



MEDIA RELEASE

FIRST EVER 'CLARE BIODIVERSITY WEEK' TO FEATURE COUNTYWIDE PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

County Clare, IRELAND, 10th May 2007 - The Clare Heritage Office in association with the Clare Biodiversity Group, has announced details of the inaugural '**Clare Biodiversity Week**' taking place from Sunday 20th May to Saturday 26th May 2007.

The countywide programme of events will celebrate the many aspects of Biodiversity in Clare from family days out in beautiful natural amenities to information and discussions about threats to biodiversity. The Week will also highlight international issues, such as deforestation, extinction, invasive alien species, and climate change.

"The aim of 'Clare Biodiversity Week 2007' is to encourage active learning about Biodiversity through a range of enjoyable events and to increase public understanding that action taken locally has national and global importance. It is also hoped that members of the public can be encouraged to take an interest in helping to conserve Biodiversity for future generations", stated Mr. Tomás Mac Conmara, Acting Heritage Officer, Clare County Council.

He added, *"For a number of years now Clare has been recognised for its leading role in Biodiversity awareness and we are determined that this will be reflected in the level of activity throughout the county during the first ever 'Clare Biodiversity Week'."*

Last year over 1500 people, along with pupils from dozens of Clare schools took part in the third annual '**Clare Biodiversity Day**', which featured a range of activities at

Dromore Wood Nature Reserve. ‘Clare Biodiversity Week 2007’, however, will feature numerous events at locations throughout the county, explained Mr. Mac Conmara.

“In light of the first Biodiversity Week, the Clare Heritage Office made the decision to encourage a more geographical spread of Biodiversity events in the county this year. I would certainly encourage people who have never engaged in a direct way in Biodiversity, as well as enthusiasts, to attend some of the events and find out about the nature in their local areas”, he said.

The Week commences on **Sunday** 20th May with a dawn walk in Clare’s best-known location for Biodiversity – the Burren National Park. Local wildlife experts Austin Cooney and Tom Lynch will lead members of the public from the Grotto at Corofin from 5am to hear a dawn chorus with a difference. Participants of the morning walk can expect to enjoy the sounds of the Whitethroat, Blackcap, Yellowhammer, Cuckoo, along with more common birds.

Also on Sunday, ‘Irish Seed Savers’ will host a biodiversity event at Capparoe, Scariff. The daylong event will feature garden tours of the native heritage orchards, gardens and woodland. Other activities on the day include workshops on native fruit varieties, vegetable seed processing, rare Irish grains, planting organic garden, bee keeping, rare poultry, horse ploughing, cob building, children's activities including nature walks, wildlife drawing and a puppet show. At the same location, meanwhile, Bob Wilson and Stuart McIntyre of the Centre for Environmental Living and Training (CELT) will host a one-day course about coppice craft, native tree & shrub identification, and uses of timber.

On **Monday** 21st May National Parks and Wildlife Service (N.P.W.S.) Ranger, Emma Glanville will host an evening nature walk at Dromore Wood Nature Reserve, near Ruan. On **Tuesday** 22nd May N.P.W.S. Ranger Barry O’ Donoghue will lead a walk along the rugged cliffs at Loop Head. On **Wednesday** 23rd May ‘Irish Seed Savers’ will present an “Introduction to Garden Design” at Scariff for members of the public starting a garden or seeking to get more from their existing garden. Tutors Ian McGrigor and Niamh Ní Dhuill of Kerry Earth Education will explain how to create a plan for an edible sustainable garden, for any situation; rural or urban, school or

community garden. Also on Wednesday, David Lyons and Sinead Biggane of the recently established Clare Bat Group will host a bat walk at Tuamgraney and Raheen Woods.

On **Friday** 25th May the focus of 'Clare Biodiversity Week 2007' move northwards once again to the Burren National Park. Tony Kirby will guide walkers on a trip from Kilnaboy through one of the world's most famous landmarks. The walk will feature commentaries on the archaeology, botany, fauna, geology, agriculture and folklore of the Burren.

The West Clare Wildlife Club will host the final event of the week on **Saturday** 26th May at the restored Vandeleur Gardens in Kilrush. Dr. Simon Berrow of the Clare Biodiversity Group, who is also Project Manager of the Shannon Dolphin and Wildlife Foundation, will present a guided walk in Vandeleur Woods providing information on the resident trees, flowers, birds, butterflies and moths.

Commenting on 'Clare Biodiversity Week 2007', Dr. Berrow said, "*Biodiversity week gives everyone a chance to enjoy and explore the glorious wildlife and wild places of County Clare.*"

"Biodiversity is all living things from the tiniest insect to the mighty oak. It is the variety of life on our planet. Our health, economy and quality of life depend on a healthy environment rich in biodiversity. Here in Clare, its presence is everywhere, in our parks and gardens, by our roadsides, in our rivers and seas and in the spectacular 'living landscapes' we are privileged to enjoy in Clare", he stated.

Dr. Berrow concluded by urging the people of Clare to reserve their places at the various events taking place throughout the County during the Week.

For more information on the 'Clare Biodiversity Week 2007' events contact Tomás Mac Conmara, Acting Heritage Officer, Clare County Council at **tmacconmara@clarecoco.ie** or 065-6846408.

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