This was Lough Bunny, a permanent lake believed to have been formed after the collapse of the underlying bedrock. It was fed from springs and it drained through sinkholes, but never fully. Occasionally fish jumped, more than likely Rudd and/or Perch, as these are by far the dominant species here, with some Pike. This was our picnic spot. Boulders provided seats and the Ash trees some shade on a very hot day. The filled baguettes went down a treat as we munched away by the gently lapping waters of Lough Bunny. While at lunch we watched a Little Egret fly past, as did Common Terns at the back of the lough and nearer to us Bullfinch, Pied Wagtails, Chaffinch and Robins flitted about – the latter eager for any falling breadcrumbs from Mace's fine Lisdoonvarnian fare. Swallows flew low over the water drinking as they went. After lunch and after spotting Turlough Dandelions by the lough shore, we strolled along water's edge in a north-easterly direction and marsh orchids popped up everywhere. Among the first to be seen was the lambent white, frilly-edged O'Kelly's Spotted Orchid. Early Marsh, Irish Marsh and the hybrid Early x Narrow-leaved Marsh Orchids and Heath Spotted were all growing here with hundreds of Common Butterwort hiding among the shoreline grasses. Towards the end of our stroll we happened upon a single slender specimen of Narrow-leaved Marsh Orchid (Pugsley's), with most of its few flowers facing the same way.

Nearby we came across a three-petalled, lilac-flowered plant with bright yellow anthers, growing at the point of the lough's fluctuating water levels – it was Lesser Water Plantain. Further on, the buds of Dropwort, tinged red or pink and white stood at a good height and were not easily missed. Interestingly, this is one of the other few species that is found in Ireland only in the Burren. In the afternoon heat the Brimstones and Speckled Wood butterflies fast flitted about the place, and Common Blue and Blue-tailed Damselfly and Four-spotted Chasers quartered the limestone pavements for food.

We doubled back to Kilfenora for some tea and cake at the Burren Centre, followed by an exploration of the fascinating Celtic crosses and the carvings on the Doorty Cross in the nearby beautifully restored Kilfenora Cathedral (1189). In the grounds of the church and on its walls grew Pellitory-of-the-Wall, the fine candlestick-like flower spikes of Navelwort, Rue-leaved Saxifrage, Shining cranes-bill and Lesser Swine-cress – and Gorse. From here we headed to 'Bobby's Bog' on the outskirts of Lisdoonvarna, and whom should we meet atop a tractor but the octogenarian man himself – Bobby, with many a tale to tell. With his blessing we set forth onto his remarkable lowland bog. Along the path was an area of wet woodland including Alder and several willow species. The bog had peat diggings of various ages yet many scarcer bog plants survived, though the small-scale extraction would have removed the stored carbon within the peat. An impressive Royal Fern was seen here growing next to the pink-purple alien looking flowers of Marsh Cinquefoil and beds of Water

Horsetail. Further on and backlit by the late afternoon sun were fields of Common Cotton Grass and closer to us we saw Round-leaved Sundews growing cheek by jowl with tramlines of drying peat. Among the orchids we had Heath Spotted and Northern Marsh. Ragged Robin formed large pink beds with Cuckoo Flower, and the cooing of Collared Doves could clearly be heard as we left: as if crying 'United, United!' Only it was Max, a 15-year-old Evertonian dog (apparently), who captured our hearts as we boarded our bus back to the Wild Honey Inn, minutes away.

Dinner was taken at the Rathbaun Hotel in the centre of Lisdoonvarna, where Lynn welcomed us most hospitably. Guinness and homemade soda bread accompanied our meal. Being in Ireland we did as the Irish do, (although we doubted they did it in early summer, but we did) and enjoyed a lip-smackingly good Irish stew, followed by a sumptuous fruit crumble with ice cream, and a long circular walk to bed.

### **Day 4 Tuesday 30th May. *Cliffs of Moher; Caherconnell Ring Fort; Poul nabrone portal tomb***

A Mistle Thrush sung its reveille to get us down to breakfast, not that we needed much encouragement to enjoy our first meal of the day at the Inn. A short distance from our home range were the Cliffs of Moher and that was where we started our day. Another hot sunny day with only a light breeze for comfort. This prolonged fine weather had been unheard of on earlier Wildlife Travel holidays in the Burren: perhaps one or two days of hot sun might have interrupted the week's wet and the grey, but if forecasts were correct, we'd be basking in wall-to-wall sunshine during our entire Burren sojourn. Today Peter arrived with his hat on – another sign of the fine day to come.

The cliffs early in the morning, when the crowds had yet to arrive, where an awe-inspiring place. 214 metres below us, the Atlantic breakers were becalmed and auks on whirring wings went to and fro, flapped away to fish and returned with Sand Eels for their precocious young sat on precarious ledges of mudstone and siltstone. We stood and watched from the Wild Atlantic Way. The cliffs are part of a Special Protection Area for Birds under the EU Birds Directive and provide habitat for 30,000 breeding pairs of birds. Puffin, Guillemots and Razorbills seemed the busiest, yet there were other birds here too like Fulmars, Kittiwakes, Common and Great Black-backed Gulls, Gannets and Shags. And as we availed ourselves of views back to O'Brien's Tower and along the cliff face where a long green chunk of rock, Goat Island, jutted out to sea, we noticed this was where the Puffins were nesting in old rabbit burrows on the grassy topped semi-stack, so called Goat Island because a certain Cornelliuss O'Brien once kept his goats there. It was from here that we glimpsed one of the Peregrine Falcons flying over us and then stooping with much vim and vigour, as is usually their way. Swifts were here too and then, at first one, then two, then several more flew just above the brow of the hill behind the sympathetically designed visitor's centre, chattering Red-billed Choughs, 'cheo-wing' as they displayed their mastery of flight. Their orange-red bills and legs were colour-echoed down below us on those Puffin-orange-red feet. Some Choughs landed and walked around perhaps feeding at this time of year on ants and beetles and leatherjackets, crane fly larvae. Fulmars glided on stiff wings along the clifftop. The air was filled with Fulmar cackling and Kittiwake trumpeting. Down on the surface of the water rafts of birds could be seen presumably resting between fishing trips. On land, Linnets and Meadow Pipits were around.

There was botanical interest too with much Thrift, Sea Campion, Kidney Vetch, blue flowering Sheep's-bit and small patches of blue-grey Roseroot in yellow flower.



The limestone steps' risers and treads that led up to the viewing platforms were full of Carboniferous fossils: colonial corals, brachiopods snails and crinoids, some seen in cross-section and others in long section. The slate paving slabs used as part of the wall viewing areas exhibited Carboniferous worm track fossils made on ancient seabeds. We had a break in the visitor centre which had much of interest about the wildlife, geology and social history of the cliffs and surrounding area.

Onwards to the 10-12<sup>th</sup> century Caherconnell Ring Fort and lunch at its modern-day café. The local stone ring fort was impressive and well-preserved, and its occupation extended as recently as the 17<sup>th</sup> century; the same site having been used for over 4000 years. The whistling call we heard was unlike any bird we knew. That was because it came from a shepherd's lips at a demonstration sheepdog trial next door. On the sheltered east sidewall of the fort, we found some Mossy Saxifrage growing in an apparently soil free medium, on other moss. It was in flower and beautifully backlit so that its flower stalk hairs were clearly visible.

Poulnabrone Portal Tomb was only a half a kilometre further north. Possibly the most famous megalithic monument in the Burren, this Neolithic tomb, older than the pyramids, is at least 6000 years old. Much like Caherconnell, this tomb had been in use over a long period of time, at least 1500 years since it was first built. What remains today is only the 'stone skeleton' of the original monument; originally it would have been part covered with soil, and its flagstone capped by a cairn. The limestone pavement around the tomb held many plants including Irish Eyebright, Early Purple Orchids and Heath Speedwell.

Another beautiful day out in the sun, when we gave more time to birds, archaeology, geology, and seascapes.

### **Day 5 Wednesday 31st May. Keelhilla (Slieve Carran/Eagle's Rock) National Nature Reserve; Corcomroe Abbey**

Once more a beautiful morning and a welcoming breakfast. We collected our lunch baguettes from Mace's - we were now on first name terms with their staff!

We set off south-east via Kilfenora, then headed north-east past Leamaneh Castle, still buzzed by Swifts but no squabbling Jackdaws this time, before we stopped briefly on the hillside at Carran to take in the view of the broad flat-bottomed valley: this was the largest 'polje' in Ireland, a seasonally-flooded glacial depression. It is capable of flooding to depths of almost two metres over several square kilometres almost overnight, then draining through sink holes and surface streams. Today there were still large areas of surface water and the valley looked very green. A first Cuckoo crossed in front of the bus. Then further on, two more flew alongside us. Then another on a telegraph wire mobbed by Meadow Pipits. Then a two-ton truck blocked the narrow hazel-lined lane that led to our destination: the driver nowhere to be seen yet the engine was still running. As far as we knew no alien sightings had been reported. The driver emerged from a farmhouse, the truck reversed and we were once more on our way. Passing a sign to the Burren Perfumery, some wondered why this had been located in the middle of nowhere, out on the pavements, surrounded by Hazel scrub, not easy to find down narrow lanes to the back of beyond of the Burren. As we continued on our journey we marvelled at the 'pinky-ness' of Hawthorn blossom, with some shrubs more pink than white.

We arrived at the Slieve Carron Nature Reserve, with the high hills of Eagle's Rock looming over an environment of limestone pavement, scrub grassland and woodland. From where we stood at the entrance to the reserve and looking north-east, we could see into County Galway beyond and somewhere in the distance would have been Kinvarra. We entered through a gap in the dry-stone wall and to our left there was an information board, beneath which grew one Hairy Rock-cress plant: it has grown here for around 15 years, clearly loving its typical habitat, and in that time this plant, distinctive slender, leafy, densely hairy, with spikes of small white flowers, had made itself known to many Wildlife Travellers. The site had been designated a National Nature Reserve by the Irish government in 1986 and formed part of the Burren plateau. A grassy path meandered between the limestone pavements through lines of least rocky resistance, a path with Early Purple Orchids, some gone over, and Heath Spotted Orchids too, and not far from the entrance we came across what we had been looking for earlier in the week, a Dense-flowered Orchid. Locally frequent in the Burren in grassy places this orchid can be difficult to find, more so at this time of year when the flowers are gone. This first example dressed in its fresh seed pods would have required a visit in April or early May to find it in bloom, part of the 'classic' combination of Burren plants: Dense-flowered Orchid, Spring Gentian and Mountain Avens growing side by side: a Mediterranean orchid, an Alpine gentian and the more typically Arctic avens.

Then here and there a couple of the Dingy Skippers flying as if in a constant shiver. Then another Dense-flowered Orchid; plenty of Mountain Avens in flower and in seed, and yes Bloody crane's-bill was seen growing everywhere brightening up the place. Looking closely for Irish Eyebrights, we spotted their narrow bronze-coloured leaves and their two-lipped small white flowers, lower lip longest, in small pockets of shallow soil in the pavements; it was near thyme upon which it is semi-parasitic. Not found in Britain, in folklore it was meant to counter the evil eye and when carried it would help enhance one's psychic powers. Now, what more might we see today? Perhaps feral goats up on the Keelhilla's hills, and yes there they were!

Mountain Everlasting grew with Thyme Broomrape, Red Bartsia and flowering Burnet Rose. A Song Thrush sang, Small Heath and Six-spot Burnets flew with the Yellow Shell moths seen before, plus a Dew Moth, unmistakable, orange-yellow forewing with small black spots. Ravens could be heard high above. Then we stepped through another beautifully constructed stone wall. They were so much a feature of this place. Finding ourselves on a grassier meadow, with clearly deeper soils, and walking under bright sunshine, we stumbled upon some Ramsons and Bluebells under some taller Hazel. Just in front of these and tucked away in the grass were some lady's-mantle. On closer inspection we noted two types: Yellow-green and Smooth Lady's-Mantle. From here we ventured into the cool shade of the wood, which embraced the remains of an oratory (595AD +/-). This once belonged to St Colman Mac Duagh who set out to be a hermit within the solitudes of this wood. Here in the depths of the Burren, much like the Burren Perfumery, St Colman found perfect seclusion to commune alone with his creator. Here he had his 'cell', a cave, above the oratory he had built where today a spring still issued forth into a well, with its waters so clear we could see many a tossed votive coin. It is said that through his seemingly continual fasts, prayers and vigils, he became so imbued with the sense of the divine love that he was frequently in rapture, and no doubt at times in much hunger. A legend is told of flying plates full of food that left King Guaire Aidhne's banqueting table from his palace in Kinvarra on Easter Sunday and flew, as if carried by angels, all the way to St Colman's cell, where the saintly man had just finished his Lenten fast, and one suspects couldn't believe his ecstatic eyes.

The peacefulness of the place was palpable and in the shade we ate our lunch, listening to the bird songs of Robins, Blackcaps and Song Thrush, and admiring Brittle Bladder Fern and Hart's-tongue by the well; a veteran Goat Willow variously encrusted in lichen; and the other ferns about the place: Male Fern, Soft Shield Fern, Lady Fern and Broad Buckler Fern among others. Earlier, and at the edge of the wood, we had spied some Water Avenas with their delicate flowers of dark red sepals that surrounded orangey pink petals and a cluster of yellow stamens, all of which hung on long purple stems. Also, the diminutive Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage just inside the wood in deeper shade and dampness. As we headed back to our bus, two more butterflies were seen, Speckled Wood and Marsh Fritillary, the latter seen near the Ramsons and may have been sipping their nectar. Briefly we popped into a calcareous fen seen over a stone wall. Unfortunately this was pretty dry but we managed to pick up Round-leaved Sundew, Broad-leaved Cotton-grass, Devil's-bit Scabious, Common Butterwort, Bugle, all among a stand of Black Bog-Rush. Small Heath butterflies were noticeable on the wing. A Yellowhammer sang from a hazel shrub.

Now in this 25°C heat what we needed was some oasis nearby where we could relax with a cool drink. The nearest place was in New Quay but that was at least 45 minutes away. On the bus and meandering our way through narrow lanes in the middle of nowhere, in the back and beyond of the Burren... and we headed straight for that place, the Burren Perfumery. It was just right, with shade, herbal teas, cold sparkling elderflower cordials, ice creams and scents, and what's more a gift shop – just perfect for a half hour's rest and recuperation, with Robins and Chaffinches roaming around our feet. Paradise had been found, much as it had been found, on occasions, by an ecstatic St Colman.

Corcomroe Abbey, on the outskirts of Ballyvaughan, was the site of extensive remains of 15<sup>th</sup> century church architecture. The ruins represented the wider Carthusian community. Our visit made all the more poignant as within the ruined walls, we stumbled upon a family just finishing covering up a grave, which we suspected might have been of a recently interred relative. Among the carvings on the capitols of two altar columns, were depictions of Bluebells or perhaps Water Avenas. The stone walls housed much Navelwort (the flower spikes like candles waiting for mass to begin), Pellitory-of-the-Wall and Ivy-leaved Toadflax.

And onto New Quay and Flaggy Shore, where the air was fresh with smells of the sea and Sandwich Terns flew back and forth on fishing trips for sand eels and sprats for their young. They dived in front of us for fish. A lone Black Guillemot also fed in the bay. There was Wild Radish along the stony shore and in the sea-weedy waters near the pier we saw one or two beautifully marked Compass Jellyfish. Over supper we'd talked about poetry and specifically Seamus Heaney's poem 'Postscript' which delved into themes of nature, experience and time, and was set at Flaggy Shore:

*'And some time make the time to drive out west  
Into County Clare, along the Flaggy Shore....'*

It was good to be here late in the afternoon admiring the scenery and reflecting on what the day had brought us, though not on flying plates. Today our angel had been Peter, who'd picked us up in the morning, had safely flown us from one Burren corner to another and delivered us back to our Inn satiated with wonderful wildlife, and with an appetite for dinner. Little did we realise, until he told us, that he, Peter, had driven Seamus Heaney (1939-2013) around the county on a number of occasions but specifically when he unveiled a memorial to the poet Brian Merriman (1747-1805) on the shore

of Lough Graney in County Clare, where the opening scene of Merriman's poem, '*The Midnight Court*' was set. Our return up Corkscrew Hill allowed us views of Ballyvaughan Bay with Galway Bay beyond.

Tonight's meal was delightfully taken at Ballinalacken Castle Hotel, high on a wildlife meadow hilltop, set against the rugged beauty of west Burren, a 15<sup>th</sup>C castle and overlooking the Cliffs of Moher and tomorrow's destination, the Arran Islands. The food was exquisite and we ate and chatted and drank in the most relaxed and convivial surroundings.

### **Day 6 Thursday 1st June. *Inisheer, Aran Islands***

A bright sunny 'free' day to do whatever we wished to do. Free-thinking spirits that we were, we decided to do our own thing, and all visit the Aran Islands. Baguettes, immune to the waves and tribulations of the Atlantic, were secure in our backpacks and we too were soon secure aboard the Aran Island Express, moored at Doolin, where the limestone pavements came down to the shore to wet their limpets and rocks.

At the port we had seen the blue-purple and yellow of Sea-Aster and the fleshy greens of Sea Beet, the wild ancestor of beetroot, chard and sugar beet. On an island just off Doolin we had Great Black-backed Gulls that loafed around on the sun-warmed rocks.

Some auks were spotted during our calm and brief 25 minute crossing. Once ashore on Inisheer, a couple of us decided to use a horse-powered means of transport (Black Bessie) while the rest relied on person-power to leg it around the island. Some of us went this way some of us went that way, all of us took in the island, the unconnected-ness of island living. Rock Pipits were evident on the sandy beach and Shags were seen just off shore. Sea Holly, plenty of Pyramidal and Bee Orchids and Yellow-wort grew among the Marram Grass or on mostly bare ground. On our way to the ancient cemetery, Small Blue butterflies were on the wing with Meadow Browns, Northern Wheatears perched and called from buildings and Swallows swooped around the dune slacks. The very hot day brought out the heady scent of the lemon-coloured blossom of extensive carpets of Bird's-foot Trefoil and also the smell of recently dropped ordure, which in turn brought in a chunky black dung beetle. The beetle then proceeded to tunnel its way into the dun briquettes, getting stuck into things and not holding back. This place delivered us spires of over 1.5 metre high real curiosities, Babington's Leek, locally common here, escaped from gardens many centuries ago. Soon it came round for our unwanted escape from Inisheer. We met on the pier in late afternoon sunshine and told each other tales of our day, of our adventures on Aran.

Then on to the Cliffs of Moher and O'Brien's Tower from below. We took a boat tour to the cliffs, to the stacks and caves and another world of birds upon birds on ledges, rafting on the water, flying this way and that. One or two seen dead on the surface – was it bird flu or natural death? Guillemots, Shags, Puffins, Kittiwakes, Gannets, Razorbills and gulls all living with a backdrop of mudstone, siltstone and shale beds and the highest of cliffs, pin-pricked with human beings walking the coastal path, the Atlantic Way. The Guillemots bounced on the surface of the sea as they landed for a rest and all the while we had a live commentary of what we were seeing and what the world was like when this place's geology was created. Commentary too on the birdlife and its conservation: succinct, informative, and no dumbing down for a fascinated audience filling the decks. In the early evening light the huge numbers of flying birds, mostly shades of white in front of the cliffs and the huge



Branaunmore stack, their general activity and their noise were something to witness and the experience was taken away as a wonderful memory.

Our dinner tonight was 'chez nous' at the Wild Honey Inn, its restaurant having been a receiver of a Michelin Star since 2018 and a Michelin Green Initiative award in 2020 for Sustainable Gastronomy. We were all given our printed menus so there is little point in recalling here the delights that we so enjoyed this night. No need to mention the crab cocktail of white crabmeat, mayonnaise and apple, wild asparagus and courgette, basil, with gazpacho dressing or even say anything about the rare breed pork belly with heritage carrots and pickled apple jam or say less still about the wild turbot with piperade and poached San Marzano tomato. No need for more words about these mini Burren rock gardens of colour and exquisite taste laid out in front of us on white plates that were as if limestone *kamenitzas*. The desserts – sumptuously sublime. Gastronomy, seemingly too brassy a word to describe our heavenly meal.

### **Day 7 Friday 2nd June. *Cappanawalla; Fanore Beach; Caher Bridge Garden***

We couldn't but believe it. Another fine hot sunny day with the slightest of breezes. After our roll call at Mace's we drove north to Cappanawalla (300m ASL), a bare limestone ridge and its more vegetated lower northern slopes that overlooked Ballyvaughan. We parked at the Burren College and Arts Centre car park at the foot of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Newtown tower castle, built for the O'Brien family, restored in 1994, its buttresses bedecked with Sea Campion, Ox-eye Daisy, Fairy Foxglove, Polypody and more. From here we walked a quiet shady lane lined with Sweet Woodruff, Snowberry about to flower, Sanicle and Bush Vetch, with Wood White butterflies patrolling the verges. Up the slope we went and the track opened up and in the clearings we came across Tutsan, Burnet Rose, Bloody Crane's-bill among other plants. The views from here towards the coast and surrounding hillsides were superb. As we progressed up the hill we emerged onto rocks which had some ferns: Maidenhair Spleenwort, Wall-Rue and Rustyback. A slope showed signs of having been a wet flush but today it was mostly dry. Here we found them, that other jewel of the Burren, the large deep blue flowers with white striped throats of the Large-flowered Butterwort, with several dozen plants scattered on those thin soils over limestone. The plants were looking their best with their star-shaped, fly-paper like fleshy yellow-lemon-lime leaves flecked with hapless insects. Here we also saw Lesser Butterfly Orchid, Irish Lousewort, the little Flea Sedge and Bee Orchid, with the scent of Water Mint in the air. Chaffinches, Linnets, and Willow Warblers were heard as we sat on the pavements and took in the quiet sunny views across the valley to Aillwee hill (304m ASL) and the northern Burren. This was classic karst landscape enjoyed to the full on our last day's outing.

Back down to our bus and onto Fanore Beach. Lying on the road between Ballyvaughan and Poulsallagh with an extensive sandy beach and sand dunes around the outlet channel of the Caher River, Fanore Beach was understandably busy in places today. We sallied forth onto the dune heath grassland. No Spring Gentians this year but plenty of Irish Eyebrights with their miniscule delicately coloured flowers. There were also Yellow-wort, Heath Dog-Violets, Yellow Rattle, tiny Pyramidal Orchids and Common Dodder. Dune restoration was evident.

We walked onto the back dunes and down onto the banks of the dry Caher river, its channel dominated by large well-rounded cobble stones. The elegant large flowers of Sea Bindweed gave its presence away; its other name, Beach Morning-Glory, is perhaps more fitting. Sun Spurge grew well here with the bindweed, erect and robust with grey-green leaves. One of the plants seen sprawling

from the strand-line sands was Spear-leaved Orache, with its distinctive 'sugar-frosted' mealy, silvery-white foliage. From here we hopped onto the sands proper and headed for some limestone pavements uncovered by wave action, which contained some coral and bivalve fossils. Nearby a convenient rocky outcrop, barnacled and with limpets and small rocky pools, provided seating for lunch, with the sea just metres away, calm and enticing. This was our 'picnic on limestone rock'. There was one lone cloud that hung around in an otherwise blue sky. Jellyfish were gently being washed up along the shore and faced certain death later that afternoon. The fresh specimens were quite beautiful. There were four types: Compass (compass-like brown markings), Moon (four pink purple rings on its back), the Purple and the Blue Jellyfish. After lunch and making our way back to the car-park we had Sea Mayweed, not in flower, by the steps leading out of the beach.

Peter then drove us up the Caher Valley to the stone bridge where the Caher Bridge Garden was situated. The shade provided by Carl Wright's trees was most welcome. The garden was begun in 1999 and over the years he had extended it working up the side of the valley and planting some native but mostly garden non-native plants and exotics. The garden included interesting design elements, water features which borrowed from the River Caher, and a notable collection of a vast range of plants from all over the world. Carl had also used much local stonework to create paths and numerous distinct areas within the garden with vantage points that created framed vignettes of other aspects of the garden. Carl was incredibly enthusiastic about his seemingly never-ending project and was an engaging host. While there we spotted a Buzzard being mobbed by two Ravens. This was a particularly good sighting as the Buzzard's expansion is a success story for west Ireland over the past decades. Once confined to the northeast of the country, they now appeared more and more throughout Ireland, and some, rarely, like today had been spotted in the west. This then was our final stop on our last day in the Burren. A drive back up the Caher, through Formoyle, onto the N67 took us into Lisdoonavra.

Dinner tonight was once more at Ballynalacken Castle Country House Hotel. Suffice to say it was another wonderful meal made all the more memorable as it was Sally's birthday. After the meal, Peter collected and returned us to the Wild Honey Inn where, because some of us were leaving at the crack of dawn, we said our goodbyes and thanked Peter for his excellent driving during our week in the Burren. Some were flying tomorrow yet others continued with their travels, self-guided, within the west of Ireland, which had so much to offer to those who cared to come and visit.

**Charlie Rugeroni, Wildlife Travel. June 2023**



Above (clockwise, from top left):  
Flecked Marsh Orchid, O'Kelly's Spotted Orchid, Ivy Broomrape, Fly Orchid

## PLANTS

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	First seen
<b>PTERIDOPHYTA: FERNS</b>		
<b>Aspleniaceae (spleenwort family)</b>		
<i>Asplenium ceterach</i>	Rustyback	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Asplenium marinum</i>	Sea Spleenwort	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Asplenium ruta-muraria</i>	Wall-rue	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i>	Hart's-tongue	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	Maidenhair Spleenwort	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	Lady-fern	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Cystopteris fragilis</i>	Brittle Bladder-fern	31 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Dennstaedtiaceae (bracken family)</b>		
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Osumundaceae (royal fern family)</b>		
<i>Osmunda regalis</i>	Royal Fern	29 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Polypodiaceae (polypody family)</b>		
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	Broad Buckler-fern	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	Male-fern	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Dryopteris pseudomas</i>	Scaly Male-fern	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	Polypody	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Polystichum aculeatum</i>	Hard Shield-fern	31 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Pteridaceae (maidenhair fern family)</b>		
<i>Adiantum capillus-veneris</i>	Maidenhair Fern	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Equisetaceae (horsetail family)</b>		
<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	Field Horsetail	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<i>Equisetum fluviatile</i>	Water Horsetail	29 <sup>th</sup>
<b>CONIFERS</b>		
<b>Cupressaceae (cypress family)</b>		
<i>Juniperus communis</i>	Common Juniper	29 <sup>th</sup>
<b>ANGIOSPERMS: Dicotyledons</b>		
<b>Amaranthaceae (amaranth family)</b>		
<i>Atriplex portulacoides</i>	Sea-purslane	1 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Beta vulgaris</i> ssp. <i>maritima</i>	Sea Beet	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Apiaceae (carrot family)</b>		
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley	30 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Conopodium majus</i>	Pignut	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Crithmum maritimum</i>	Rock Samphire	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Daucus carota</i>	Wild Carrot	1 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Eryngium maritimum</i>	Sea-holly	1 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Sanicula europaea</i>	Sanicle	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Smyrnium olusatrum</i>	Alexanders	31 <sup>st</sup>



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SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	First seen
<b>Aquifoliaceae (holly family)</b>		
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Araliaceae (ivy family)</b>		
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Hedera helix</i> ssp. <i>hibernica</i>	Atlantic Ivy	31 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Asteraceae (daisy family)</b>		
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Antennaria dioica</i>	Mountain Everlasting	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Aster tripolium</i>	Sea Aster	1 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Carlina vulgaris</i>	Carline Thistle	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Centaurea scabiosa</i>	Greater Knapweed	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Cirsium dissectum</i>	Meadow Thistle	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>	Hemp-agrimony	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Hieracium</i> agg.	Hawkweeds	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Oxeye Daisy	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	Pineappleweed	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Mycelis muralis</i>	Wall Lettuce	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Pilosella officinarum</i>	Mouse-ear-hawkweed	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common Ragwort	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	Groundsel	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Solidago virgaurea</i>	Goldenrod	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Sonchus arvensis</i>	Perennial Sow-thistle	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly Sow-thistle	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Taraxacum</i> agg.	Dandelions	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Taraxacum palustre</i>	Turlough Dandelion	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Tripleurospermum maritimum</i>	Sea Mayweed	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	Colt's-foot	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>Betulaceae (birch family)</b>		
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver Birch	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Boraginaceae (borage family)</b>		
<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	Field Forget-me-not	29 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Brassicaceae (cabbage family)</b>		
<i>Arabis hirsuta</i>	Hairy Rock-cress	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Barbarea vulgaris</i>	Winter-cress	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Brassica rapa</i>	Turnip	1 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	Cuckooflower	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>	Dame's-violet	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Lepidium didymum</i>	Lesser Swine-cress	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Lobularia maritima</i>	Sweet Allison	31 <sup>st</sup>

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SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	First seen
<i>Nasturtium officinale</i>	Water-cress	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Raphanus raphanistrum</i> ssp. <i>Maritimus</i>	Sea Radish	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Sisymbrium officinale</i>	Hedge Mustard	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Campanulaceae (bellflower family)</b>		
<i>Jasione montana</i>	Sheep's-bit	30 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Caprifoliaceae (honeysuckle family)</b>		
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Honeysuckle	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>	Common Valerian	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Valeriana ruber</i>	Red Valerian	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Caryophyllaceae (pink family)</b>		
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Minuartia verna</i>	Spring Sandwort	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Silene flos-cuculi</i>	Ragged-Robin	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Silene uniflora</i>	Sea Campion	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Stellaria media</i>	Common Chickweed	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Stellaria uliginosa</i>	Bog Stitchwort	29 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Celastraceae (spindle family)</b>		
<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	Spindle	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Cistaceae (rock rose family)</b>		
<i>Helianthemum oelandicum</i> ssp. <i>piloselloides</i>	Hoary Rock-rose	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Convolvulaceae (bindweed family)</b>		
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Hedge Bindweed	30 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Calystegia soldanella</i>	Sea Bindweed	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field Bindweed	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Cuscuta epithymum</i>	Dodder	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>Cornaceae (dogwood family)</b>		
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood	31 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Crassulaceae (stonecrop family)</b>		
<i>Rhodiola roseum</i>	Roseroot	30 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Sedum acre</i>	Biting Stonecrop	30 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Sedum anglicum</i>	English Stonecrop	30 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	Navelwort	29 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Droseraceae (sundew family)</b>		
<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>	Round-leaved Sundew	29 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Ericaceae (heather family)</b>		
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	Heather	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Euphorbiaceae (spurge family)</b>		
<i>Euphorbia helioscopia</i>	Sun Spurge	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<i>Euphorbia paralias</i>	Sea Spurge	1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Fabaceae (pea family)</b>		
<i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i>	Kidney Vetch	28 <sup>th</sup>

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SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	First seen
<i>Lathyrus linifolius</i>	Bitter-vetch	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black Medick	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Tufted Vetch	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Vicia sepium</i>	Bush Vetch	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Gentianaceae (gentian family)</b>		
<i>Blackstonia perfoliata</i>	Yellow-wort	1 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Gentiana verna</i>	Spring Gentian	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Geraniaceae (geranium family)</b>		
<i>Geranium lucidum</i>	Shining Crane's-bill	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb-Robert	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Geranium sanguineum</i>	Bloody Crane's-bill	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Hypericaceae (St John's-wort family)</b>		
<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>	Tutsan	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	Perforate St John's-wort	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Hypericum pulchrum</i>	Slender St John's-wort	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Lamiaceae (mint family)</b>		
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	Water Mint	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Origanum vulgare</i>	Wild Marjoram	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>	Wood Sage	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Thymus drucei</i>	Wild Thyme	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Lentibulariaceae (butterwort family)</b>		
<i>Pinguicula grandiflora</i>	Large-flowered Butterwort	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i>	Common Butterwort	29 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Lythraceae (purple loosestrife family)</b>		
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Purple-loosestrife	31 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Malvaceae (mallow family)</b>		
<i>Malva arborea</i>	Tree-mallow	1 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Common Mallow	1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Meyantheaceae (bogbean family)</b>		
<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>	Bogbean	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Myricaceae (myrtle family)</b>		
<i>Myrica gale</i>	Bog-myrtle	29 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Oleaceae (olive family)</b>		
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	Wild Privet	28 <sup>th</sup>

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SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	First seen
<b>Onagraceae (willowherb family)</b>		
<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>	Enchanter's-nightshade	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Fuchsia magellanica</i>	Fuchsia	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Orobanchaceae (broomrape family)</b>		
<i>Euphrasia anglica</i>	English Eyebright	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<i>Euphrasia salisburgensis</i>	Irish Eyebright	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Orobanche alba</i>	Thyme Broomrape	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Pedicularis sylvatica</i>	Lousewort	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Yellow-rattle	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>Oxalidaceae (oxalis family)</b>		
<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>	Wood-sorrel	31 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Papaveraceae (poppy family)</b>		
<i>Fumaria muralis</i> ssp. <i>boraei</i>	Common Ramping-fumitory	1 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common Poppy	31 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Plantaginaceae (plantain family)</b>		
<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>	Ivy-leaved Toadflax	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Erinus alpinus</i>	Fairy Foxglove	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Plantago coronopus</i>	Buck's-horn Plantain	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Plantago maritima</i>	Sea Plantain	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander Speedwell	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Veronica officinalis</i>	Heath Speedwell	30 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Plumbaginaceae (leadwort family)</b>		
<i>Armeria maritima</i>	Thrift	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Polygalaceae (milkwort family)</b>		
<i>Polygala vulgaris</i>	Common Milkwort	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Polygonaceae (dock family)</b>		
<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	Japanese Knotweed	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Primulaceae (primrose family)</b>		
<i>Lysimachia arvensis</i>	Scarlet Pimpernel	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Lysimachia maritima</i>	Sea-milkwort	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	Yellow Pimpernel	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Primula veris</i>	Cowslip	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Primrose	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>Ranunculaceae (buttercup family)</b>		
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Marsh-marigold	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>	Lesser Spearwort	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	2 <sup>nd</sup>



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SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	First seen
<i>Thalictrum minus</i>	Lesser Meadow-rue	29 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Rhamnaceae (buckthorn family)</b>		
<i>Frangula alnus</i>	Alder Buckthorn	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>	Buckthorn	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Rosaceae (rose family)</b>		
<i>Alchemilla glabra</i>	Smooth Lady's-mantle	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Alchemilla xanthochlora</i>	Yellow-green Lady's-mantle	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Dryas octopetala</i>	Mountain Avens	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Filipendula vulgaris</i>	Dropwort	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	Wild Strawberry	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Geum rivale</i>	Water Avens	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Silverweed	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Potentilla fruticosa</i>	Shrubby Cinquefoil	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Potentilla palustris</i>	Marsh Cinquefoil	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Rosa arvensis</i>	Field-rose	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog-rose	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Rosa pimpinellifolia</i>	Burnet Rose	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Brambles	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Rubus saxatilis</i>	Stone Bramble	1 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Sorbus aria</i>	Common Whitebeam	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan	30 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Rubiaceae (madder family)</b>		
<i>Asperula cynanchica</i>	Squinancywort	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Galium boreale</i>	Northern Bedstraw	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Galium odoratum</i>	Woodruff	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Galium verum</i>	Lady's Bedstraw	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Rubia peregrina</i>	Wild Madder	1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Salicaceae (willowfamily)</b>		
<i>Salix caprea</i>	Goat Willow	31 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Sapindaceae (soapberry family)</b>		
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore	30 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Saxifragaceae (saxifrage family)</b>		
<i>Chrysosplenium oppositifolium</i>	Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Saxifraga hypnoides</i>	Mossy Saxifrage	30 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Saxifraga rosacea</i> ssp. <i>rosacea</i>	Irish Saxifrage	1 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Saxifraga tridactylites</i>	Rue-leaved Saxifrage	29 <sup>th</sup>

## The Burren 2023: trip report and species lists

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	First seen
<b>Scrophulariaceae (figwort family)</b>		
<i>Scrophularia auriculata</i>	Water Figwort	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Urticaceae (nettle family)</b>		
<i>Parietaria judaica</i>	Pellitory-of-the-wall	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Viburnaceae (viburnum family)</b>		
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	30 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Guelder Rose	30 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Violaceae (violet family)</b>		
<i>Viola canina</i>	Heath Dog-violet	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<i>Viola palustris</i>	Marsh Violet	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Viola riviniana</i>	Common Dog-violet	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>MONOCOTYLEDONS</b>		
<b>Alismataceae (water-plantain family)</b>		
<i>Baldellia ranunculoides</i>	Lesser Water-Plantain	29 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Amaryllidaceae (daffodil family)</b>		
<i>Allium ampeloprasum</i> var. <i>babingtonii</i>	Babington's Leek	1 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Allium ursinum</i>	Ramsons	31 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Araceae (arum family)</b>		
<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Lords-and-Ladies	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Asparagaceae (asparagus family)</b>		
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Bluebell	31 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Cyperaceae (sedge family)</b>		
<i>Carex echinate</i>	Star Sedge	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Carex pulicaris</i>	Flea Sedge	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<i>Cladium mariscus</i>	Great Fen-sedge	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>	Common Cottongrass	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Eriophorum latifolium</i>	Broad-leaved Cottongrass	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Schoenus nigricans</i>	Black Bog-rush	31 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Juncaceae (rush family)</b>		
<i>Luzula sylvatica</i>	Great Wood-rush	29 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Orchidaceae (orchid family)</b>		
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal Orchid	1 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>	Common Spotted Orchid	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i> var. <i>o'kellyi</i>	O'Kelly's Spotted Orchid	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Dactylorhiza incarnata</i> ssp. <i>incarnata</i>	Early Marsh Orchid	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Dactylorhiza incarnata</i> ssp. <i>cruenta</i>	Flecked Marsh Orchid	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Dactylorhiza incarnata</i> ssp. <i>pulchella</i>	Purple Early Marsh Orchid	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Dactylorhiza maculata</i> ssp. <i>ericetorum</i>	Heath Spotted Orchid	28 <sup>th</sup>

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SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH NAME	First seen
<i>Dactylorhiza majalis</i> ssp. <i>occidentalis</i>	Irish Marsh Orchid	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Dactylorhiza majalis</i> ssp. <i>traunsteinerioides</i>	Narrow-leaved Marsh Orchid (Pugsleys)	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Epipactis atrorubens</i>	Dark-red Helleborine	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Epipactis helleborine</i>	Broad-leaved Helleborine	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Neotinea maculata</i>	Dense-flowered Orchid	31 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Neottia ovata</i>	Common Twayblade	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Ophrys apifera</i>	Bee Orchid	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Ophrys insectifera</i>	Fly Orchid	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Orchis mascula</i>	Early-purple Orchid	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Platanthera bifolia</i>	Lesser Butterfly Orchid	29 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Poaceae (grass family)</b>		
<i>Ammophila arenaria</i>	Marram Grass	1 <sup>st</sup>
<i>Briza media</i>	Quaking-grass	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Catapodium maritimum</i>	Sea Fern-grass	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Molinia caerulea</i>	Purple Moor-grass	28 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common Reed	29 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Sesleria caerulea</i>	Blue Moor-grass	28 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Typhaceae</b>		
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	Reedmace	28 <sup>th</sup>

## BIRDS

ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	notes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>Family Anatidae (Ducks, Geese &amp; Waterfowl)</b>										
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>			*			*			
<b>Family Phasianidae (Pheasants and Partridges)</b>										
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>				H	*				
<b>Family Procellariidae (Shearwaters)</b>										
Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>					*		*		
<b>Family Sulidae (Gannets)</b>										
Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>							*		
<b>Family Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants)</b>										
Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>				*					
Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>			*				*		
<b>Family Ardeidae (Hérons)</b>										
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>			*	*					
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>				*		*			
<b>Family Accipitridae (Buzzards)</b>										
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>								*	
<b>Family Falconidae (Falcons)</b>										
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>			*						
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>					*				
<b>Family Himantopidae (Oystercatchers)</b>										
Oystercatcher	<i>Himantopus ostralegus</i>							H		
<b>Family Laridae (Gulls)</b>										
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>				*	*	*	*		
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>			*	*			*		
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>					*				
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>			*			*	*		
Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>					*		*		
<b>Family Sternidae (Terns)</b>										
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>				*					
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalassarcha sandvicensis</i>						*			
<b>Family Alcidae (Auks)</b>										
Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>					*		*		
Black Guillemot	<i>Cepphus grylle</i>							*		
Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>			*		*	*	*		
Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>					*		*		
<b>Family Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)</b>										
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>			*	*	*	*	*		
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>				*		*			
<b>Family Cuculidae (Cuckoos)</b>										
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>			*	H	H	*			

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ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	notes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>Family Apodidae (Swifts)</b>										
Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>				*	*	*	*		
<b>Family Alaudidae (Larks)</b>										
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>			*	*	*	*	*		
<b>Family Hirundinidae (Swallows and Martins)</b>										
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbica</i>			*	*	*	*	*		
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>			*	*	*	*	*		
<b>Family Motacillidae (Pipits and Wagtails)</b>										
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>			*		*	*	*		
Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>			*				*		
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba yarelli</i>			*	*	*	*			
Grey Yellow	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>			*						
<b>Family Cinclidae (Dippers)</b>										
Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>			*						
<b>Family Troglodytidae (Wrens)</b>										
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>				H	*	*	*		
<b>Family Prunellidae (Accentors)</b>										
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>			*		*	*			
<b>Family Turdidae (Thrushes)</b>										
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>			*		*	*	*		
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>				*					
<b>Family Muscicapidae (Flycatchers and Chats)</b>										
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>			*	*	*	*	*		
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>			*	*	*	*	*		
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>			*		*	*	*		
<b>Family Acrocephalidae (Reed Warblers)</b>										
Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>			*	H	H	*	H		
<b>Family Sylviidae (Sylviid Warblers)</b>										
Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>			*	H	H	*			
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>						*			
<b>Family Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)</b>										
Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>								*	
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>					*			*	
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>							*		
<b>Family Paridae ( Tits)</b>										
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>			*		*	*	*		
<b>Family Corvidae (Crows)</b>										
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>			*	*	*	*	*	*	
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>			*	*	*	*	*	*	
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>			*	*	*	*	*	*	
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>			*	*	*	*	*	*	



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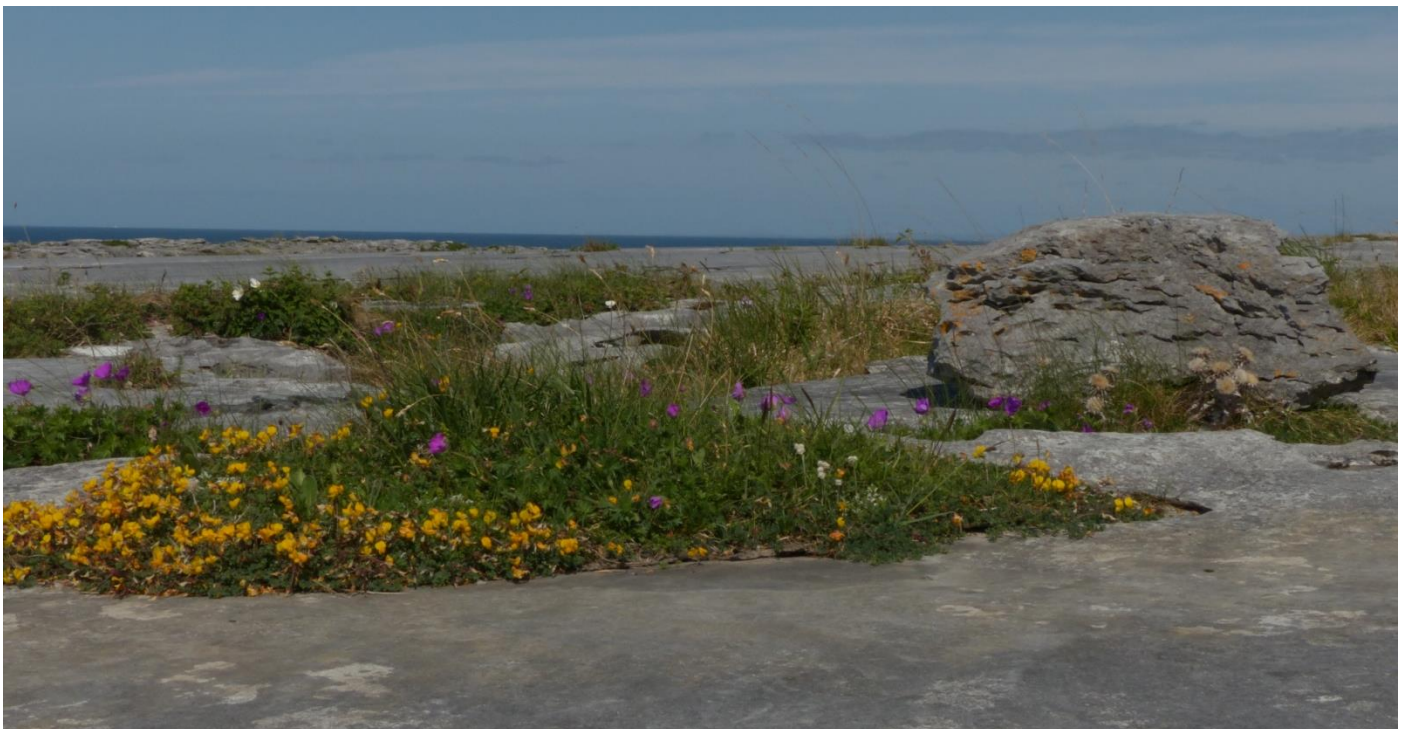
ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	notes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>			*		*	*	*	*	
Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>					*				
<b>Family Sturnidae (Starlings)</b>										
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>			*	*	*	*	*	*	
<b>Family Passeridae (Sparrows)</b>										
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>			*	*	*	*	*	*	
<b>Family Fringillidae (Finches)</b>										
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>			*	*	*	*	*	*	
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>					*	*			
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>						H	*	*	
Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>			*	*	*	*	*		
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>				*		H			
<b>Family Emberizidae (Buntings)</b>										
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citronella</i>						*			
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>				*	*				

## MAMMALS

Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>			*						
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## FISH

Weaver Fish	<i>Trachynus sp.</i>			*						
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## INVERTEBRATES

ENGLISH NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	notes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>LEPIDOPTERA: Butterflies</b>										
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>				*		*	*		
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>		*	*	*		*			
Wood White	<i>Leptidea sinapis</i>								*	
Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>				*					
Orange Tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>							*		
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>		*	*		*	*			
Small Blue	<i>Cupido minimus</i>				*			*		
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>		*	*		*				
Marsh Fritillary	<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>						*			
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>				*		*			
Wall Brown	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>							*		
Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>		*				*			
Dingy Skipper	<i>Erynnis tages</i>						*			
<b>LEPIDOPTERA: Moths</b>										
Dew	<i>Setina irrorella</i>					*				
Lackey	<i>Malacosoma neustria</i>		*							
Yellow Shell	<i>Camptogramma bilineata</i>		*							
Cinnabar	<i>Tyria jacobaea</i>							*		
Transparent Burnet	<i>Zygaena purpuralis ssp sabulosa</i>		*	*						
6 spot Burnet	<i>Zygaena fillipendula</i>				*	*				
<b>DRAGONFLIES</b>										
Large Red Damselfly	<i>Pyrrosoma nymphula</i>								*	
Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>		*	*						
Common Blue Damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>		*	*						
Four-spotted Chaser	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>			*	*					
<b>MISCELLANY</b>										
Garden Chafer	<i>Phyllopertha horticola</i>			*	*					
Dor Beetle	<i>Aphodius sp.</i>		*					*		
Garden Snail	<i>Cornu aspersum</i>				*					
Heath Snail	<i>Helicella itala</i>		*	*						
Moon Jellyfish	<i>Aurelia aurita</i>							*	*	
Compass Jellyfish	<i>Chrysaora hysoscella</i>								*	
Purple Jellyfish	<i>Pelagia noctiluca</i>								*	
Blue Jellyfish	<i>Cyanea lamarckii</i>								*	

*thank you for travelling with us*

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