

# Nature's Web

Issue No. 62

Summer 2021

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# Rocky Shore Safari



Image courtesy of Sherkin Island Marine Station/Paul Key

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# Editor's Page

On the morning of April 27th 2021 a 6 metre Basking Shark was spotted in Sherkin Island's Kinish Harbour (Cúinne) at around 8 am, a few hours after high tide. By 9.45 am my brothers Robbie and Michael had been observing the shark for 15 minutes while they were in the harbour working on their oyster beds. With the tide falling fast and the Basking Shark swimming in 0.7 m of water it was soon in danger of stranding due to the very low spring tide expected at 12.17 pm. The Basking Shark was taking a zig-zag route around the south-western side of the harbour. It was well away from an area of deep water around the harbour's mouth, where it could safely swim at low-tide. While not wanting to cause the Basking Shark any stress by going too close to it, they felt it necessary that they help shepherd the shark towards the area of deep water near the harbour entrance.

After 10 minutes of shepherding the Basking Shark using their boat (a 9 m aluminium flat bottom craft), the shark finally reached the deep water and started swimming out the harbour's mouth. The Basking Shark kept swimming in and out of the harbour's mouth for the next couple of hours before low tide but was safe from the risk of stranding as the now exposed mud flats were no longer accessible to it. Thankfully the last sighting of the Basking Shark in the harbour was around 5 pm (an hour before high-tide), with scans of the harbour being conducted periodically late into the evening before the next low-tide.



## Basking Shark at Sherkin Island

Images courtesy of Robbie

Above: The Basking Shark being coaxed into deeper water.  
Right: Kinish Harbour, Sherkin Island.



**AS GAELIGE!** We are delighted to have teamed up with An Gúm, who are translating Nature's Web into Irish. Issues are now available, as gaeilge, at:  
<http://www.gaeilge.ie/maidir-le-foras-na-gaeilge/an-gum/ion-dulra/>

## Welcome to the Winter Edition of Nature's Web!

Dear Reader,



Welcome to the Summer 2021 issue of Nature's Web. In this issue Dave Wall, Citizen Science Officer with the National Biodiversity Data Centre, tell us all about his work with Explore Your Shore! These surveys are for anyone interested marine life can become involved in. Check out the surveys and also test your skills at unscrambling the Big 30 marine animals and plants on the shore.

Basking Sharks are incredible animals. Having read on this page about the sighting of one at Sherkin Island, learning more about them on page 5. Black John - the Bogus Pirate gives us lots of information zooplankton, the favourite food of Basking Sharks.

Check out about the most unusual Baobab Tree on page 3, nature news from around the world on page 12 and enjoy a giggle with jokes on page 13.

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

Susan

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Michael Ludwig

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Photo courtesy of [www.bordbia.ie](http://www.bordbia.ie)

## Crab Tacos

### What to do:

Check through the crab meat and discard any pieces of shell. Squeeze out any liquid then combine the crab meat, mayonnaise, lime juice and chives. Mix well, taste and season. Set aside while you prepare the salad and salsa.

Mix all the salad ingredients together, including the lime juice and olive oil, then taste and season. In a separate bowl mix all the ingredients for the salsa, taste and season.

**To assemble:** Warm the tortillas or taco shells as per packet instructions. Then fill each with a spoonful of salad, add some of the crab mixture and top with the salsa. Garnish with some coriander and mint leaves and serve with a lime wedge on the side. Alternatively place the various elements in bowls in the middle of the table and let everyone help themselves.

**To serve:** Use coriander and mint leaves to garnish and lime wedges to serve. Small tortillas or taco shells x 8 – 2 per person.

Brought to you by Bord Bia [www.bordbia.ie](http://www.bordbia.ie)

### What you need:

#### Crab:

- 300g cooked crab meat
- 30ml low fat mayonnaise
- Juice ½ lime
- 2 tablesp. fresh chives, finely chopped
- Salt & freshly ground black pepper

#### Salad:

- 1 yellow pepper, deseeded & finely sliced
- ½ small cucumber, halved lengthways, deseeded & sliced
- Small bunch fresh

- coriander, roughly chopped
- 2 scallions, finely sliced
- Juice of ½ lime
- 1 tablesp. olive oil

#### Tomato and Avocado Salsa:

- 200g cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 1 avocado, peeled and diced
- ½ small red onion, very finely diced
- 1 red chilli, diced very finely
- Juice ½ lime
- Handful fresh mint leaves, chopped

## Baobab Tree

Scientific Name: *Adansonia* spp

Irish Name: Baobab



Image courtesy of Bernard Gagnon - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adansonia#/media/File:Adansonia\\_grandidier04.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adansonia#/media/File:Adansonia_grandidier04.jpg)

*Adansonia grandidieri* in Madagascar, sometimes known as the Grandidier's Baobab.



Image created by Forest Starr & Kim Starr and licensed under CC BY 3.0

The palmate, or palm-like, leaves of the *Adansonia digitata* tree. Baobab trees are an important nesting site for birds.



Image courtesy of Jose Antonio

The fruit of the *Adansonia rubrostipa* tree.

The Baobab tree is native to Madagascar, mainland Africa and Australia. It has a very unusual shape, with a very thick barrel-like trunk and relatively short, stubby branches. It is known by some as the "upside down tree". When its leaves have fallen, the tangled branches look like the tree is growing with its roots in the air. The trunk is made of fibrous wood and its diameter can increase and decrease over time as it is thought to store water in the trunk when supplies are good to protect it for drought. Depending on the species, the baobab tree can grow between 5-25 metres in height.

Baobab trees are deciduous and only have leaves for about three months each year. The palm-like leaves begin growing at the start of the rainy season and fall off when the dry season arrives. The rainy season and dry season are typical of a hot, tropical climate where Baobab trees like to live.

Baobab trees produce large white flowers at dusk but they are very short-lived, only flowering for a few hours before fading. The flowers, which are smelly, are usually pollinated by bats and produce hard-shelled fruit. Inside kidney-shaped seeds are surrounded by pulp.

The baobab is one of the longest-lived flowering plants in the world. In Zimbabwe, an African Baobab tree known as the Panke Baobab died in 2011 and when it was radiocarbon dated, it was discovered to be 2,450 years old!

Climate change and population growth have been suggested as reasons for the death, in recent years, of a number of Baobab trees in Africa.



There are eight species of baobab tree in the world, six of which grow only in Madagascar, where a number of them are endangered. One such species is the Grandidier Baobab, which is the biggest of them all and its trunk can grow to three metres across. These impressive trees are a major tourist attraction in Madagascar.

### A Tree of Life

In Africa, Baobab trees have great cultural significance for the people that live near them. The trees are also important because all parts of the tree have value:

- the bark and trunk have fire-resistant properties and can be made into anything from rope to cloth to musical instruments;
- its leaves can be eaten like spinach and have many medicinal properties;
- the fruit's pulp is one of most nutrient-rich foods in the world and can be eaten or ground to make a drink.
- its seeds can be ground to make oil.
- its pollen can be made into glue.
- the tree itself has been used for shelter, food store or even a place for burial.



# Black John - the Bogus Pirate



## War in a Water Drop!

By John Joyce

Avast there, Mateys!  
Find out about the unlikely battleground of a single drop of seawater.

While a single drop of seawater may seem an unlikely battleground, it can be home to many tiny animals and plants . . . each fighting in a war for survival!

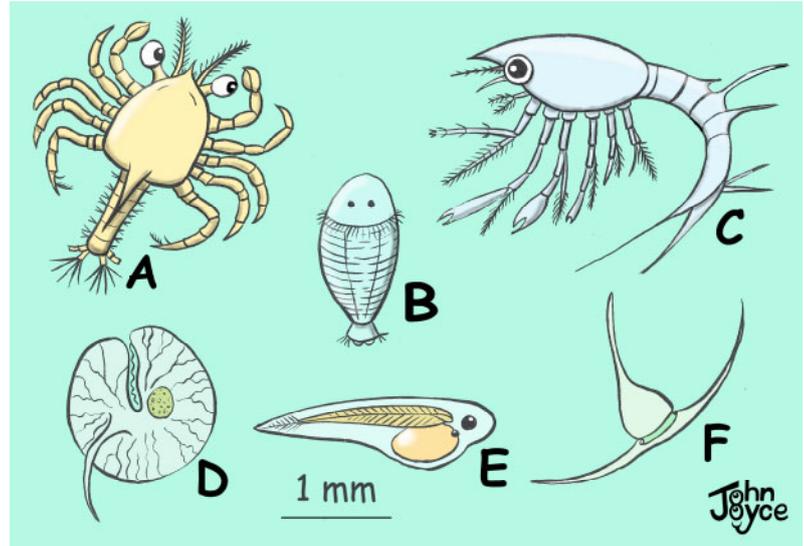
As we saw in the Winter 2020 edition of *Nature's Web*, microscopic, single-celled plants called 'phytoplankton' thrive and 'bloom' in huge numbers when the sea temperature, available light and dissolved nutrients on which they feed are all at comfortably high levels. And feeding on these microscopic plants – and each other – are a host of tiny animals known as 'zooplankton'.

The largest group of zooplankton are simple, single-celled animals called 'protozoa' – or 'first animals' (D and F). But the term 'zooplankton' is also used to describe everything from fish eggs and larvae (E) and the larvae of crabs (A), scampi (C) and the larvae of the bottom-dwelling tube worms such as *Pectinaria koreni* (B).

Copepods – tiny relatives of lobsters and shrimps – are the most numerous members of the zooplankton and, in fact, the most abundant multicellular animals on Earth, outnumbering insects by three orders of magnitude. Because of their enormous numbers and their importance as a food source to larger animals, zooplankton play a key role in marine ecosystems. They also perform a vital function in helping to remove carbon from the atmosphere by eating the microscopic marine plants which absorb that gas from the atmosphere, just as land plants do. This 'fixes' the carbon from the phytoplankton within the zooplankton's animal bodies, which eventually die and fall to the sea floor – preventing the carbon from re-entering the atmosphere.

What concerns marine biologists, is the fact that higher seawater temperatures are causing some species of shrimp and starfish to breed earlier. This means that their larvae – which are part of the zooplankton - are not available as a food source when the young of other, larger marine animals including important commercial fish species, appear later in the year. This has led to the call for international cooperation to monitor changes in zooplankton distribution over time and to study the effects of pollution, overfishing and climate change on ocean life. Some leading marine scientists have even warned that the wide variety of life in the Ocean may shrink to fewer and fewer species if warming continues, so that it becomes dominated by microbes, bacteria and jellyfish.

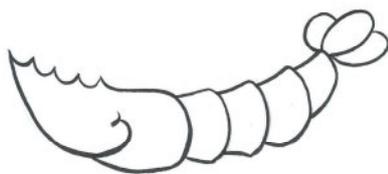
Images & text copyright John Joyce



**A = Edible Crab larvae**  
(*Cancer pagurus*);  
**B = Tube Worm larvae**  
(*Pectinaria koreni*);  
**C = Scampi larvae**  
(*Nephrops norvegicus*);

**D = Luminous plankton**  
(*Noctiluca scintillans*);  
**E = Newly hatched cod**  
(*Gadus morhua*);  
**F = Dinoflagellate plankton**  
(*Ceratium arcticum*).

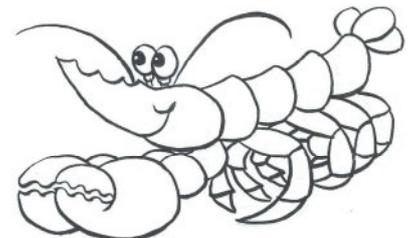
## HOW TO DRAW A LOBSTER



DRAW THE HEAD AND BODY



ADD EYES, ANTENNAE AND CLAWS



FINISH OFF WITH THE LEGS

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

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# Basking Shark

**Scientific Name:** *Cetorhinus maximus* **Irish Name:** Liamhán gréine



Image courtesy of NOAA

The Basking Shark's large mouth is white inside and its gill slits are black.

Basking Sharks are the second biggest fish in the world, the Whale Shark being the biggest. They are found in all the world's temperate oceans—north and south of the equator. Unfortunately, not a lot is known about them.

We are very privileged to have these gentle giants living in our waters. In the summer months, they are usually seen feeding on plankton on the surface of the water, they can also be seen “basking” or “sunning” themselves, which gives rise to their name. While they usually spend about two months in one area and then move on, they are believed to move to deeper water in winter, beyond the continental shelf.

In general, Basking Sharks are no danger to humans but they are large

animals so care should always be taken around them. If out in a boat and a Basking Shark is nearby, the boat should keep a safe distance for both the fish and the boat's safety.

The life expectancy of the Basking Shark is around 50 years. Females give birth to live young and give birth to a few large babies each breeding cycle. Each young shark is about 1.5 m long when born. Before giving birth, females carry their young for at least 3 years!

Average adults are 7.9 m long but some can reach 11 metres. They have a long body covered rough skin and are greyish/brown in colour with a lighter underside. They have a conical snout, a big mouth and large gill slits around the head. On their back is a large, floppy dorsal fin, along with pectoral fins on their sides and a crescent-shaped tail fin. Other smaller fins run along the back and underneath.

Basking Sharks are a filter feeding shark species. They have a very large mouth, with hundreds of small teeth. While slowly swimming, the mouth is opened very wide, allowing a continuous flow of water flows through. Large gills around the head contain bristle-like gill rakers, which are covered in mucus, and these filter the plankton out of the water. These sharks can filter about 2 million litres of water per hour.



Image courtesy of Robbie Murphy

A Basking Shark swimming at the surface. Note the floppy dorsal fin and large tail fin.

Basking Sharks have a very large liver, taking up 25% of their body. This is used for buoyancy. Though they usually move slowly through the water, they are sometimes seen leaping out of water. It is thought this may be to get rid of parasites on their skin.

Basking Sharks have few predators. In the past they were easily hunted by humans for their liver oils, skin and meat. Thankfully, today Basking Sharks are protected.

## FACT SHEET

**Colour:** Brownish or greyish, with a lighter underside.

**Length:** The average adult is 7.9 m long

**Weight:** On average 5,200 kg

**Habitat:** Oceanic waters.

**Diet:** Plankton

## Zooplankton



The main food that Basking Sharks feed on are zooplankton. These are microscope animals and animal larvae that live in the sea. Read more about zooplankton on page 4.

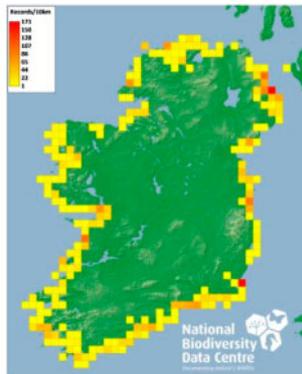
# Explore Your Shore

Get involved with



[www.exploreyourshore.ie](http://www.exploreyourshore.ie)

**E**xplore Your Shore! has designed four intertidal biodiversity recording surveys to help you to start exploring and recording our coastal biodiversity. All you need to take part is a camera and a smart phone (or paper recording form). Read on to find a survey that you would like to take part in.



A 2019/2020 map showing validated records of our coastal biodiversity. This map is updated each year on [www.exploreyourshore.ie](http://www.exploreyourshore.ie)

For further information on all surveys, please visit the *Explore Your Shore!* website.



Image & text courtesy of Explore Your Shore!



## The Big Beach Biodiversity Survey

The Big Beach Biodiversity Survey is looking for volunteers to conduct a timed survey, recording bivalve shells and other flotsam cast up on the tide.

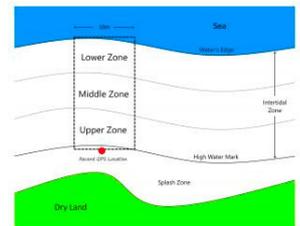
They are asking you to record both live and dead animals and plants found on the beach. The dead animals will have originated from the adjacent sea area and can provide a really useful indication of the diversity of life living beneath the waves just off the shore. Getting involved is easy and a *The Big Beach Biodiversity Survey* can be completed in as little as 30 minutes. All you need is a camera and a smart phone or paper recording sheet.



## Rocky Shore Safari

The *Explore Your Shore! Rocky Shore Safari* records the distribution of intertidal seaweeds and marine animals around the Irish coast. They want YOU to enjoy an hour searching the rocky shore for our Big 30 tick list of rocky shore species (available on the website).

The idea is to survey the lower shore around low tide and make your way off the shore as the tide turns. Survey methods and safety considerations are available on the website.



## Seashore Spotter

Seashore Spotter is the entry level survey designed to collect casual species records from

anyone who is out and about on our coastline. No matter what you are doing at the coast, you can always submit a marine species record via the online recording form or the app (but please include a photo!). Just record your details, your location and the species – please include a photo to help verify the what you saw.



## Seashore Snapshots

The Seashore Snapshots Survey is looking for volunteers to take digital photographs of barnacle and limpet species on our rocky shores. You don't need any identification expertise – just know what a barnacle and a limpet look like (see the photos below!).

Getting involved is easy all you need is a camera and to download the printable Seashore Snapshots photo frames. Your photos will be stored and analysed by experts who will identify the species present and their density in terms of percentage cover.



# All in a Day's Work

## Dave Wall— Citizen Science Officer

**Dave Wall is Citizen Science Officer with the National Biodiversity Data Centre, Waterford. He is responsible for the Explore Your Shore! and Dragonfly Ireland 2019-2024 citizen science projects.**

[www.exploreyourshore.ie](http://www.exploreyourshore.ie)



Dave Wall

Images courtesy of Dave Wall

### Where do you work?

The National Biodiversity Data Centre is based in Waterford, but I currently work mostly from my home in Bangor, Co. Down.

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

Yes, I've always been interested in wildlife. I grew up watching Jacques Cousteau and David Attenborough on the BBC back in the 80's and loved biology at school. I was lucky enough to have a science teacher who encouraged me and was one of the few people I knew who entered university specifically to study Zoology!

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

I graduated from Trinity College in 1996 and took the scenic route to my current job. First, I was an otter surveyor at Sherkin Island Marine Station, which was a fantastic opportunity for a new graduate. I then studied badgers in the Austrian Alps, before returning to Ireland to study foxes. I worked as a wildlife consultant, before spending 10 years working on ships as a marine mammal surveyor. I later switched to coastal community engagement, before taking up my current post at the Data Centre in 2019... phew!

### What is a day in your life like?

No two days are the same. My role includes checking species records submitted by Citizen Scientists (volunteers, just like

you, who submit sightings to [exploreyourshore.ie](http://exploreyourshore.ie)), to ensure the correct species identification has been made. On other days I might deliver talks or workshops on Citizen Science, or head out to survey a marine or freshwater site.

### What is your main aim?

To improve our knowledge of Irish biodiversity (all living things), and in particular our knowledge of marine species. Ultimately, I want to help protect Ireland's biodiversity and work to restore our lost biodiversity. Ask your parents or grandparents about what wildlife was around when they were young, and you may be surprised at what they tell you!

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

Meeting our network of fantastic Citizen Science volunteers and helping increase public knowledge of marine and freshwater species. I also love learning about new species, even if I work until I'm 101 I will learn something new every day!

### What is the worst thing?

Realizing just how much of our marine biodiversity has been lost in the past 200 years.

### Where does your work take you?

One of the great things about my job is I get to visit different parts of Ireland. I have been around most of the Irish coast working on ships, or as a diver

for 21 years, but there's always somewhere new to explore!

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

I work as part of a team of 10 people at the National Biodiversity Data centre.

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

Stick with it and take every opportunity that passes your way, as you never know where it will lead you!

### What would you do if you could do something else?

I'd be diving 😊

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

My granny used to tell me... 'Love many, trust few, and always paddle your own canoe' ... and she was right!



Surveying humpback whales, Cape Verde, 2006



Preparing for a research trip on the RV Celtic Explorer, 2009



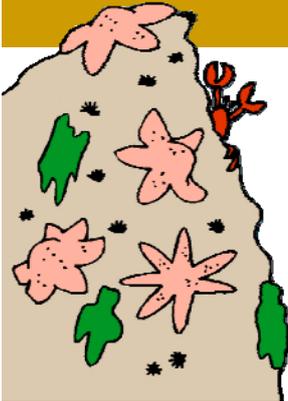
On a survey in the Celtic Sea, 2014



Explore Your Shore Workshop in 2019

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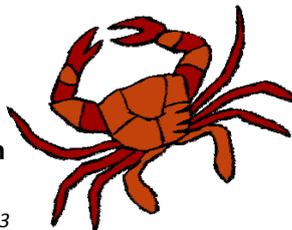
# Explore Your Shore



## Rocky Shore Safari Big 30 QUIZ!

Before visiting the shore and taking part in the *Explore Your Shore Rocky Shore Safari*, can you search the shore below and figure out which animals and plants are which? They are all on the *Rocky Shore Safari Big 30!* check list, which can be downloaded as part of the paper survey form on <https://exploreyourshore.ie/shore-surveys/rocky-shore-safari/> and will help you when you visit the shore.

The seashore is divided into zones and animals and plants typically make their home in certain zones. Some are found on more than one zone. Can you unscramble the names and match the number with the name of the correct animal or plant?



Answers on page 13

<p><b>Upper Zone</b> The upper zone lies at the top of the shore, nearest dry land.</p>	1: ndnelhceal ckwar	<p><b>Whole Shore</b></p> <p>24: etabdle aeemonn</p> <p>11: ohrse barc</p> <p>14: altf heotsllp</p> <p>7: weduget</p> <p>17: dbelei kwlinpreei</p>
<p><b>Middle Zone</b> The middle zone lies half-way along the slope of the shore between high water and low water.</p>	3: aldbdre wkcar    28: rteufhbits    16: ogd lewhk 20: sretltooliehs mtilep    30: ebcooyhnm efre 29: nnhsya    4: geg awrkc    18: lfta kiireplnew	
<p><b>Lower Zone</b> The lower zone lies adjacent to the sea at low water.</p>	26: mmoonc atfsshir    29: nnhsya 8: wweerdei    9: sbekoladcr 21: prlipies mtlpie    20: sretltooliehs mtilep 2: rareetsd racwk    27: suniohc tsar 19: eldyr-uaeb eptmil    15: aiepdnt pohltles 5: tgnho dewe    18: lfta kiireplnew 30: ebcooyhnm efre    12: nbwor rcba 28: rteufhbits    22: rtywrbesar enoamen 23: csaonklkes enmoean    25: heros ncriuh 6: lueds    10: vuiec    16: ogd lewhk	
		<p><b>Rockpools</b></p> <p>13: ermthi rabc</p> <p>8: wweerdei</p>

- Beadlet Anemone \_\_\_\_\_
- Bladder Wrack \_\_\_\_\_
- Blue-rayed Limpet \_\_\_\_\_
- Brown Crab \_\_\_\_\_
- Butterfish \_\_\_\_\_
- Channelled Wrack \_\_\_\_\_
- Common Starfish \_\_\_\_\_
- Cushion Star \_\_\_\_\_
- Cuvie \_\_\_\_\_
- Dabberlocks \_\_\_\_\_
- Dog Whelk \_\_\_\_\_
- Dulse \_\_\_\_\_
- Edible Periwinkle \_\_\_\_\_
- Egg Wrack \_\_\_\_\_
- Flat Periwinkle \_\_\_\_\_
- Flat Topshell \_\_\_\_\_
- Gutweed \_\_\_\_\_
- Hermit Crab \_\_\_\_\_
- Honeycomb Reef \_\_\_\_\_
- Painted Topshell \_\_\_\_\_
- Serrated Wrack \_\_\_\_\_
- Shanny \_\_\_\_\_
- Shore Crab \_\_\_\_\_
- Shore Urchin \_\_\_\_\_
- Slipper Limpet \_\_\_\_\_
- Snakelocks Anemone \_\_\_\_\_
- Strawberry Anemone \_\_\_\_\_
- Thong Weed \_\_\_\_\_
- Tortoiseshell Limpet \_\_\_\_\_
- Wireweed \_\_\_\_\_

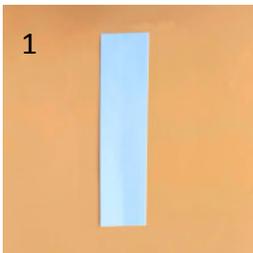
## Make a Folding Book



Images courtesy of Susan Murphy Wickens

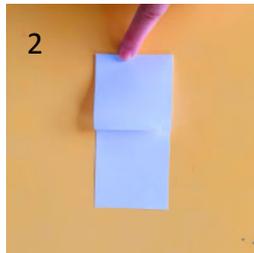
### You will need:

- 2 sheets of white A4 paper
- Thick card
- 1 sheet of coloured paper
- Ruler
- Scissors
- Glue or double-sided tape
- Hole punch
- A lace or string



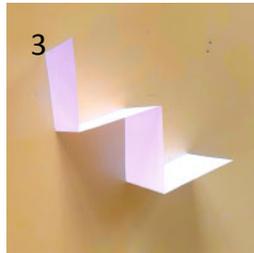
1

1. Cut each A4 sheet into three equal lengths. Each strip should be 7 cm wide.



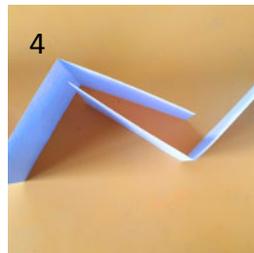
2

2. Fold each strip in half, lengthwise. Then fold each end back on itself.



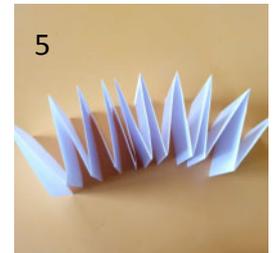
3

3. You should end up with each strip folded in a zig-zag pattern.



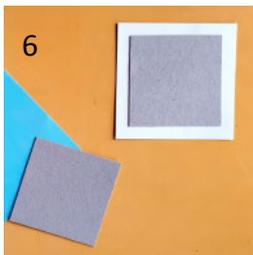
4

4. Stick the end square of one zig-zag strip to the end square of another, keeping the zig-zag going in the same direction.



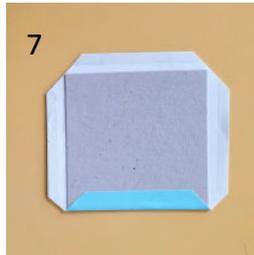
5

5. Repeat for all the folded strips. You can keep adding more if you would like your book to have more pages.



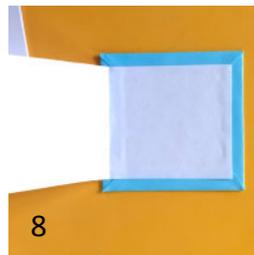
6

6. Cut two pieces of heavy card, each 8.5 cm x 8.5 cm, and two pieces of coloured paper, each 11 cm x by 11cm.



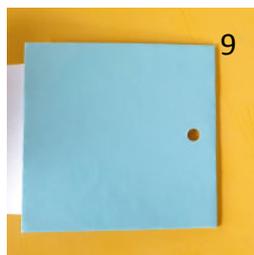
7

7. Stick the card to the centre of the coloured paper and trim the corners of the paper at right angles. Fold the paper over the card on all sides.



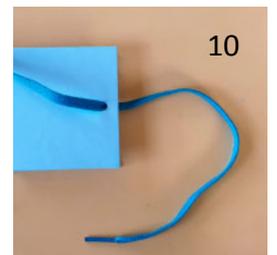
8

8. Stick the outside square of the folded paper to the back of the card and repeat for the other end of the folded paper and the other card.



9

9. Punch a hole in the front cover using a hole punch. Decorate with your own drawing or stick on a picture.



10

10. Through the hole, thread a length of lace or string that is long enough to wrap around the book and tie in a bow.

# Water Safety Ireland

## Keep floating inflatable toys away from open water



**Remember: Inflatable toys are not safe for persons to float upon in open waters. Never be tempted to swim out after a floating toy.**

Water Safety Ireland are asking members of the public who have inflatable toys, such as lookalike dinghies, canoes, kayaks, lilos, rings, sharks, seals, birds and other assorted fish and cetaceans, to consider disposing of them for good and not purchase them again when visiting open waters. Inflatable toys present a drowning risk and tragically in 2020, two people in Ireland lost their lives as a result of these toys.



Lifeguards trained by Water Safety Ireland have seen an increase in the use of inflatable toys. Roger Sweeney of Water Safety Ireland points out that they are not suitable for use as recreational craft and can be lethal in open water. He explains that drownings typically occur when a person overestimates their ability and underestimates the risk. The risk that an inflatable toy can take a person out of their depth and out of their comfort zone is very high due to Ireland's changeable

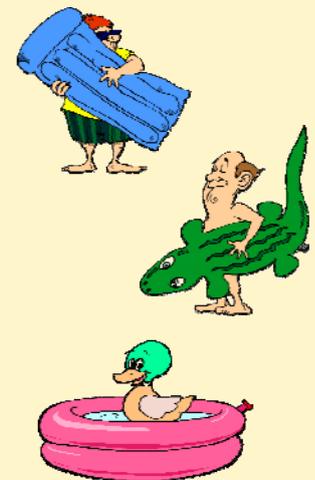
offshore winds and the range of our tides. It is even worse if the toy deflates and the person tries to swim or paddle a partly deflated toy to safety. Cooler water can quickly cool the muscles needed for swimming and hidden currents can make this swim very difficult and sometimes impossible. These toys provide a false sense of security and should be avoided.



The Irish Coast Guard and Water Safety Ireland are appealing to the public to be mindful of the drowning risk associated with the use of inflatable toys in open water. They appeal to parents and guardians never to allow inflatable toys to be used at rivers, lakes or beaches as the devices are vulnerable to the slightest breeze or current and can take a child away from shore and into danger. Equally the temporary loss of such a device could attract children or adults to try and retrieve them from the water and thereby get into a life-threatening situation. Good weather has already tempted people into using inflatable toys which has quickly led them into danger and the need for rescue services to respond.

Gerard O'Flynn of the Irish Coast Guard explains that Search and Rescue (SAR) resources including Coast Guard helicopters, RNLi lifeboats, Coast Guard units and community rescue boat services are no strangers to such rescues. Their hearts go out those that suffer a tragic loss in such circumstances and they are mindful of a number of very near misses whereby children were swept out to sea and were rescued following a full scale Search and Rescue operation.

**If you see somebody in trouble in the water or along the coast use VHF Ch 16 or Dial 112 and ask for the Coast Guard**



These floating toys are a common sight in the Mediterranean where, in comparison to Ireland, there are less incidents with them. Continental weather brings normally light or no winds or onshore sea breezes at beaches. Floats there are more often blown ashore and not out to sea. The opposite is the case in Ireland. Strong and changeable winds throughout summer means these toys can be blown offshore.

**Water Safety Ireland**  
The Long Walk, Galway  
[www.watersafety.ie](http://www.watersafety.ie)

Water Safety Ireland have produced this video for children outlining the dangers posed by inflatables on open water:  
<https://watersafety.ie/organisations-warn-about-the-dangers-of-inflatables-on-open-water/>

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# Moving Day!





# The World Around Us



“Foreign Correspondent”  
Michael Ludwig reports on  
some interesting goings on  
in the natural world.



## PJ the Cuckoo and his trips across the Sahara

In April this year, PJ the Cuckoo returned to his forest home in Suffolk in the UK and became a record breaker whilst doing so. This special cuckoo is part of a project being carried out by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) to help uncover what might be driving the UK Cuckoo population down; they have lost over two-thirds of their breeding Cuckoos in the UK as a whole and almost three-quarters of them in England during the last 23 years.

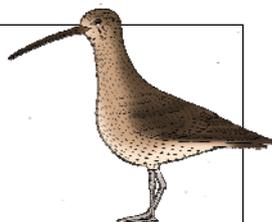
PJ was fitted with a satellite tag in June 2016 in King’s Forest, Suffolk, and has been providing scientists at the BTO with valuable information ever since. His arrival back in the forest saw him complete his fifth annual migration cycle to, from and within Africa since he was tagged, amassing a distance travelled of well over 50,000 miles (80,000 km) and making him the only satellite tagged Cuckoo to have achieved this since the project began in 2011. During this time he has crossed the Sahara desert ten times alone, not counting all of his sea crossings and navigating the Atlas Mountains in Morocco and the Pyrenees on the Spanish/French border. PJ was one year old when tagged, so this summer he will be six years old, taking him to within a year of the British longevity record for a ringed cuckoo, which stands at six years and eleven months for a bird found dead in 1983.

## Curlew Path

The Dublin Bay Birds Project carries out year-round waterbird surveys in Dublin Bay. These include focused surveys of particular species, combined with colour-ringing, radio-tagging and GPS-tracking of a selection of key wader species.

In May, the Project got word that a female Curlew (‘FH74868’) ringed back in 2014 in Dublin Bay, had been spotted on the breeding grounds near Jokisilta, Tyrnava in Finland for the second year in a row. This is the only international resighting the Project have ever received of a Curlew ringed in Dublin but it shows that Finland is an important breeding site for Curlews that overwinter in Ireland and Britain. To find out more about the Dublin Bay Birds Project and Birdwatch Ireland visit:

<https://birdwatchireland.ie/category/project/dublin-bay/>



## Nest Boxes

Calvin Jones, of Ireland’s Wildlife, has produced an excellent video for the Sherkin Island Tidy Islands Group on how to help birds in our gardens by providing nest boxes. You can watch it on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZbwijVg2cc>

Calvin also dedicated a page on his website to Garden Bird Nestbox Resources. Check it out if you are interested in attracting birds to your garden.

<https://irelandswildlife.com/nestboxes/>

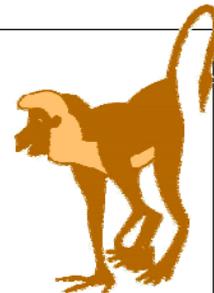


## Covid Waste Killing Wildlife



An unexpected consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic has been the necessity to use so much Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as masks and latex gloves. Unfortunately, single use waste of this type is not always been disposed of properly and it is making its way into the environment. Not only can discarded rubbish be unsightly, it can also be harmful to wildlife. A recent study of posts on social media, led by biologists Auke-Florian Hiemstra from Naturalis Biodiversity Center and Liselotte Rambonnet from Leiden University in The Netherlands, found that it is becoming a huge problem for wild and domestic animals, with many becoming entangled in this type of waste or ingesting it. While PPE is necessary, it must be disposed of properly.

## Speed Bumps



Speed bumps on the road are designed to slow traffic in areas where pedestrians may be crossing the road. However, they are now also being used to help protect one of the world’s most endangered primates, the Zanzibar red colobus monkey. These monkeys are found only on the island of Zanzibar, off the coast of Tanzania, with over half the population of approximately 6,000 inside the Jozani Chwaka-Bay National Park. Scientists have found that speed bumps significantly reduce the numbers of monkeys killed on a road that cuts across the park—a leading cause of death for them. The Zanzibar red colobus monkey seems oblivious to the dangers of traffic and have been recorded sauntering across the road, even when there is oncoming traffic. So by slowing the traffic, drivers are better able to react when they see a monkey.

# 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 What is the average length of a Basking Shark?
- 2 Give another name for the Baobab Tree.
- 3 The zooplankton known as copepods are tiny relatives or what marine animals?
- 4 Name the meat used in the taco recipe.
- 5 What is the website for the Explore Your Shore survey?
- 6 What monkey is being helped by speed bumps on the island of Zanzibar?
- 7 Which animal almost became stranded in Kinish Harbour, Sherkin Island?
- 8 Name a seaweed growing on the shore's Upper Zone.
- 9 What should you NEVER swim out to sea after?
- 10 What type of waste must be disposed of properly?
- 11 Who ringed the curlew spotted in Finland recently?
- 12 What shape are the leaves of the Baobab Tree?
- 13 For which organisation does Dave Wall work?
- 14 A Basking Shark's main food is what?
- 15 PJ the Cuckoo returned to the UK from where?
- 16 What toys should you keep away from open water?
- 17 What did Dave Wall study in college?

HOW MUCH DID YOU LEARN? 1. 7.9 metres; 2. The Upside Down Tree; 3. Lobsters and shrimp; 4. Crab meat; 5. www.exploreyourshore.ie; 6. Zanzibar Red Colobus Monkey; 7. A Basking Shark; 8. Channelled Wrack; 9. Inflatable toys; 10. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); 11. The Dublin Bay Birds Project; 12. Palmate or palm-like; 13. The National Biodiversity Data Centre in Waterford; 14. Zooplankton; 15. Sahara Desert; 16. Inflatable toys; 17. Zoology.

ROCKY SHORE SAFARI BIG 30 QUIZ (Page 8): Beadlet Anemone=24; Bladder Wrack=3; Blue-rayed Limpet=19; Brown Crab=12; Butterfish=28; Channelled Wrack=1; Common Starfish=26; Cushion Star=27; Cuvie=10; Dabberlocks=9; Dog Whelk=16; Dulse=6; Edible Periwinkle=17; Egg Wrack=4; Flat Periwinkle=18; Flat Topshell=14; Gutweed=7; Hermit Crab=13; Honeycomb Reef=30; Painted Topshell=15; Serrated Wrack=2; Shanny=29; Shore Crab=11; Shore Urchin=25; Slipper Limpet=21; Snakelocks Anemone=23; Strawberry Anemone=22; Thong Weed=5; Tortoiseshell Limpet=20; Wireweed=8.



Image courtesy of Alan D. Wilson [www.naturespicsonline.com](http://www.naturespicsonline.com)

## Think of a Title

Can you think of a caption for this photograph of a Sonoran Desert Toad, taken in Arizona, USA?

## Nature Jokes



What did the tree wear to the beach?  
Swimming trunks

What happened when the basking shark got famous?  
He became a starfish.



Which sound do hedgehogs make when they hug?  
Ouch!

Ducks wake up at what time?  
At the quack of dawn.



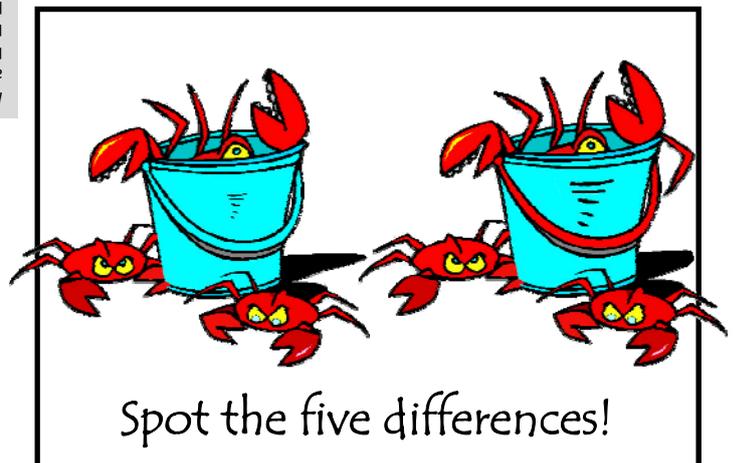
Why did the apricot take an apple to dinner?  
It couldn't find a date.

What has ears but cannot hear?  
A cornfield



What's the most expensive kind of fish?  
A goldfish.

What gives milk and has a horn?  
A milk lorry!



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# Learn More



Only €2.95 each including postage or €12.00 (plus €3.10 p&p) for all eight! 32pp each

Sherkin Island Marine Station has published a range of colouring books, guides and activity books for children. Each 32-page *Colouring & Guide Book* gives you the chance to colour, identify and learn about the wildlife around Ireland. *Safety Sam's Activity Book* is filled with activities to encourage safety for children. *My Nature Diary* contains lined pages to fill in a daily record of sightings and nature news.

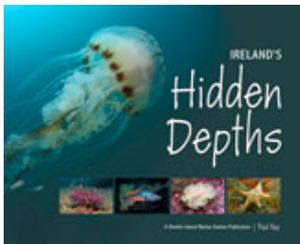
## A Beginner's Guide to Ireland's Wild

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

Only €8.50 inc postage



**Ireland's Hidden Depths** 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 €15.00 including postage

## Sea Life DVD:

### "On the Water's Edge"

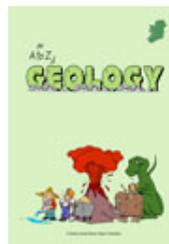
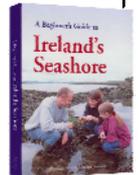
Produced by Sherkin Island Marine Station, the DVD 'On the Water's Edge', features a short film on life beside the sea.

Presented by Audrey Murphy, it includes 6-10 hours of interactive material for children of all ages. Only €3.00 plus €2.00 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

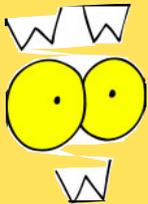
Only €8.00 inc postage



"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 €2.50 postage

To order books, visit: [www.sherkinmarine.ie](http://www.sherkinmarine.ie) and pay by Paypal or 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.



# 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:

Basking Shark: <https://www.baskingshark.ie/> <https://fb.watch/6bbWslh8Z-/>

<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/may19/basking-shark-tagging-channel-islands-national-marine-sanctuary.html>

Bord Bia Recipe: <https://www.bordbia.ie/recipes/fish-recipes/crab-tacos/>

Baobab Tree: <https://madagascar-tourisme.com/en/what-to-do/fauna-and-flora/baobab/>  
<https://botanicgardens.ie/2016/09/05/baobab-in-bloom/>

Black John—War in a Water Drop!: <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/plankton.html>

Explore Your Shore!: [www.exploreyourshore.ie](http://www.exploreyourshore.ie)

National Biodiversity Data Centre: <https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/>

Water Safety Ireland: [www.watersafety.ie](http://www.watersafety.ie)

Nest boxes: <https://irelandswildlife.com/nestboxes/>

Speed Bumps: <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/04/no-monkey-business-for-zanzibars-red-colobus-speed-bumps-are-lifesavers/>

Curlew: <https://birdwatchireland.ie/crossing-the-finnish-line-dublin-ringed-curlew-breeding-in-finland/>

PJ the Cuckoo: <https://www.bto.org/press-releases/record-breaking-cuckoo-returns-uk>

Covid Waste: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/covid-19-ppe-entangling-and-killing-wildlife-180977502/>

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

# Wordsearch



## Nature's Web Summer 2021 Wordsearch

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



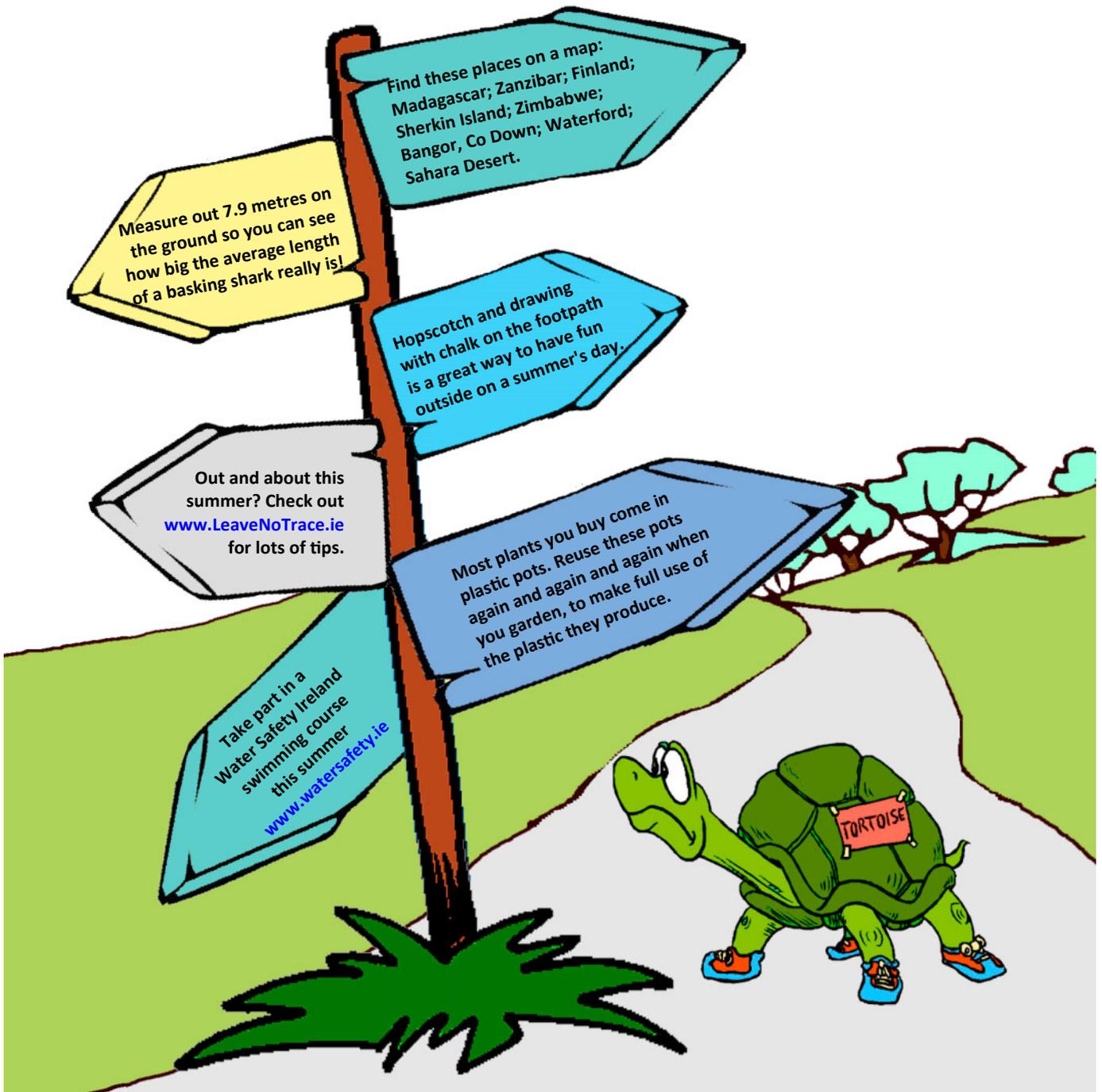
- Basking Shark
- Big Thirty
- Baobab Tree
- Citizen Science
- Curlw
- Dave Wall
- Explore Your Shore
- Filter Feeder
- Folding Book
- Inflatable Toys
- Lobster
- Madagascar
- Nest Boxes
- PJ the Cuckoo
- Rocky Shore Safari
- Waste
- Zanzibar monkey
- Zooplankton



(OVER,DOWN,DIRECTION): Basking Shark (E,1,18); Big Thirty (N,1,18); Baobab Tree (NE,1,18); Citizen Science (E,5,15); Covid (NW,13,15); Curlw (NW,13,15); Dave Wall (NE,4,14); Explore Your Shore (N,2,16); Filter Feeder (N,18,12); Folding Book (N,17,11); Inflatable Toys (N,14,15); Lobster (S,11,7); Madagascar (NE,3,10); Nest Boxes (N,16,15); PJ the Cuckoo (NE,2,14); Rocky Shore Safari (E,3,17); Zanzibar monkey (W,17,16); Zooplankton (NE,3,11).

# Nature's Noticeboard

## Summer 2021



Sherkin Island Marine Station would like to thank everyone who helped with this newsletter, especially Bord Bia, John Joyce, Michael Ludwig, Robbie Murphy, Dave Wall, Water Safety Ireland, Jez Wickens and Alan D. Wilson.

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



We appreciate support from the EPA toward the newsletter.

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