

Wicklow Mountains National Park EDUCATION CENTRE

PRIMARY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME 2011

Welcome to our Primary Schools Programme

As many teachers are aware, Wicklow Mountains National Park has been running an Education Programme for several years. Our programme focuses on Nature Awareness, with several themes on offer to cover all ages and interests.

Hopefully there is something for every school.

In November 2007, we opened a second Education Centre in Knocksink Wood in Enniskerry. See details below.

NOTE The actual programme listed for each topic may vary slightly, depending on the group's timetable, the weather, the childrens' ages, etc. In the event of very **WET WEATHER**, we are likely to alter the programme considerably, although we will probably do a treasure hunt first. The children should bring a change of clothes.

How To Book

Please note that our diary fills up VERY quickly, especially as fieldwork is now compulsory for secondary schools. So, please, if you wish to book a place, ring early - months before you wish to come!

- **We only take bookings by phone:** (0404-45656).
- Our service is free of charge. (However, there may be a charge for parking.)
- We insist that groups bring at least one adult leader for every 10 children.



**The Education Centre
Wicklow Mountains National Park
Kilafin, Laragh
Co. Wicklow
Tel: 0404-45656
Fax: 0404-45055**

**Email: wickloweducationcentre@environ.ie
Web: www.wicklowmountainsnationalpark.ie**

Nature For Infants

Age Range: Senior & Junior Infants.

Time of Year: Any, but preferably during the warmer months.

This is a fun day that focuses on introducing the very young to Nature through a series of age-specific activities. A typical Nature For Infants day would be as follows:

- A Scavenger Hunt.
- Looking at plants
- Looking at
- Looking for evidence of Bigger Animals
- Basic food chains

Irish Jungle

Age Group: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th classes

Time of Year: April to October, when the leaves are on the trees.

Forget house and garden plants - come and explore real native Irish plants growing in one of our National Parks. The Plants In Their Place day can be done as a stand alone day, or as a follow-on to our Not A Weed Outreach programme. A typical Plants In Their Place day would feature the following activities:

- A plant treasure hunt
- A plant slide show
- A plant exploration walk, looking at trees, algae, lichens, flowers, and shrubs, and exploring how plants gather their energy from the sun, what eats plants and how plants fight back.
- Fun activities using blindfolds and other props will help introduce plants to children in a fun way.
- A plant quiz is an optional extra, if time allows.

Bug Safari

Age Range: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th classes

Time of Year: March to October only; the warmer the weather, the better the bugs!

Bugs are fascinating! The bug world is full of drama, with herbivores and carnivores of all shapes and sizes. It is truly a bug eat bug world out there! The Bug Safari can be done as a stand alone day, or as a follow-on to our Bug Secrets Outreach programme. A typical Bug Safari day would feature the following activities:

- A bug treasure hunt
- A bug slide show
- A bug hunt, exploring the bugs of several habitats, and using nets, pooters, and beating sheets. Bug themed activities also feature.
- A bug quiz.

Wildlife & Wilderness

Age Range: 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th classes

Time of the Year: Any.

Most children know a certain amount about lions & tigers & other foreign wildlife. But many Irish children are unaware of the wildlife in their own country. Do we have beavers in Ireland? How easy is it to see a badger? Do deer eat sheep? This day focuses on our Irish mammals, birds, frogs and lizard. (Although, we may not actually see any on the day!)

The programme for the Wildlife & Wilderness day is as follows:

- A wildlife themed treasure hunt
- Birdwatching (using real binoculars, images of birds in the trees, and a simple bird identification chart)
- A scavenger hunt
- A wildlife safari, looking for tracks & signs of mammals & birds, and exploring their homes and habitats. Why do certain animals live in certain places?
- A wildlife quiz. (If time permits)
- If we are very lucky, we may even spot a wild red squirrel, a deer, or a herd of wild goats. (But no promises!)

Mini Bioblitz

Age Range: 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th classes

Time of the Year: April to October

Biodiversity is a term used to describe the huge variety of plants and animals which live all around us. The children can discover some of this diversity in Glendalough through some fun and challenging activities, games and walks. A typical bioblitz day is as follows:

- A biodiversity themed treasure hunt.
- A mini bioblitz challenge using picture charts to identify some of the different plants and animals in Glendalough.
- A walk including a variety of different fun games to learn about threats, benefits and the importance of conserving Ireland's biodiversity.

Habitats Day

Age Range: 5th & 6th classes

Time of the Year: Any

The valley of Glendalough contains many wonderful habitats - evergreen and deciduous woodlands, grasslands, rivers, lakes, bogs and heaths, and more. This Habitats Day is designed for 5th and 6th classes. It uses a simple worksheet, and teachers will be expected to photocopy a worksheet for each child. A typical Habitats Day is as follows:

- A habitats themed treasure hunt
- A habitats slide show
- A habitats study with a worksheet and fun activities
- A habitats debate

Take A Hike

Age Range: 5th & 6th classes

Time of the Year: Any

Some of the older children benefit from a total day out, away from any serious work. A hike around Glendalough can be a great way to explore nature.

We also introduce the children to Leave No Trace. Leave No Trace is a new outdoor ethics programme that has recently arrived in Ireland from the USA. Unlike the old Countryside Code, Leave No Trace does not consist of a series of do or don't rules, but rather appeals to people's own ethics to help look after their own surroundings. Leave No Trace concerns itself with ALL outdoor users, whether serious outdoor pursuits enthusiasts or school children playing outside.

For the hike, the children are divided into small groups and taken to explore - sometimes up a steep hill to admire a fabulous view, sometimes along the flat to explore ancient ruins. Anything of interest along the way is discussed with the Guide. The walk is likely to stay on track, but if the children are suitably equipped the walk may venture off track. The children should dress for inclement weather. A typical Take A Hike Day is as follows:

- A Leave No Trace treasure hunt
- A walk to explore Glendalough and to discuss the seven principles of Leave No Trace
- A Leave No Trace quiz (if time allows)

Nature Awareness Day

Age Range: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th classes

Time of Year: Any

This is our original programme. The children are encouraged to explore nature using a variety of fun activities that make full use of the five senses. A typical Nature Awareness day would be as follows:

- A treasure hunt
- A scavenger hunt
- A nature walk full of fun activities.

Knocksink Wood Education Centre

In November 2007, the National Parks & Wildlife Service opened a second Education Centre in Knocksink Wood Nature Reserve in Enniskerry. This Centre is a sister Centre to the one in Glendalough and is offering the same primary school programme listed here.

To make a booking for Knocksink Wood Education Centre, please phone 01-2866609.



Comhshaol, Oidhreacht agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Heritage and Local Government