



This leaflet is produced jointly by the Heritage Office of Kilkenny County Council and the Kilkenny County Childcare Committee. It is supported by the Kilkenny Heritage Forum and the Heritage Council. Thanks to Laurant McDonagh (initial text and research); Ann McDonagh; Mark Nolan; Catherine Lennon.

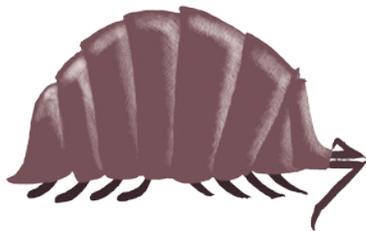
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# The Wildlife of Kilkenny

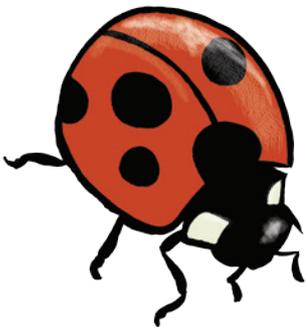


Woodlouse/ Cláirseach



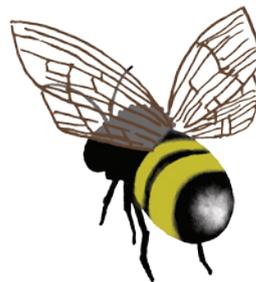
Look under an old log or stone to find these minibeasts which like a dark, damp home. They have long antennae which they use to feel their way with. Look out for two tiny feeler-like tubes on their bums which they use like straws to drink with.

Ladybird/Bóin Dé



This colourful beetle has wings tucked under its spotted shell. The bright red colour warns predators to keep away. Ladybirds smell with their feet. How many spots can you count?

Bumblebee/Bumbóg



This stripy insect is coloured black and amber just like the Kilkenny jersey! They fly from plant to plant collecting nectar and as they do lots of pollen sticks to their hairy legs. You can tell different species of bumblebees apart by the colour on their bums!

Ash Tree/Fuinseog



The Ash is a favourite tree in Kilkenny as its' wood is used to make hurleys.

## Hawthorn/Sceach gheal



This tree has many white, and sometimes pink, flowers which bloom in May, which is why it is sometimes called the Maybush. Small birds like it because it gives them good shelter and in Autumn it has many red berries which birds like to eat.

## Grey Heron/Corr réisc



Grey Herons stand very still in the river on their long legs looking for fish. They live in big nests at the top of tall trees near rivers.

## Swallow/Fáinleog



Swallows only live in Ireland in the summer where they fly fast through the air feeding on insects. Like a builder uses cement, swallows use their spit and mud to make their nests.

## Limestone/Aolcholch



Kilkenny limestone is really old rock that was formed before the dinosaurs. Fossils are the shells and skeletons of plants and animals that lived thousands of years ago, and are now found in rocks.

**Did you know?** When Kilkenny limestone is polished it becomes black and looks like marble. That is why Kilkenny is called the Marble City.

Can you find fossilised plants and animals in the limestone on paths and walls around the City?

## Butterfly/Féileacán



Did you know that butterflies are born as caterpillars and then turn into butterflies? They are very important because they feed on nectar and help to pollinate plants. Butterflies have cold blood so they need the warmth of the sun to help them fly. That's why you will only find them in summer time in Ireland.

How many different butterflies can you spot?



# Some Habitats and Species in Kilkenny

## Did You Know?

A habitat is a place where a plant or animal lives. An animal needs 5 things to survive in its habitat:

1. Food
2. Water
3. Shelter
4. Air
5. A place to raise its young

**Task:** Try to visit some of the habitats in Kilkenny.

## Rivers

Rivers are important habitats for many species of animal including fish, birds and insects. They also give us water for drinking.

## Walls

Walls, especially old stone walls, are great habitats for plants to grow on and insects to live in.

## Woodlands

Woodlands are habitats where trees, shrubs and other plants grow together. They help to make the oxygen that we breathe. They make excellent habitats for many animal species.

## Marshes

Marshes are very wet places and great habitats for wildlife. You can find reeds, bulrushes and many species of insects.

## Grasslands

Grasslands can have many species of grasses, wildflowers and insects.

## Some Wildlife Vocabulary

**Pollination:** Plants make pollen and nectar. Pollen is like yellow dust which the plant needs to share with other plants to make seeds. The sweet nectar attracts insects to the plants to carry the pollen. This is called pollination.

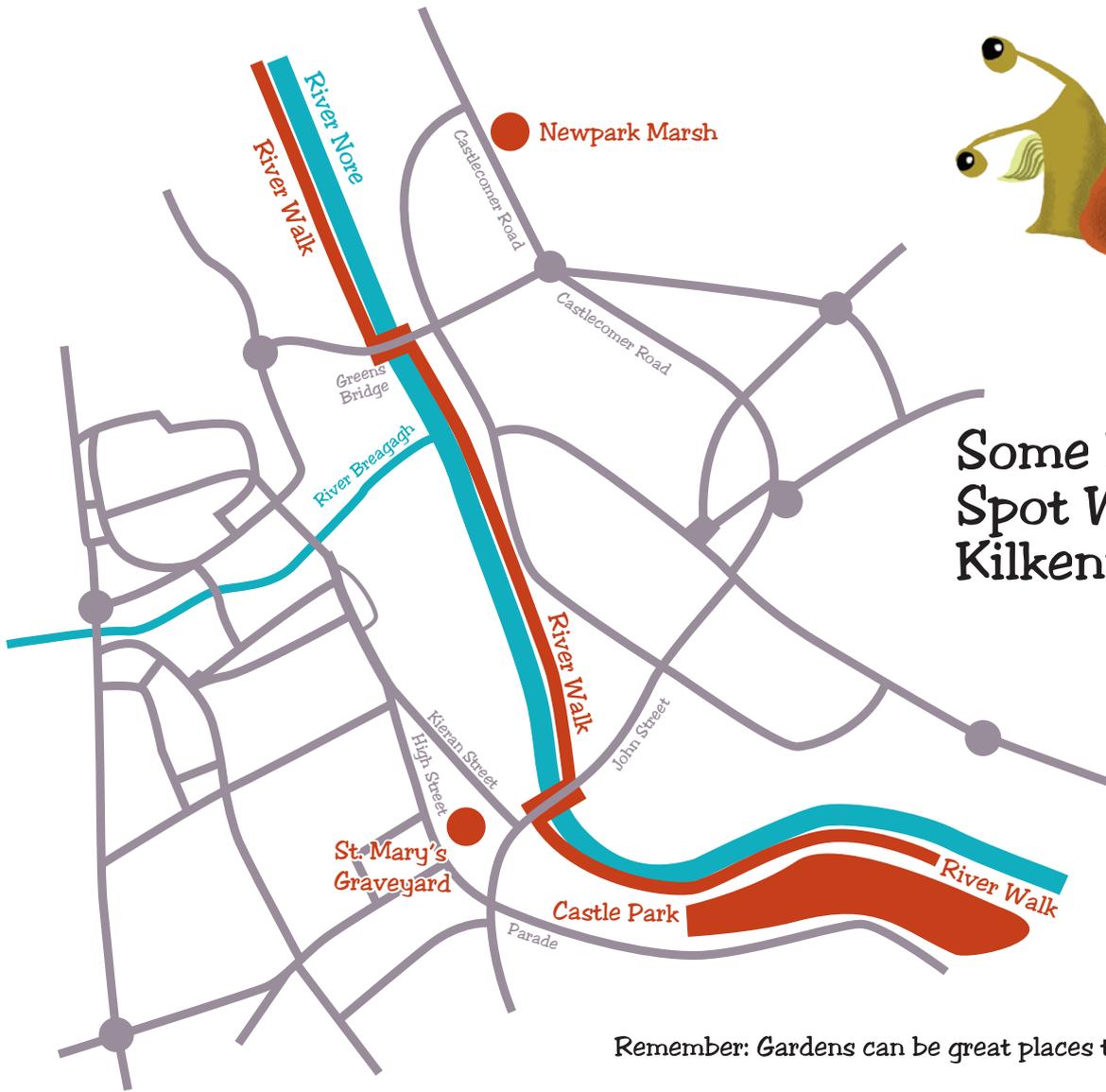
**Migration:** Some animals go on long journeys between countries searching for food and places to nest. This is called migration. Swallows spend the Winter in Africa where it is warm and there is plenty of food. In Spring they fly back to Ireland to feed on insects, build their nests and have their young. In Autumn they return to Africa. You will often see groups of them sitting on telegraph wires chattering noisily as they prepare to fly on their long journey. Some butterflies such as the Painted Lady and the Monarch also migrate.

**Folklore and myths** are traditional beliefs, stories or songs that are told to us by older people such as our grandparents. For example, fishermen used to believe that the herons long legs were magic which made fish swim to them. **Task:** Ask an older person you know if they know of any old myths or stories about plants or animals.

## Questions for Wildlife Detectives

6. Which creature smells with it's feet?
7. Who carries pollen on their legs?
8. What insect likes to be underneath dark and damp things?
9. What bird lives by the river and can stand very still and eats fish?
10. Who flies to Africa for the winter?
11. What tree are hurleys made from?
12. I'm a salmon – what type of habitat do I live in?
13. Is your garden good for wildlife? What wildlife can you find there?





## Some Places to Spot Wildlife in Kilkenny City

Remember: Gardens can be great places to spot wildlife too.



## Be a Kilkenny Wildlife Detective

### How to be a good Wildlife Detective

1. Be quiet. Some creatures are very shy.
2. Be patient and wait. You will not see all the plants and animals in one place, it will take time.
3. Bring home all litter. A good detective leaves nothing behind so no one knows you were there
4. Explore and investigate.

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