



MEDIA RELEASE

PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO RECEIVE NEWLY LAUNCHED 'BIODIVERSITY OF COUNTY CLARE CD-ROM'

Ennis, County Clare, IRELAND, Oct 27th 2006 – Primary school students across Clare are set to increase their knowledge of the county's natural environment thanks to a new educational tool developed by the Clare Biodiversity Group. An interactive CD-ROM titled '*Exploring the Biodiversity of County Clare*' was officially launched in Ennis today by Clare senior hurler Tony Carmody. The CD provides information on the county's biodiversity and will act as a tool for primary school teachers to introduce the natural environment and a practical element to lessons.

Biodiversity – an abbreviation for biological diversity - is the variety of all plants and animals and their natural habitats. The newly launched interactive CD-ROM features detailed information and photographs of some of the native mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, insects and plants found in Clare. The CD contains a wide range of biodiversity activities both for the and including field trips and outdoor activities. Activities include '*Gardenbird Detectives*', '*Exploring the Seashore*' and '*Wet and Watery Activities*'. The CD-ROM also includes details and photographs of the annually held Clare Biodiversity Day, links to other biodiversity websites, and information on alien invasive species.

Explaining the need to develop the CD-ROM, Elaine Keegan, Biodiversity Officer with Clare County Council stated, "*Clare has a rich variety of different animals and plants as well as some of the best examples of habitats in Europe. However, our biodiversity is disappearing fast with animals and plants becoming extinct and habitats being damaged. The Clare Biodiversity Group, therefore, thought it was imperative that the youngest members of our community learn about how to protect their surrounding natural environment. There is no doubt that primary school education can play a very important role in protecting future biodiversity in Clare.*"

The new CD-ROM, which is one of the targets set out under the Clare Biodiversity Action Plan and the County Clare Heritage Plan 2003-2007, is linked to the Science and Geography curricula as both include a strong element of environmental awareness. According to Elaine Keegan, *“The study of plants and animals and their habitats through this CD incorporates basic literacy, numeric and computer skills and also provides a practical element to lessons. This CD is most suitable for 3rd–6th classes in primary schools. However, the local natural environment is also a strand unit in younger classes, and the photographs and information in this CD could be a teacher’s resource for those classes. A copy of ‘Exploring the biodiversity of County Clare’ will now be sent to all primary schools in County Clare.”*

‘Exploring the Biodiversity of County Clare’ has been produced by Ms. Keegan and Congella McGuire, Heritage Officer with Clare County Council. Many other organisations and individuals provided material and input to the CD, and we would like to thank them all very much for their contribution. The CD-ROM – one of the many objectives set out in the Clare Biodiversity Action Plan and the County Clare Heritage Plan 2003-2007 - received financial support from the Heritage Council, Rural Resource Development (LEADER) and Clare County Council.

To find out more about the CD-ROM, please contact Elaine Keegan, Biodiversity Officer, Clare County Council on ekeegan@clareccoco.ie or 065-6846456.

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Notes to Editors:

- Elaine Keegan, Biodiversity Officer, Clare County Council (065-6846456 or ekeegan@clareccoco.ie) is available for interview and further comment. Alternatively, call Mark Dunphy of Dunphy Public Relations on 086-8534900 or media@dunphypr.com.
- The Clare Biodiversity Group consists of representatives from a variety of organisations, both governmental and non-governmental, as well as individuals with an interest or expertise in biodiversity in the County. Members include Clare County Council, Irish Seed Savers Association, Shannon Dolphin and Wildlife Foundation, National Parks and Wildlife Service, IFA, and the Forest Service.
- Information on the Clare Biodiversity Action Plan is available from www.clareccoco.ie or www.clarebiodiversity.ie.