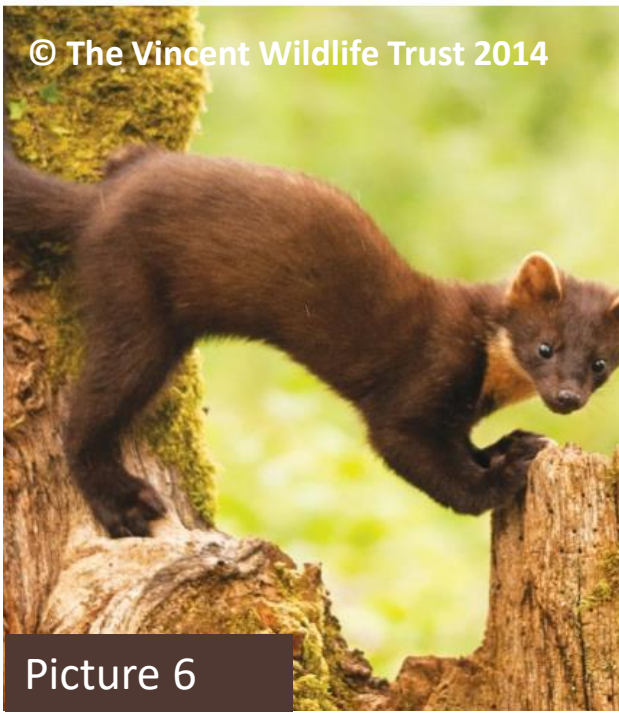
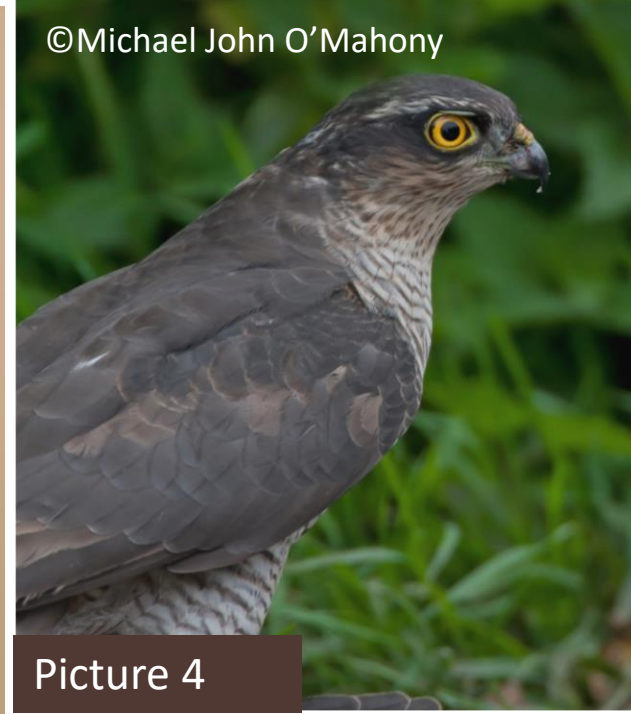




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Picture 3

Picture 4

Can you name these Irish Plants and Animals? Try our interactive quiz on these species [here](#).

• Picture 1

• Picture 2

• Picture 3

• Picture 4

• Picture 5

• Picture 6

Cleavers



Common Name: Cleavers

Irish Name: Garbhlus

Scientific Name: *Galium aparine*

Other Common Names:

Robin-run-the Hedge , Goosegrass and Stickleback

Description

The is a small “annual” plant i.e. a plant that completes its life cycle, from germination to the production of seeds, within one year, and then dies. It flowers from May to September producing tiny white star flowers. Its fruits are small spheres, covered with tiny bristles. Its angular stems also have bristles and can grow up to 1m long. The leaves of this plant are; long and narrow; are found in clusters along the stem; and they have bristles on their underside.

Habitat found

This plant is widespread throughout Ireland. It is usually found in hedgerows, wasteland, crop fields and gardens. The name comes from the fact that it can ‘cleave’ or stick to anything it comes in contact with. This helps to spread the plant far and wide, for example its sticky seeds can attach themselves to animal fur, bird feathers and even our own clothing.



Flower: May – September

Fruit: July– November

The plant continues to grow and produce vegetation through out the Winter. It can grow to over 1m long.

In late Spring to early Summer the plant begins to flower with small white star-shaped flowers.

Life Cycle

Cleavers start their lifecycle in Autumn. It can take 8 weeks for a seed to germinate.

During the Summer as the temperature begins to rise, the plant growth rate accelerates.

From mid-summer flowers turn to fruit, which are little sticky balls. This fruit sticks to animal fur; this helps take the seeds (which are within the fruit) to new locations to grow.



Fun Facts!

- The bristles found all over the plant enable it to attach itself to other plants and to the ground, which helps support it as it grows.
- Cleavers comes from the same family as the coffee plant; some people roast the seeds and use them as a caffeine-free alternative to coffee!

Draw Cleavers fruits getting stuck to an animal:

Cleavers



By **Winter**, the seeds have fallen onto the ground and germinated; new Cleaver plants start to grow.

In **Spring** Cleavers continues to grow close to the ground.

Life Cycle

By **Autumn** the pollinated flowers, will turn into round, furry, green fruit (with seeds inside). Many of these will get stuck onto passing animals' fur and feathers and get carried away.

In early **Summer** the plant begins to produce small white star-shaped flowers. These flowers attract small insect visitors (pollinators) to drink the nectar.

Draw Cleavers leaves and flowers:

Some more images from the Internet...



Daisy



Common Name: Daisy

Irish Name: Nóinín

Scientific Name: *Bellis perennis*

Description

A small plant, that flowers from March to October each year. Its flower has a bright yellow circular centre, with many narrow white petals attached. These petals often have pink/reddish tips. The flower head can reach up to 3cm in diameter. Its stem is long and narrow and can reach up to 10cm. The plant's leaves are all at the base; they are green, hairy and spoon shaped. Daisies are a Perennial plant, meaning they can live for several years.

Habitat found

This lovely little plant is found on all types of grasslands, including garden lawns, golf courses, parks, grazing fields and meadows. The Daisy can be found on all continents except Antarctica. The flowers open up in the morning and attract all types of insects before closing up in the evening when it gets dark.



In **Winter**, if the weather is cold, the Daisy plant will hardly grow at all. But if the weather is mild, you might see a few flowers growing!

In **Spring**, when the days get longer, brighter and milder, Daisy seeds will germinate.

Also in **Spring**, mature Daisy plants will produce buds which grow into flowers.

In **Summer** daisy flowers are visited by insects including flies and bees. While feeding on nectar, the insects accidentally drop pollen from other daisy flowers, and thus pollination occurs.

The pollinated flowers produce seeds. The seeds fall to the ground later in **Summer** and **Autumn**. The seeds will germinate when the weather is mild.

Life Cycle



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Flower: March – October

Fruit: May - November

Fun Facts!

- The name Daisy comes from the old name 'Day's Eye' as the flowers open at first light and closes in the evening.



Daisy

Life Cycle

In cold **Winter** weather the Daisy plant will hardly grow at all.

In **Spring**, Daisy seeds germinate, while mature Daisy plants start to produce buds and flowers

In **Summer** daisy flowers are visited by insects that pollinate the flowers.

The pollinated flowers produce seeds in Summer and **Autumn**. Seeds will germinate if the weather is mild.

Draw a Daisy plant with leaves and flowers:

Some more images from the Internet...



Wren

Common Name: Wren

Irish Name: Dreolín

Scientific Name: *Troglodytes troglodytes*



Description

One of Ireland's smallest birds, the wren has a small rounded body and distinctive cocked tail. It can be a bit secretive, and you often hear it before seeing it. The upper body-parts are reddish-brown; the under-parts are paler. There are faint dark bars on most feathers. There is a white stripe over the eye. The beak is thin and pointy. This bird has a remarkably loud song compared to its size. The song is quite melodic, but contains abrupt clicks or 'checks' within it.

Habitat found

One of Ireland's most widespread birds; it is found in almost all habitats including farmland, woodland, scrub, mountain and even on cliffs and offshore islands.



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Wrens will usually be seen alone, but during **Autumn** and **Winter** they can roost in large numbers; up to 50 birds! This way they can huddle together to stay warm even when the weather is freezing.

In **Spring**, birds find a suitable mate and a good nest site and will start to build their nest.

The nest is usually like a ball of moss with a small entrance to one side. Nests are hidden away in dense cover such as ivy.

Parents will look after their young for just a few weeks after leaving the nest. And then they will go on to have a second family before the end of the summer.

Chicks are fed mainly on insects, and they grow quickly. They are ready to leave the nest after about 2.5 weeks.

In **Summer**, at the start of May the female lays 5-6 eggs. Chicks will hatch after being incubated for about 2.5 weeks.

Life Cycle



Image by NottsExMiner via Flickr.com

Fun Facts!

- This is one of Ireland's smallest birds at just 10cm long from bill tip to tail tip.
- Most wrens weigh about 10g ...that's the same weight as having a 50c coin plus a 1c coin in your hand!

Seen in Ireland: All year round.
Common throughout Ireland.



Wren

Draw wrens roosting together on a cold night in Winter:

In **Winter**, wrens feed on their own, but will often meet up with others when it's time for sleep, so they can huddle in a group overnight, and keep each other warm.

In **Spring** wrens find a partner. They build a nest and lay their first clutch of eggs. The chicks hatch and parents look after them for a few weeks.

By **Autumn** the chicks grow strong, and they leave their parents. Most wrens will spend the Autumn feeding alone.

In **Summer**, the adult wrens lay another clutch of eggs. The chicks hatch and parents look after this second family for a few weeks.

Life Cycle

Can you draw a wren's nest (it is usually a ball of moss, with a small hole in the side):

Some more images from the Internet...

3C3



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Sparrowhawk

Common Name: Sparrowhawk

Irish Name: Spioróg

Scientific Name: *Accipiter nisus*



Description

It is a small bird-of-prey, with broad wings and a long tail; these features are useful for fast flight and for changing direction, respectively. Its beak is small and hooked; great for tearing meat. Overall they have a grey-brown appearance. The tail, under-wings and belly all have barring or bands of dark feathers. The male birds are blue-grey above with orange-brown bars under the body. The females are grey above, with grey-brown barring underneath. Young birds have dark brown on the upperparts with a more irregular barring pattern than adults.

Habitat found

Sparrowhawks can be seen in woodlands and in gardens, especially ones with a bit of tree cover, where they hunt small birds. They are not easy to spot, as they are usually well camouflaged sitting high up in the trees.

Female



©Michael John O'Mahony

Male



©Michael John O'Mahony

Life Cycle

During Autumn and Winter Sparrowhawks tend to hunt and roost alone.

In early Spring, male Sparrowhawks declare their ownership of territories by doing big tumbling 'display flights' to attract a female.

Once the males have attracted a partner, the pair will build a nest; this is usually in a tree in a woodland.

By May (Summer), the female will lay 4-5 eggs in the nest.

Eggs are incubated by the female for about 33 days. The male goes hunting for food for her, so she never has to leave the nest.

When the chicks leave the nest at first, their parents will continue to help them get food for up to about a month.

Once the chicks hatch, they then spend a further month in the nest, getting strong and growing feathers. The male will collect most of the food for the whole family.

Fun Facts!

- Average wingspan = 33cm; and average length = 62cm
- Females are up to 25% larger than males
- Some Sparrowhawks have been known to catch and eat bats!

Seen in Ireland: Year round



Sparrowhawk

Life Cycle

During **Autumn** and **Winter** Sparrowhawks tend to hunt and roost alone.

In **Spring** a pair of Sparrowhawks will build a nest, usually in a tree in a woodland.

By May (**Summer**), the female will lay eggs, and incubate them. The Male will collect food for her.

The chicks hatch. The female stays with the young chicks. The male collects food for the whole family. After a month the chicks are strong and develop feathers, and they learn to fly.

When the chicks leave the nest at first, their parents will continue to help them get food for up to about a month.

Draw a scene at a Sparrowhawk's nest:

Some more images from the Internet...



The 7-Spot Ladybird

Common Name: The 7-Spot Ladybird

Irish Name: Bóin Dé

Scientific Name: *Coccinella 7-punctata*



Description

A ladybird is a beetle with hard forewings (elytra) which cover much of the body, and the soft hind-wings, which are used in flight. Ladybirds have biting mouth-parts. Around 20 species of ladybird have been found in Ireland. They all have bright colours e.g. yellow, orange, red and black patterned elytra. The 7-Spot Ladybird has 7 black spots on shiny red wings.

Habitat found

Some ladybirds, like the 7-Spot Ladybird are generalists and can be found in a wide range of habitats and hedgerows, trees and grasslands. They can also be found along waterways in reed beds and wetlands. Other species are more specialist, eating very specific food. In gardens, fields, lawns, hedges and parklands most 7-Spot Ladybirds eat aphids (plant lice).



Adult ladybirds hibernate for the **Winter**. They often hibernate in really large groups.

Ladybirds come out of hibernation and get active looking for food in **Spring**.

The mature larvae pupate (this is equivalent to a caterpillar entering a cocoon). They will emerge as an adult ladybird in early **Autumn**.

In late Spring adult ladybirds mate and the females lay their eggs.

Life Cycle

The larvae reach maturity within a month, during which time, they will have moulted* 3 times

In early **Summer**, once the weather is warm, the eggs will hatch within just a few days. The larvae then feed on aphids.

Fun Facts !

- ❖ "Bóin Dé" means Little Cow of God!
- ❖ Ladybirds eat pest insects, such as aphids (plant lice). Gardeners and farmers love them, as they are a natural pest control for their fruit, vegetable and other crops.
- ❖ If attacked a ladybird will release a yellowy poison from its 'knees' (leg joints). Not only does this taste bad to birds and other animals, it also makes them feel very sick.
- ❖ Why aren't ladybirds camouflaged for safety? The bright colours of many ladybirds actually keeps them safe, as it warns predators that they taste bad, and are poisonous.



Seen in Ireland:

Seen mostly **Spring** to **Autumn**. But you may see some hibernating in Winter too, in a shed, or under wood. Overall they are **widespread** and **common**.

* 'moulting' means they shed their tight old skin, and grow a new bigger, looser one; just like us getting new clothes when we grow too big for our old ones.



7-Spot Ladybird

Draw a 7-Spot Ladybird:

Life Cycle

In **Autumn** the adult Ladybirds come out of the cocoons

Adult ladybirds hibernate for the **Winter**.

Ladybirds come out of hibernation in **Spring** and look for food

In late Spring adult ladybirds mate and the females lay their eggs on plants.

In early **Summer**, the eggs hatch and the larvae feed on aphids.

The larvae grow fast, moult 3 times, and then build themselves a cocoon.

Draw a 7-Spot Ladybird **Larva**:

Some more images from the Internet...

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Pine Marten

Common Name: Pine Marten

Irish Name: Cat crainn

Scientific Name: *Martes martes*



Description

Pine Martens are the same size as a domestic cat and can measure up to 60cm long. They are related to the Badger, Otter and Stoat. Their coat is brown with a pale colour over the throat and chest. In summer the coat becomes dark brown and in winter it becomes brighter and longer. They have a long bushy tail, and large feet and ears.

Habitat found

Pine Martens are mostly found in western counties and the midlands. They spend most of their time in trees, in deciduous and coniferous forests. They are nocturnal animals meaning they only come out at night, although they can sometimes be seen during the day. When breeding they find a den for protection, these are usually found in old buildings, log piles, burrows, holes in trees or under rocks. Pine Martens are omnivorous, which means they eat feed on a variety of food and include plants and animals in their diet, such as: berries, fruits, small mammals, invertebrates, birds, birds' eggs and frogs.



Most adult Pine Martens spend the **Winter** alone. (Although as already mentioned, many mothers will be accompanied by their kits, just for their first year.)

In **Spring** pregnant Pine Martens give birth to their young. The babies are called "kits" and they are usually born as twins or triplets.

The kits live in a den for up to 6 weeks, while the mother provides them with food. (Also in early **Summer**, adult Pine Martens will breed)

Kits stay with their mother through **Autumn**. Some will then leave at 6 months old, but others prefer to stay longer; some don't leave until they are 16 months old!

After this time the juveniles move on to find their own territory.

Life Cycle



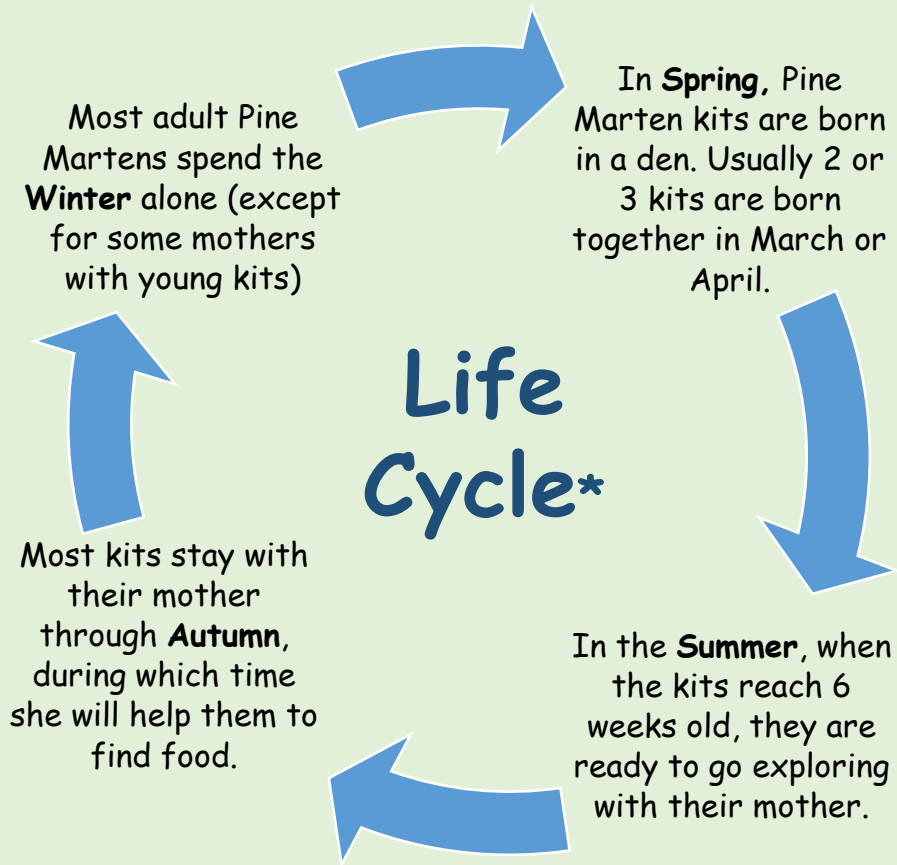
Fun Facts!

- Its Irish name 'Cat Crainn' comes from the fact it is the same size as a cat and lives in trees.
- It is Ireland's rarest native mammal species, with only 2,700 individuals recorded.
- Pine Martens breed just once a year.
- They can live up to 10 years, but usually only live up to 5 years in the wild.

Seen in Ireland: All year round – Nocturnal animal

Present in Ireland: Year-round mostly in the west and mid-lands

Pine Marten



Draw a Female Pine Marten with kits
OR Draw a Male Pine Marten hunting on his own

*What about the Daddies?!

Male Pine Martens live alone almost all year around. They hunt alone, and sleep alone in 'refuges'. Refuges are small shelters that they use; they are usually found a few metres off the ground, in trees in the forest. Adult males will spend only a short time with females in the summer, in order to breed.

Some more images from the Internet...

