

Acknowledgments

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TEXT

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PHOTO CREDITS

Hedgehog and Hazelnut Weevil by Brian Nelson

Otter and Juniper shieldbug by Leon van der Noll

Pine Marten by Maurice Flynn

Badger by Shirley Goodlife

Crossbill by Dave McGrath

Fallow deer by Chris Bolton

White tailed Sea Eagle by Valerie O'Sullivan

All other photos by Colin Stanley



For more information

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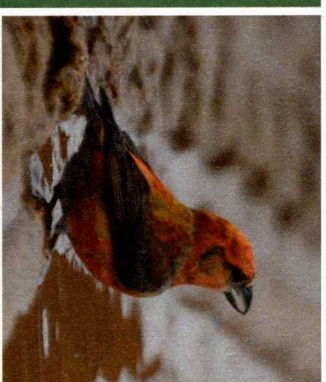
Portumna has a diverse and varied wildlife due to the location of the town where the River Shannon meets Lough Derg. There is an abundance of wetlands, callow grassland and woodland close to the town, as well as the mix of private gardens, green spaces and farmland in and around the town. The wide range of habitats in Portumna provides a range of homes and food sources for wildlife. This leaflet highlights a selection of the many birds, mammals and insects that can be spotted in the town and environs.

The wildlife of Portumna is part of the rich biodiversity of the town. The term 'biodiversity' refers to all living things (including plants, animals, microbes, fungi and people), the places where plants and animals live (habitats), the interactions among living things (the web of life) and their environment (ecology). Biodiversity is life and sustains life on Earth. Biodiversity provides us with clean air and water, food, fuel, building products and medicines. It also provides us with many free 'services' such as nutrient recycling, pollination, pest control, flooding control capacity and water filtration. Making space for nature in our towns and villages enhances and protects the local biodiversity and the natural environment. It also helps to improve our quality of life by providing natural amenities for recreation such as Portumna Forest Park, the River Shannon and Lough Derg.

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and printed on recycled paper



The Wild Life of Portumna



Guide to
the fauna of
Portumna
and environs
Nature in Portumna
Series No.3



INSECTS



JUNIPER SHIELDBUG *Cypolestus tristictus*

Juniper shieldbugs occur in stands of juniper on lake shores and heath. They have a very localised distribution in Ireland but do occur in Portunna near the shore of Lough Derg.



HAZELNUT WEEVIL *Curculio nucum*

The adults of the Hazelnut weevil emerge in May and June. The larvae feed inside the developing hazelnut, emerging from it in autumn to pupate in the ground. The hazelnut weevil was recently recorded in Portunna, the first record for Ireland.



BROWN HAWKER *Aeshna grandis* - Seabhai ómarach

This relatively large dragonfly can be spotted in and around large lakes such as Lough Derg and other wet places such as canals and slow-flowing rivers. With a mainly brown body and golden amber wings.



GARDEN TIGER MOTH *Arctia cya*

The Garden tiger moth can be spotted in a range of habitats including gardens, damp meadows, scrubby dunes, woods and hedgerows. With a wingspan of 45-65mm. The larval food plants are dock and nettle as well as some garden plants.



COMMON CARDER BEE *Bombus pascuorum*

This species of bumblebee is common and widespread in Ireland and is found in a wide range of habitats. It can be regularly seen feeding on Bush vetch when in flower.



SILVER-WASHED FRITILLARY *Argynnis paphia*
- Fritilean geal

This beautiful butterfly is found in woods and tall hedgerows. It is Ireland's largest butterfly with a wingspan of up to 80mm. With a flight period from June to September. Females lay their eggs on various forms of violets.

BIRDS



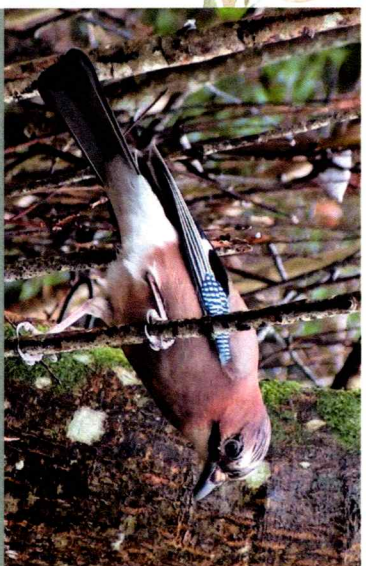
BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla* - Caipín dubh

The song of the blackcap is considered to be one of the most beautiful of all the Irish song birds. Blackcaps breed in deciduous woodlands and mature hedgerows. Approximately the same size as a robin, they are mainly grey in colour with the males having the distinctive black cap and the females having a brown one.



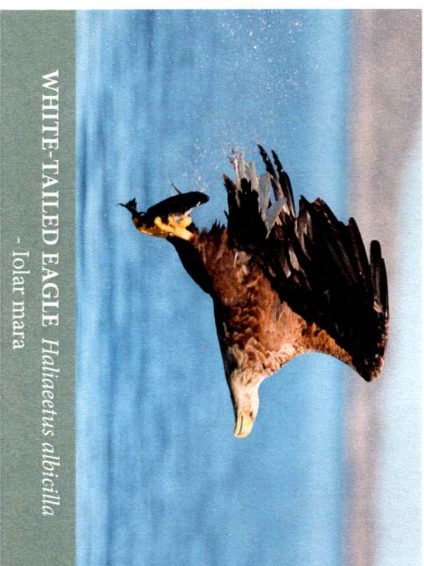
CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita* - Tíuf-tíaf

Chiff chaffs also breed in deciduous woodland and mature hedgerows. The song is a distinctive "tsip-tsulp-tsulp-tsulp" ("chiff-chaff") often repeated five or six times. Chiff Chaffs are a summer visitor to Ireland, usually April to September.



JAY *Garrulus glandarius* - Scréachóg

One of our more colourful birds, Jays are commonly found in broadleaved woodland. They eat and store seeds for the winter months (oak, hazel and beech) and also eat insects, occasionally taking young birds or eggs.



WHITE-TAILED EAGLE *Haliaeetus albicilla*
- Iolar mara

Re-introduced to Ireland in 2007, white-tailed eagles were once widespread around all coasts. They are spectacular birds that can be seen foraging in and around Lough Derg.

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra* - Crosghob

(Pictured on front cover) Crossbills live in and around coniferous woodland. They are slightly larger than a sparrow and have a thick set head and bill which has the distinctive crossed tips. This adaptation helps in removing seeds from cones.



TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris* - Snag

Treecreepers are widespread in Ireland in deciduous woodland and mature hedgerows. They can be hard to spot but Portumna Forest Park is a good place to look for them. Treecreepers creep up trees, looking quietly for food and when they reach the top, they fly down to the base of another tree.



LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithinus caudatus*
- Meantán caifhada

Long-tailed tits are small songbirds that live in and around deciduous woodlands. Their nest is one of the most intricate made by any bird in Ireland, consisting of mosses bound together by spider webs and covered in lichens.

MAMMALS



BADGER *Meles meles* - Broc

Easily recognisable with their distinctive black and white colouring, badgers are widespread in Ireland. They are shy creatures that often live in woodland and hedgerows in burrows known as sets. They are omnivores and live in social groups.



HEDGEHOG *Erinaceus europaeus* - Gráinneog

In Ireland, hedgehogs tend to live in farmland with hedgerows. They generally hibernate from October until March. Hedgehogs eat a wide range of insects and forage a night when they are safe under the cover of darkness. When threatened they roll up into a ball for defence.



RED SQUIRREL *Sciurus vulgaris*- Iora rua

Red squirrels live in woodland and spend most of their time in the canopy of trees. A true woodland species, red squirrels are often spotted in Portunna Forest Park.



FALLOW DEER *Dama dama* - Fia buí

Fallow Deer are often spotted in Portunna Forest Park and the Slieve Aughties. It is thought they were introduced by the Normans in 1244 to Co Wicklow.

IRISH HARE *Lepus timidus hibernicus* - Giorria

(Pictured on front cover) Irish hares are a subspecies of the Mountain Hare and are only found in Ireland. They occur in a wide range of habitats. They are larger than rabbits and their young are born with hair (unlike the rabbit) as they don't live in a burrow.



PINE MARTIN *Martes martes* - Cat craim

The pine marten is considered one of the rarest and most elusive wildlife species in Ireland but numbers of pine marten are on the rise. Pine martens were once hunted to near extinction.



OTTER *Lutra lutra* - Madra uisce

The otter is regarded as one of Ireland's most charismatic mammals. Ireland is a European stronghold for otters. Otters are found in a diverse array of aquatic habitats including streams, rivers, upland lakes, coastal lagoons, estuaries and sandy beaches. Within these habitats, otters feed on a range of aquatic and terrestrial prey.