

Greenwave

The Greenwave experiment is looking at how Spring moves across Ireland. On a large European scale Spring moves from the South where it gets warm first to the North where it gets warm later. So Spring arrives in Spain and Italy before it arrives in Germany, and then it moves on to Sweden and Finland.

We want to see what will happen in Ireland. The south-west of Ireland - west Cork and Kerry get very few days in winter when there is frost, so we would expect Spring to arrive there first. But how does it move across Ireland? Does it come straight up from south to north? Or might the story be different here because we are an island? The sea keeps coastal areas warmer in winter so the area with the most frost days is the centre of Ireland, which is furthest from the sea. So Spring could come from the edges in.

Landscape

We need lots of accurate measurements from all over the country to see what happens. It will start in the south-west, move up around the coast and then fill in from the edges to the middle. That will be the situation for the trees and flowers. The swallows, on the other hand, arrive here from Africa and should be seen along the south coast first. They should move steadily up over the country as they fly to their nesting sites. Swallows return to the same nesting sites every year. But, of course, there may be some very early swallows who arrive before the main migration and records sent in May show this.

Finally after a few years of records we will be able to compare data from one year to the next and know not only what direction and at what speed Spring moves, but also whether the time of its arrival changes from year to year and if it is getting earlier as global warming takes place.

www.greenwave.ie

Birdwatch Ireland

www.birdwatchireland.ie

Birdlife International

<http://www.birdlife.org/>

World Conservation Union

<http://www.iucn.org/>

African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds

<http://www.unep-aewa.org/>

Spring Alive

<http://www.springalive.net/>

Primary Science

<http://www.primaryscience.ie/>