A Nature Trail Guide for Ballymore Eustace

Welcome to Ballymore Eustace and our first nature trail guide. This guide has been created to help you enjoy some of the best of the nature of Ballymore Eustace. Thanks to the enclosed setting of our village, its mature trees and its location on the Liffey, Ballymore Eustace is home to dozens of species of birds and mammals, hundreds of wild plants and countless invertebrates. All of these are essential in keeping a clean and natural environment for the place where we all live.

The Tiger is proud of our common natural heritage and is working to conserve this area as a wild resource for all to enjoy. You can help by keeping Ballymore Eustace as you would wish to find it, for you and for all who call it home.

Sources of Information
ENFO Tel. 1800 200 191 www.enfo.ie info@enfo.ie
EPA Tel. 053 9166000 www.epa.ie info@epa.ie
Birdwatch Ireland 01 281 9878 www.birdwatchireland.ie
The Irish Wildlife Trust 018602839 www.wt.ie Heritage Council 056 7770777 www.heritagecouncil.ie
Kildare Co. Council 045 9802600 www.kildare.ie
Copies of the Nature/Habitat Trails can be downloaded at www.kildare.ie/ballymoreanglers

John Acreyoyd’s “A Beginner’s Guide to Ireland’s Wild Flowers” published by Sharan Island Marine Station is an excellent inexpensive pocket sized guide and can be purchased locally.

This nature trail was prepared by Ballymore Eustace Tidy Towns Committee with the help and expertise of Flynn, Fumey, Environmental Consultants, Kildare County Heritage Department and Cill Dara Ar Aighiall Teoranta t/a County Kildare LEADER Partnership.

The Mill Walk

This is a rough woodland trail that leads past the old mill that was powered by the natural energy of the Liffey. The woodland here is over one hundred years old and may in fact have been a woodland for centuries before that. Some of the tallest trees of the woodlands, which may commonly reach 20m in height. These trees gain their humid habitat is good for fungi and invertebrates such as woodlice, spring-tails or slugs; all of these are involved in ‘recycling’ the woodland’s leftovers and creating soil.

Pudding Lane

The shady aspect of the path allows for extensive moss growth under relatively thick leaf-litter. A shady and humid habitat is good for fungi and invertebrates such as beetles, woodlice and springtails.

St. John’s Churchyard

This churchyard occupies a very prominent place in the village of Ballymore Eustace. The present Church was erected in 1820 and the churchyard contains two 10th century High Crosses, numerous ancient tomstones and the remains of an old Church. As well as being an important site in the history of the village, this area provides a haven for many wildlife species. Like many churchyards, St. John’s acts like a mini-nature reserve. There is usually no need for any chemicals or fertilisers in a place such as this and the low intensity of mowing and lack of grazing allows many wild plants to flourish. Some of these are very obvious, like the lichens and umbrellifers in the summer months, but look around in the spring and you’ll see dozens of flowers including lesser celandine, snowdrop, bluebells, cowslip and primrose almost in the shadow of the Church itself.

The grassland areas are comprised mainly of annual meadow grass, perennial ryegrass and foxtails. However, the edges of the grassland areas have much of the characteristics of woodland edge with herb-robert,

The Liffey Walk

The Liffey Walk was opened up in 1980 when the Trout and Salmon Anglers’ Association with the help of the Eastern Regional Fisheries Board cleaned up the overgrown rights of way and laid walkways. It was extended in 2000 after this area became the property of Ballymore Eustace Community Development Association in 1998. This walk will bring you a little way along one of Ireland’s most famous rivers. Although the Liffey is harnessed at Powellshougha and Golden Falls, the river here is wide and fast flowing past banks that are rich in wild plants. Among the largest plants are the alder trees. These are common waterside trees and their wood is extremely handy, even in very wet conditions. The alder is a broadleaved conifer, meaning it produces cones as well as having broad leaves. Look for these small cones dines from late summer on.

Because this area is wet for a large part of the time due to power generation floods, there are many water-loving plant species to be seen. Look out for the pretty flowers of the yellow iris, ragged robin, water-forget-me-not, cuckoo-flower, meadowsweet, purple loosestrife and the ‘cigar’ top bullrush. In early summer, growing in the shallower ripples or pools of the Liffey can be seen the rafts of white flowers of the stream water-crowfoot or water buttercup.

This area is managed by the anglers who treasure the Liffey for its trout and salmon. You will see these fish breaking the surface of the water in pursuit of insects such as mayfly or caddis fly, which are well known to, and imitated by fly fishermen. Another insect-lover, the much maligned bat, comes out to feed at night along the River and while known to anglers, is rarely seen by the public.

In early morning or at dusk you may be lucky enough to see an otter, mink or deer.

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