



## MEDIA RELEASE

# MAJOR SEMINAR ON BIODIVERSITY OF COUNTY CLARE TO TAKE PLACE IN ENNIS

**Ennis, County Clare, IRELAND, 17<sup>th</sup> April 07** - The Clare Heritage Office, in association with the 'Notice Nature' campaign and the Clare Biodiversity Group, will hold the first ever '**Clare Biodiversity Seminar**' at Clare Museum on Thursday 26th April 2007. The event will feature discussions on a range of issues from designated sites in Clare, native trees and hedgerows, and Biodiversity at a local and national level.

Newly appointed Clare Biodiversity Officer, John Murphy will open the seminar with an introduction to Biodiversity in the County. Renowned Ecologist, Janice Fuller will address those in attendance about '*Buds of the Banner: A Guide to Growing Native trees and shrubs in Clare*', which was recently published by Clare County Council in conjunction with Rural Resource Development. The Seminar will also feature Lorraine Fitzgerald of the 'Notice Nature' campaign and David Lyons, Acting **District** Conservation Officer (ADCO) and Ranger, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) who will provide a presentation on the various designated biodiversity sites in Clare.

Commenting on the Seminar, John Murphy, Clare Biodiversity Officer stated, "*This Biodiversity event aims to outline the unique combination of wild places, beautiful scenery and all life forms that make Clare a unique county that is enriched with biodiversity.*"

He added, "*Biodiversity provides us with a great variety of products and services. It gives us food, fuel, medicines, building materials and our beautiful countryside, landscapes and ocean. It also helps to purify our air and water, and to stabilise our soil. It provides for tourism and recreational activities, walking, cycling, angling,*

*boating and bird and whale watching. The conservation of biodiversity is life enhancing and is of economic, cultural social and health value.”*

Clare became the first County in Ireland to produce a Local Biodiversity Action Plan when the Clare Biodiversity Action Plan was launched in May 2006. Clare is also the first County to have a local Biological Records Centre and has been acknowledged as the leading example for Biodiversity protection and promotion.

According to Tomás Mac Conmara, Acting Heritage Officer with Clare County Council said, *“The interest in Biodiversity issues has been growing steadily in County Clare over the last number of years. This is particularly evident in the amount of individuals and community groups now actively engaged in its protection and promotion. The seminar provides an opportunity to discuss Biodiversity on a broad level and also to disseminate awareness about issues concerning Biodiversity in the county.”*

The Clare Heritage Office works closely with the Clare Biodiversity Group in directing the Clare Biodiversity Action Plan process in the county. The 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, the Shannon Dolphin and Wildlife Foundation, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Irish Farmers Association, the Forest Service as well as individual experts such as Brendan Dunford from the Burren LIFE project in Carron.

Lorraine Fitzgerald of the ‘Notice Nature’ campaign said that County Clare has provided an example of what other counties should be doing when it comes to the promotion of Biodiversity.

*“We are delighted to be working with the Clare Heritage Office and Clare Biodiversity Group in advancing that awareness”, she concluded.*

For more on the upcoming Seminar, contact Tomás Mac Conmara at 065-6821616 or [tmacconmara@clarecoco.ie](mailto:tmacconmara@clarecoco.ie).