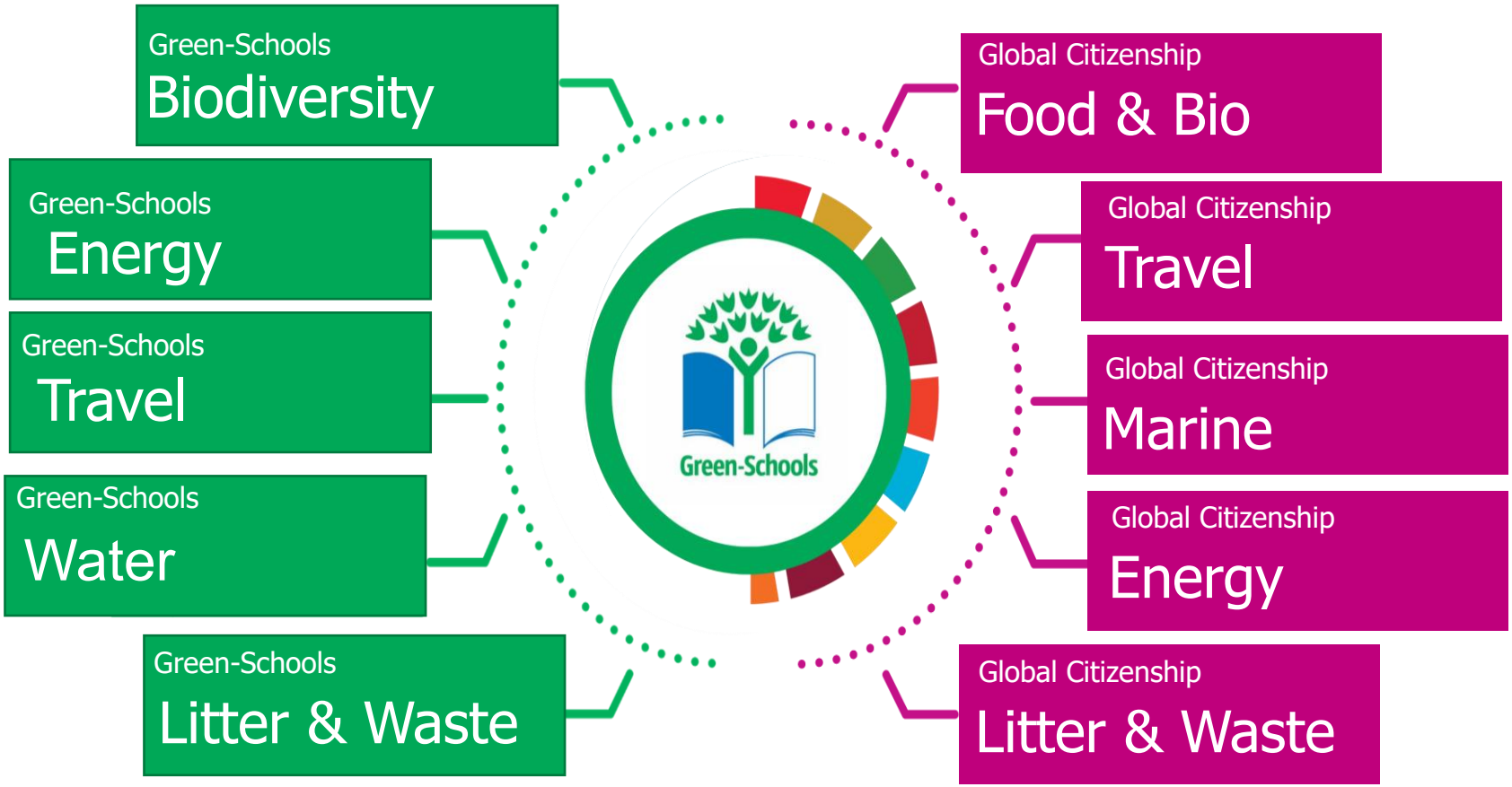
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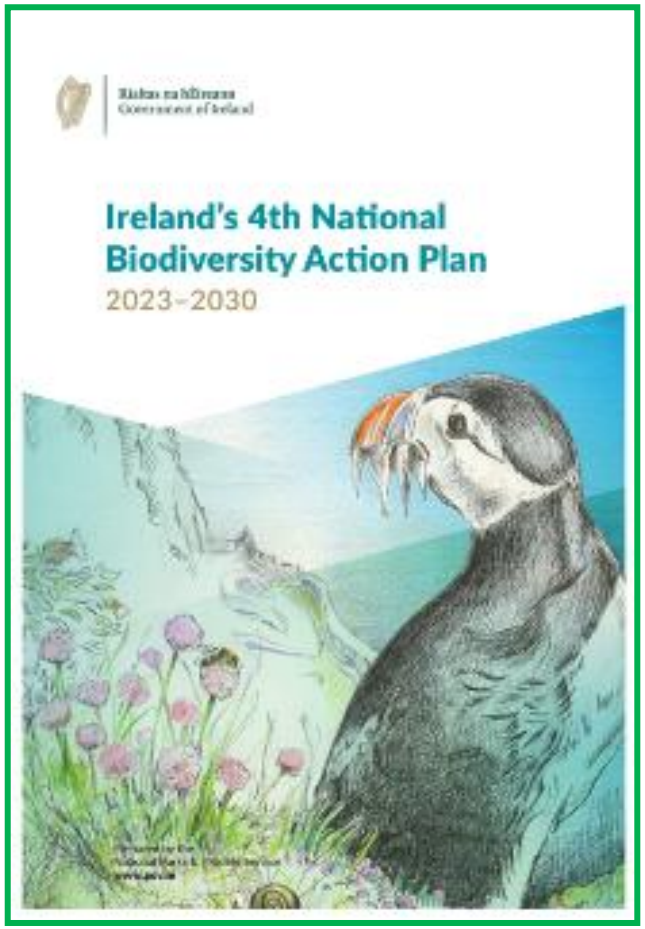
Teacher Seminar 2026

Biodiversity Theme

Green-Schools Themes



The National Parks and Wildlife Service support the Biodiversity Theme



Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2023-2030

Objective 3: Secure Nature's Contribution to People

Actions highlight the relationship between nature and people in Ireland.

2025/2026 In Review





- 2,297 trees were planted.
- 358 window boxes, hanging baskets and flowerpots were planted
- 268 bird tables and bird feeders erected
- 136 Bug Hotels created
- 141 Organic Gardens with vegetable and herb beds developed
- 92 Native wildflower areas managed
- 120 Log Piles, Leaf Piles and Rock piles created
- 81 Wildlife Areas (unmanaged spaces) established
- 66 Compost Heaps
- 27 Ponds created
- 31 bat boxes installed

What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity, or *biological diversity*, is the variety of living things; from the tiniest flower to the largest animals at sea





The more different types of living things the better it is for the planet!

Why is biodiversity so important?













Why is biodiversity so important?













… Other reasons

- Many species are of unknown value to us
- Many species not yet discovered may be of value to us
- All biodiversity is intrinsically valuable for itself









What is happening to Biodiversity?



What is causing the Biodiversity Crisis?



Habitat Loss

This can happen through deforestation, creating space for industry, farming etc.



Habitat Fragmentation

This happens when habitats or ecosystems are separated by roads etc.



Litter and Pollution

Causes the death of millions of animals each year.

What is causing the Biodiversity Crisis?



Climate Change

Plants and animals can be severely effected by changes to the climate.



Over Exploitation

This happens when animals, plants etc are overused without getting a chance to recover.



Invasive Species

Species which are non native and spread easily, for example Japanese Knotweed can cause a lot of damage to a region.









Green-Schools 7 Steps



Step 1: Green-Schools Committee



Step 1: Green-Schools Committee

- Students (N.B. student led)
- Co-ordinator

- **Optional**
- Sub-Committee for previous themes
- Other staff
- Parents
- Community Members

- Remember! Whole school involvement!



Step 2: Review (- BEFORE taking action!)



There are 2 ESSENTIAL actions:

1. Biodiversity Awareness Survey (4 questions)

- You don't need to survey every student in the school but try to get a good selection and keep track of which class groups you survey. You may wish to skip the infant classes for example.

2. Create a Habitat Map

-This can be assigned to one class or group to undertake but it should be displayed where everyone can see it.

Biodiversity Awareness Survey
Year 1

	Survey 1
Date Survey Conducted	
What % of students and staff knew what the term biodiversity meant?	
What % of students and staff were able to list 3 reasons why biodiversity is so important?	
What % of students and staff were able to list 3 threats to biodiversity?	
What % of students and staff were able to list 3 ways in which we can help biodiversity?	

Awareness Survey

Don't worry if you find that many students could not answer the survey questions. Here are a couple of videos you could show them afterwards to explain a bit about Biodiversity:

1. World Wildlife Foundation- What is Biodiversity
2. This is Ireland -this is a lovely one which shows some of Ireland's Biodiversity
3. Biodiversity Song- this is a good one for junior classes to get them familiar with the word "Biodiversity"

Habitat Mapping

A **habitat map** shows the different habitats within a particular area









What is the purpose of habitat mapping?

- Gives a starting point for your school
- Identifies areas/species that you might wish to protect or places you think you can add to.

Your school's habitat map should:

Show the layout of your grounds

Include any and all types of habitats on the grounds including yard, pitches, trees, hedging, raised beds etc.

Help identify areas needing improvement

Habitat Mapping



We have lots of resources to help you create a habitat map with your class.

- Lesson Plan to use in school
- Webinar recording if you want more detailed information.

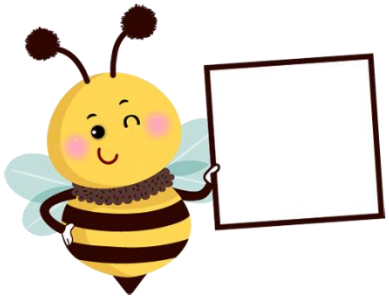
Step 3: Action Plan

Two overall objectives

1) Practical Improvements
2) Raise Awareness







Step 3: Action Plan

1) Practical improvements

- Leave areas ‘unmanaged’ (hedgerows/grass areas)
- Plant native trees/flowers
- Develop an organic garden
- Create a pond/log pile/leaf pile/wildlife area
- Bug hotel, (best option a few small ones instead of the larger ones) or go the natural route and create wild spaces with rotting plants and tall grass for them!
- Build bird or bat boxes (unused/old wood)



Step 3: Action Plan

2) Raise awareness

- Follow along with our "Nature's Calendar" for seasonal actions and activities.
- Carry out bird/butterfly/tree surveys (home/school/local area)
- Go on nature walks around your grounds, local parks etc. Add labels to trees, wildflower areas etc.
- Create nature tables in the classroom.
- Schedule time outside with planned activities
- Examine food chains, life cycles of different plants and animals etc.
- Letters home with ideas for getting outside
- Create art or projects based on Irish wildlife and display



Further actions

- Get involved in national surveys in conjunction with The National Biodiversity Data Centre (e.g. Butterfly/Bumblebee surveys) www.biodiversityireland.ie
- Download their All Ireland Pollinator Plan or the JUNIOR Pollinator Plan for information and tips on how to make your school more pollinator-friendly.
- NPWS – why not investigate one of Ireland's six National Parks and find out why they are so important

National Biodiversity Data Centre
Documenting Ireland's Wildlife





National Parks & Wildlife Service

Sample Action Plan

Action	Person/Group Responsible	Time Frame
Send a **letter** home to parents informing them that the school is now participating in Green-Schools Biodiversity.	Green-Schools Coordinator	Early September
Carry out a **Biodiversity Awareness Survey** to examine the level of awareness among students and staff	Green-Schools Committee	Early to mid September
Habitat Map the school grounds and do up a list of the biodiversity in our school	Green-Schools Committee	Early to mid September
Quantify & Display the results of the surveys on the Green-Schools notice board	Green-Schools Committee	Mid September
Analyse the survey and suggest recommendations.	Senior classes	During maths periods mid-late September.
Hold a **poster/slogan competition** to come up with a new Green Code relating to biodiversity	Whole school	Late September – early October

Step 4: Monitoring & Evaluation

Increasing the numbers of animals visiting your school takes time. It is also tricky to evaluate! Don't be discouraged, action is as important as results!

1) Repeat the Biodiversity Awareness Survey

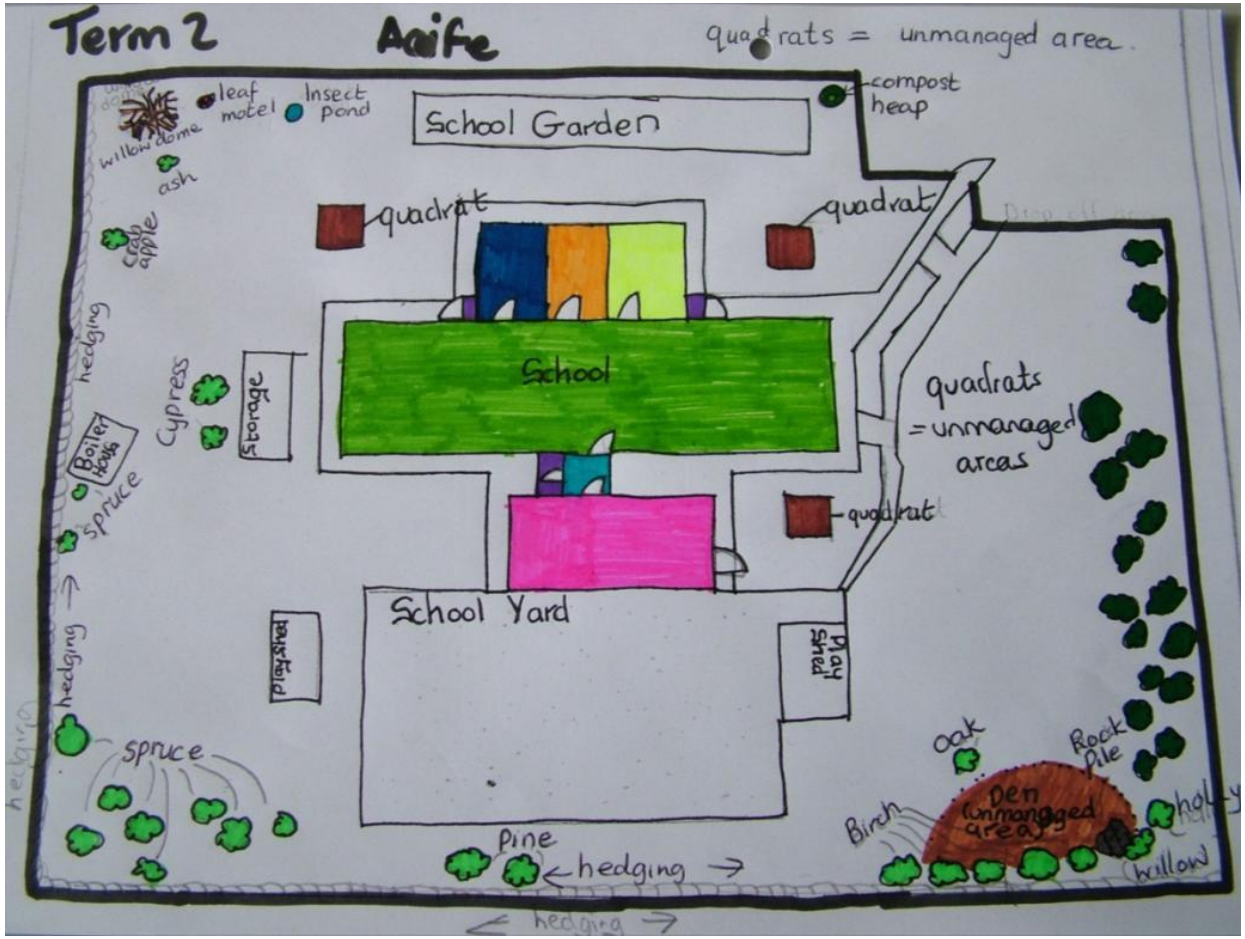
- Has the level of awareness increased in Year 2
- Make a chart or graph to show your progress

2) Repeat the Habitat Map

- Create a new habitat map in Year 2.
- Or add in any new habitats, features, names of identified plants etc to your Year 1 map.

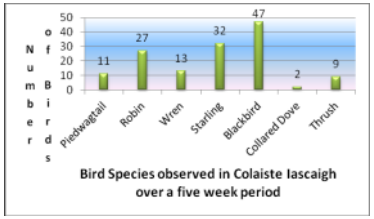


Habitat Map Year 2



The Habitat Map in year two should show any practical improvements made to improve biodiversity in the school. Note any trees planted, wildflower areas installed, areas where bird feeders were hung etc.

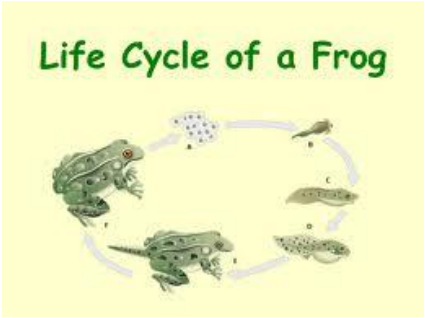
Step 5: Curriculum Work





Maths

Provide real life situations for mathematical analysis (graphs/charts)



SESE Science

The living things strand, study of habitats & species



Art

Poster design promoting biodiversity

Step 5: Curriculum Work



Home Economics

Examine where our food & textiles come from



Woodwork

Design & construct bird tables/boxes



History

Loss of habitats & species throughout time

Step 6: Informing & Involving

- Green-Schools Notice Board
- Local Press
- School Newsletter
- Action Day (International Biodiversity Day 22nd May, Tree week, National Spring Clean event, Clean Coast Event)
- Parents/Grandparents/Neighbours
- National Parks & Wildlife Service









Step 7: Green Code

Aim: To show your school's commitment to the environment.

- Display on your Green-Schools notice board
- Poster/slogan competition
  - Rap/Song/Poem/Code of Conduct

Roscommon Community College, Co. Roscommon

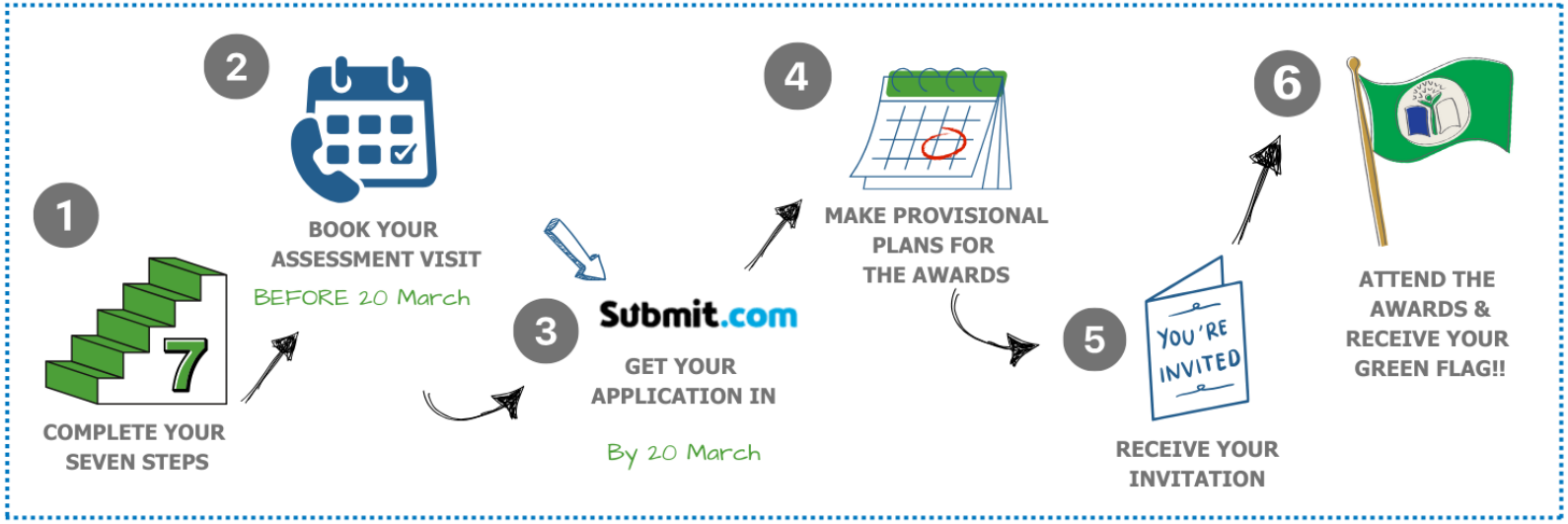
'Ecosystems can be a bog, a bush or a hedge,
So protect and promote, Be a ledge!'

Stokane National School, Co. Sligo

'Let our generation protect all creation'



Renewal Process- Deadline is March 19th!



- **You must organise and have a renewal visit before you submit your application form (but you can start working on your form anytime!)**

- Renewal visit can take place at any stage during Year 2 but many school have between January and early March. Contact your local EAO or the GS office to arrange.

- You do not need to have finished all of your work on the theme before your visit/application. You can mention your future plans!

New Application Forms

The application form has been significantly reduced. As well as the basic information about your school, you will be asked to input the results of your awareness survey and tick the boxes to tell us any of the practical changes you have made on your school grounds.

In addition to this information, you will be asked to upload a PowerPoint Presentation that shows how you completed the rest of the 7 steps. A PowerPoint Template has been created to help you and can be downloaded **HERE**. It contains a page for each of the 7 steps. A tutorial video can be accessed **HERE**.

Student's on the committee can help to create this PowerPoint.

You can change the format, design, colours etc if you wish

You can mostly use pictures or you can include text descriptions if you prefer.

Why not use your PowerPoint during the renewal visit.

New Application Forms

If you already started an application form last year, unfortunately you can no longer access this information directly. We apologise for the inconvenience.

However, we have a copy of all of the information supplied and have been in contact with all relevant schools to reshare their information directly.

Your profile (school name, address, number of students etc) will still appear when you log into the new form if you provided those details last year.

If you believe you should have received information and have not, please let us know by emailing bioevents@greenschoolsireland.org

Step One – Green Schools Committee

TEMPLATE

Add a copy of minutes from a committee meeting **or** a recording **or** something to show what happened at a meeting

Add a photo **or** a list of names **or** something to represent your Green-Schools Committee

We love to see Green-Schools Committees that are student led and have support from the whole school community

-

Please feel free to add another slide with any other information on your committee

Biodiversity School of the Year!

- This year for the fourth time we will be awarding one Primary School and one Secondary School the Title of Biodiversity School of the Year!
- Last year, our winners were from Dublin and Limerick.
- We will be selecting the winners based on the application form and renewal visit. All schools who apply for their Green Flag will be considered.
- Schools will be presented with their awards during our Awards Ceremonies in May.



Biodiversity Events - Dates for your Diary

Tree Day Webinar- Trees, Wildfires and Air Quality

Thursday, October 1st at 11am

Register to participate here

National Tree Week

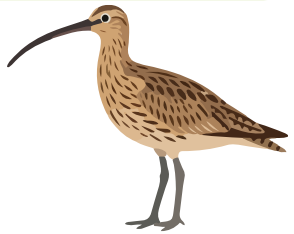
- March 8th – 12th in 2027.
- Green-Schools will celebrate this with interactive events.

Bio Bealtaine

- May 22nd is International Biodiversity Day.
- Rather than holding a week of events at this very busy time of year, we will make a series of resources and activities so you can choose your own day/week during the month to celebrate all things nature! We will also scatter a series of live activities throughout the month that you can drop in on.

Biodiversity Events - Dates for your Diary





Thursday, November 12th at 1pm

Celebrate Science Week with us for this interactive webinar with Alena Kunkel from Breeding Waders EIP- Breeding Waders EIP.

Learn about some of our Wading birds like Curlew, Dunlin and Oystercatcher and hear how they are being impacted by Climate Change. Plus, the projects taking place to protect them. This webinar is aimed at secondary and third level students.

Register here



BREEDING WADERS EIP

Green-Schools An Taisce

Féile Scéalta na hIthreach – A focus on Irish and our environment



Check out the insightful seminar about Irish placenames featuring an expert from logainm.ie, Ireland's placename archive:

New Festival: Féile Scéalta na hIthreach | Green-Schools

Through the Irish language, come up with a **Poem, Song or Drama** that tells an amazing story about a local placename that connect with nature.

Deadline for entries: Friday 23/10/2026, 11am

Finals: 26/11/2026 with singer songwriter John Spillane as special guest!

Little Green Fingers

Introducing the Little Green Fingers Project

- This project is aimed at 4 to 8-year-old students.
- We have developed this project as part of an EU funded project over the last two years and it is now ready to be rolled out.
- The project has 7 lesson plans that you can carry out with a class that allows young students the opportunity to produce their own ideas for creating new homes for animals.
- We have one set of resources for 4 to 6-year-olds and another for 6 to 8-year-olds.
- If you would like to take part or learn more, you can register your interest here.



Habitat Heroes

Introducing the Habitat Heroes Project!

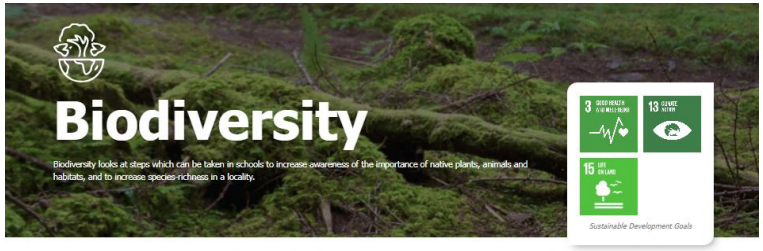
- This is a Biodiversity Project for Primary Schools, and it is a great way to get multiple classes involved in the theme.
- We have a suite of interactive resources for each Primary Year group.
- Habitat Heroes will allow each class group to learn about 6 different Irish Plants and Animals, how they connect and how we can help them!
- Then take actions to help those habitats in you school and local areas. Classes can work at their own pace and do as much or as little as they like.

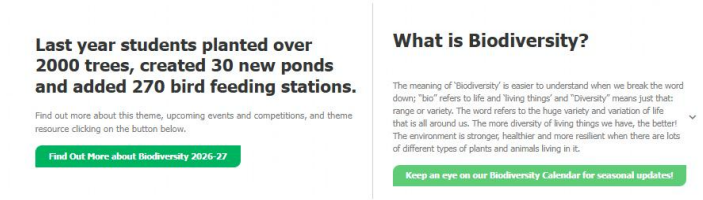


Green-Schools website

www.greenschoolsireland.org

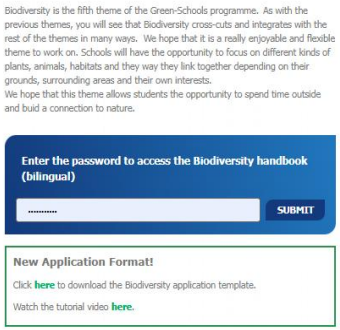
- News about upcoming events
- Links to application form
- GS Calendar

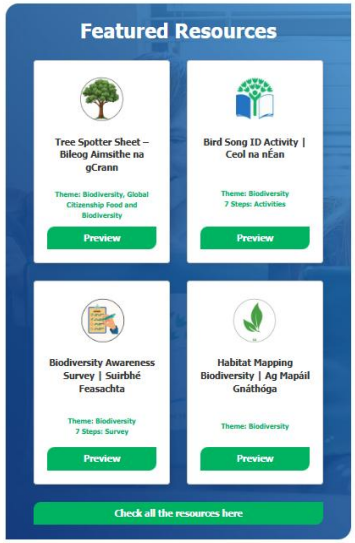




Biodiversity | Green-Schools

- Bio Handbook and Key resources
- Video and written case studies
- Background info on bio theme and links to external resources





Grants and Supports

- Order a free Tree – Tree Council for Tree Day (October 1st)
- Education for Sustainability Development Grant- Dept of Education. Schools can apply for up to €2500. September!
- Hare's Corner- funding in January, 2027. Specific Counties only.
- GIY- raised beds, soil and seeds. Waitlist only at the moment.
- Tree Planting- November to March
  - How can I help? – Easy Treesie, Coill na nÓg | Biodiversity In Schools

Thank you for your attention!

Any questions?

Contact: Clare Patten or Roisin O'Connor Flanagan

E-mail: bioevents@greenschoolsireland.org

or cpatten@antaisce.org

We are always happy to arrange a phone call to chat through any questions

Helpful Links

- Biodiversity Theme Page
- Biodiversity Video playlist
- Awareness Survey (English and As Gaeilge)
- Habitat Mapping Lesson Plan (English and As Gaeilge)
- Secondary School Video Case Study
- Seasonal Nature Resource (Monthly spotter sheets in English and As Gaeilge)
- Application Forms (submit.com)