

Biodiversity Decreasing

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Ireland's biodiversity is currently decreasing. It is now generally agreed among Ireland's scientists that the possibility of achieving the International Deadline of **2010** to stop biodiversity loss is impossible. The current rate of loss has not even been estimated, but it is mainly attributed to habitat destruction in Ireland.

Other causes are the introduction of alien plants and animals into the country. And this is before the impact of the predicted climate change, which will certainly change our flora and fauna distribution.

The Habitats Directive of 1998 (available on-line for the Dept. of the Environment) was brought in by the EU to act as a guideline for habitat preservation. Admittedly it is a difficult directive to implement in that it often cuts across social traditions in Ireland and can be seen as a block to economic development. However, these should be seen as short term difficulties. Its successful implementation would be manifest in a better managed landscape. The basis of managing the landscape is management of our habitats. Managing our habitats maintains and even increases our biodiversity.

The Irish Tourist Industry will crumble if our landscape and its habitats are not preserved. Most of us are aware of some local bog, woodland or hedgerow habitat being removed within the last five years. Most of this destruction is unintentional and arises because of a lack of education and awareness of the value of habitats. Habitats are places where plants and animals live; remove the habitat and these plants and animals die. It is as simple as that. Even with this basic understanding to the fore, it is unlikely that the owners of a new house will remove the hedging to erect a fence. Yet hundredths of kilometres of hedgerow are removed each year as new houses are erected.

Tell your TD about your concern over habitat destruction in your area and add your voice to the Forum section of Biology.ie on Habitats.

<http://biology.ie/forum/categories.php>

Biology.ie was set up in September 2005 to collect Nature's Calendar (or phenology) data from the public. This data (sightings of natural events such as the first appearance of leaves) is placed on a map of Ireland for all users of the site to view.

*The Aims & Objectives of **Biology.ie** are:*

- To collect Nature's Calendar sightings from the public into one central database.
- To increase awareness of Ireland's biodiversity and in so doing to increase awareness of the value of habitats for the plants and animals.
- To maintain a web site that allows the public to contribute their experience of the natural world via maps and blogs/forums.

Enjoy the site, and most of all, enjoy your observation of Ireland's landscape, habitats and its biodiversity.

Contact us

Should you have any questions or suggestions, please contact:

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<http://biology.ie>