



Comhairle Contae  
Fhine Gall  
Fingal County  
Council



# FINGAL BIODIVERSITY



April - June 2024  
Events Programme



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  - 10 **Pond Dipping** with **Rob Gandola** (Herpetological Society of Ireland) **FREE**
  - 11 **Family Den Building Challenge** with **OWLS** **FREE**
  - 11 **Pond Dipping** with **Rob Gandola** (Herpetological Society of Ireland) **FREE**
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  - 13 **Goat Grazing Project Howth** with **Melissa Jeuken** **FREE**



## INTRODUCTION

*Welcome to the Fingal Biodiversity Events programme for April - June 2024.*

We have a wide range of walks, talks and webinars throughout the county on offer, particularly during Biodiversity Week in May.

This year's programme begins on the 24th April with a webinar on the woodland management plan for the woodlands at St. Catherine's Park in Lucan, where Faith Wilson will talk about upcoming woodland management measures to protect one of the oldest woodlands in Dublin. We will also have webinars coming up on the restoration of the Ward river in Swords and the very successful Goat grazing project on Howth.

If you like being active, why not join us for a kayaking excursion on the Royal Canal with Kayaking.ie or go on a Safari in Howth with Shanes Howth Adventures? If you want to learn more about nature in your area, why not join one of the bird walks under the expert guidance of Birdwatch Ireland, go whale watching or frog hunting in Howth, search for plants and wildlife in St. Catherine's Park or go and see the Dublin Bay Biosphere by boat.

And finally, we have outings for the little ones too, where OWLS is organising a series of family outings in the Turvey Nature Park in Donabate.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our outings! If you have any suggestions and ideas for walks, talks or events, please get in contact with us on [biodiversity@fingal.ie](mailto:biodiversity@fingal.ie).

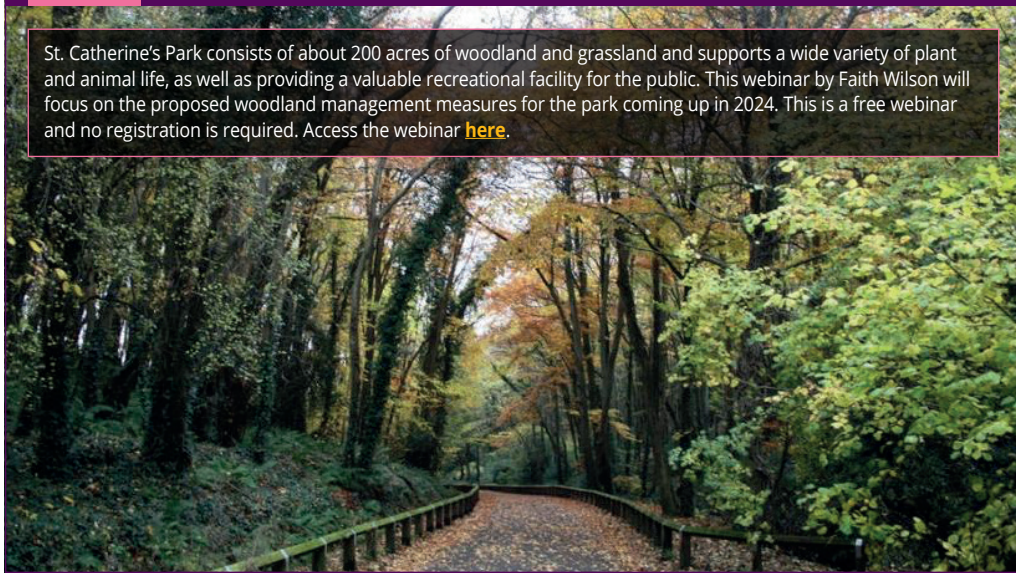


## EVENT TIMETABLE

| EVENT   | DATE             | LOCATION                    | TIME                                  |
|---|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>APRIL</b>                                      |                  |                             |                                       |
| Woodland Management Plan for St. Catherine's Park | 24 <sup>th</sup> | Online Webinar              | 1:00pm - 2:00pm                       |
| Royal Canal Kayaking Tour                         | 27 <sup>th</sup> | Leixlip, Co. Kildare        | 2:00pm - 4:40pm                       |
| Pond Dipping for Families                         | 28 <sup>th</sup> | Turvey Nature Reserve       | 1:30pm - 3:00pm                       |
| <b>MAY</b>  |                  |                             |                                       |
| Guided Walk with Dr. Frank Prendergast            | 1 <sup>st</sup>  | Turvey Nature Reserve       | 10:00am - 12:00pm                     |
| Dusk Chorus Walk                                  | 7 <sup>th</sup>  | Ardgillan Castle Demesne    | 7:00pm - 9:00pm                       |
| Guided Trip to Ireland's Eye                      | 11 <sup>th</sup> | Howth Harbour               | 11:00am - 12:00pm                     |
| Rock Pooling for Families                         | 11 <sup>th</sup> | Tower Bay Beach, Portrane   | 10:00am - 11:30am                     |
| Dawn Chorus Walk                                  | 12 <sup>th</sup> | Turvey Nature Reserve       | 7:00am - 9:00am                       |
| Hedge Walk  | 17 <sup>th</sup> | Skerries Mills              | 7:00pm - 8:30pm                       |
| Woodland Walk                                     | 18 <sup>th</sup> | St. Catherine's Park, Lucan | 11:00am - 1:00pm                      |
| Whale Watch Ireland 2024                          | 18 <sup>th</sup> | Howth Head                  | 5:00pm - 7:00pm                       |
| Meet the Goats                                    | 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Howth                       | 11:00am - 1:00pm,<br>2:00pm - 4:00pm  |
| Ward River Enhancements                           | 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Online Webinar              | 1:00pm - 2:00pm                       |
| Howth Safari                                      | 23 <sup>rd</sup> | Howth                       | 11:00am - 3:00pm                      |
| Pond Dipping                                      | 25 <sup>th</sup> | St. Ita's Demesne, Portrane | 10:00am - 4:00pm<br>(1-hour sessions) |
| Family Den Building Challenge                     | 25 <sup>th</sup> | Turvey Nature Reserve       | 10:00am - 12:00pm                     |
| <b>JUNE</b>                                       |                  |                             |                                       |
| Pond Dipping                                      | 9 <sup>th</sup>  | Bog of Frogs Loop, Howth    | 10:00am - 4:00pm<br>(1-hour sessions) |
| Beginners' Sea Snorkelling                        | 20 <sup>th</sup> | Balscadden Bay Beach, Howth | 7:00pm - 9:00pm                       |
| Teddy Bears' Picnic for Tots                      | 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Turvey Nature Reserve       | 10:00am - 11:30am                     |
| Learn About Butterflies                           | 23 <sup>rd</sup> | Newbridge Demesne           | 10:00am - 2:00pm                      |
| Goat Grazing Project Howth                        | 26 <sup>th</sup> | Online Webinar              | 7:00pm - 8:00pm                       |

**24**  
APRIL**WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR  
ST. CATHERINE'S PARK** with **FAITH WILSON***1:00pm - 2:00pm - Online Webinar*

St. Catherine's Park consists of about 200 acres of woodland and grassland and supports a wide variety of plant and animal life, as well as providing a valuable recreational facility for the public. This webinar by Faith Wilson will focus on the proposed woodland management measures for the park coming up in 2024. This is a free webinar and no registration is required. Access the webinar [here](#).

**27**  
APRIL**ROYAL CANAL KAYAKING** with  
**JENNY KILBRIDE** ([kayaking.ie](http://kayaking.ie))*2:00pm - 4:30pm at Leixlip, Co. Kildare*

Experience this tranquil and breathtaking oasis of nature by kayak, only a stone's throw from Dublin, along the Royal Canal Blueway. This guided tour is a relaxing and gentle kayak excursion on very calm water through the historic section of canal just outside Leixlip, Confey. Tours leave from the Royal Canal Amenity Group Centre in Leixlip, Co. Kildare. This is a beginner's event, but attendees must be comfortable on the water and able to paddle their own kayaks. This is an outdoor event; there may be strong sunlight or rain (or both). No children under 14 permitted. All equipment provided.



Meet at the Royal Canal Amenity Group, R149, Confey, Leixlip, Co. Kildare. **BOOKING REQUIRED:** Register at <https://kayaking.ie/royal-canal-kayaking-dublin/> using the code **FINGALCOCO** for €35 off of the regular price.



**28**  
APRIL

## POND DIPPING FOR FAMILIES with OWLS

*1:30pm - 3:00pm at Turvey Nature Reserve*

Come along to this hands-on family event as we attempt to discover life in the ponds. Water scorpions, frog tadpoles, newt tadpoles, water boatmen, pond skaters - names you may never have heard of, but they live deep below the water surface. A nature awareness event for families with small children. As this is an outdoor event, make sure that anyone attending is dressed in warm, comfortable clothes and sturdy shoes.

Meet at the top of the main car park of Turvey Nature Reserve. This event is free but requires registration. Please contact [info@owls.ie](mailto:info@owls.ie) using the headline 'Public Event Booking' with the event(s) you wish to join, your family name and how many people will be attending.



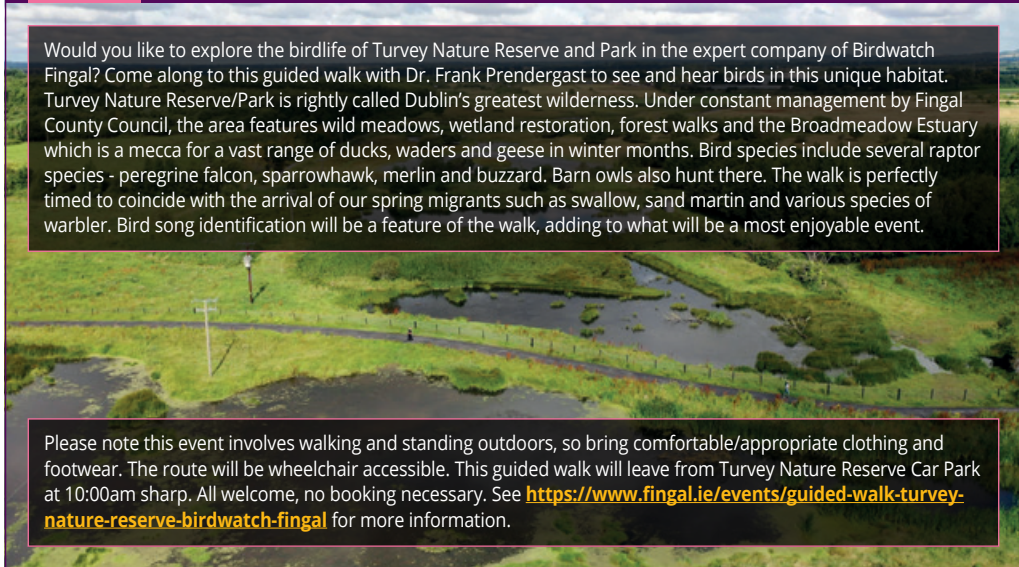
**1**  
MAY

## GUIDED WALK OF TURVEY NATURE RESERVE with DR. FRANK PRENDERGAST (BirdWatch Fingal)

*10:00am - 12:00pm at Turvey Nature Reserve*

Would you like to explore the birdlife of Turvey Nature Reserve and Park in the expert company of Birdwatch Fingal? Come along to this guided walk with Dr. Frank Prendergast to see and hear birds in this unique habitat. Turvey Nature Reserve/Park is rightly called Dublin's greatest wilderness. Under constant management by Fingal County Council, the area features wild meadows, wetland restoration, forest walks and the Broadmeadow Estuary which is a mecca for a vast range of ducks, waders and geese in winter months. Bird species include several raptor species - peregrine falcon, sparrowhawk, merlin and buzzard. Barn owls also hunt there. The walk is perfectly timed to coincide with the arrival of our spring migrants such as swallow, sand martin and various species of warbler. Bird song identification will be a feature of the walk, adding to what will be a most enjoyable event.

Please note this event involves walking and standing outdoors, so bring comfortable/appropriate clothing and footwear. The route will be wheelchair accessible. This guided walk will leave from Turvey Nature Reserve Car Park at 10:00am sharp. All welcome, no booking necessary. See <https://www.fingal.ie/events/guided-walk-turvey-nature-reserve-birdwatch-fingal> for more information.

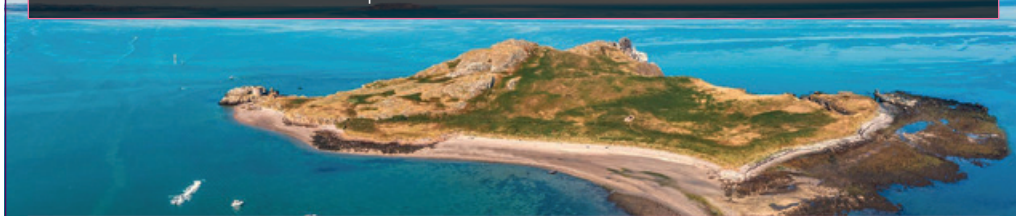


7  
MAY**DUSK CHORUS WALK** with  
**BIRDWATCH IRELAND***7:00pm at Ardgillan Castle Demesne*

Join our Dublin Fingal branch for a wonderful evening experiencing the sights and sounds on a Dusk walk. All welcome, no booking necessary. For more information, see <https://birdwatchireland.ie/event/dusk-chorus-3/>.

11  
MAY**GUIDED TRIP TO IRELAND'S EYE**  
with **HOWTH CLIFF CRUISES***11:00am at Howth Harbour*

This tour explores the treasures of Ireland's Eye, Howth Harbour and Balscadden Bay. Take a trip around Ireland's Eye, taking in spectacular views of the island, the Martello Tower, and the colony of seals and birds which inhabit the area. The tour offers an exclusive opportunity to land on the island (weather permitting), which is a Nature Reserve and a sanctuary for wildlife in the Dublin Bay Biosphere. Commentary on the history, wildlife and the famous Kirwan murder on the island is provided.



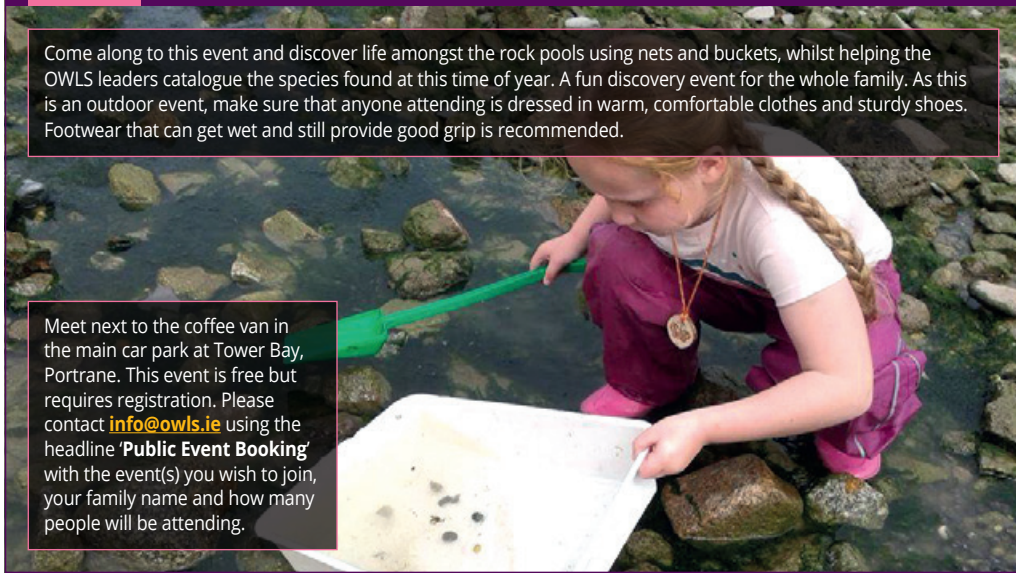
Meet at the Howth Harbour West Pier (D13 H2V4). Please dress appropriately for the weather and wear sturdy, comfortable shoes suitable for walking, light climbing and slippery rocks on the island. Dogs are allowed on the cruise but must be kept on a lead and are legally prohibited on the island itself. The boat and island are not accessible for wheelchair users. **BOOKING REQUIRED:** Register at <https://howthcliffcruises.ie/irelands-eye-tour/> for the FINGAL FERRY on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May at 11:00am and enter the code **FINGAL** in the Promo Code box on the right for 50% off of the regular price.



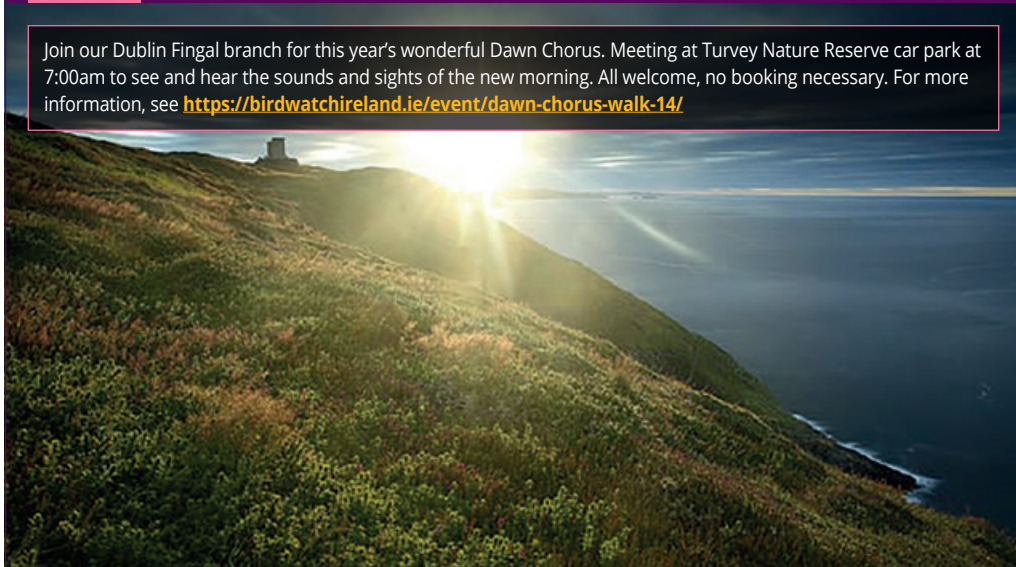
**11**  
MAY**ROCK POOLING FOR FAMILIES**  
with **OWLS***10:00am - 11:30am at Tower Bay Beach, Portrane*

Come along to this event and discover life amongst the rock pools using nets and buckets, whilst helping the OWLS leaders catalogue the species found at this time of year. A fun discovery event for the whole family. As this is an outdoor event, make sure that anyone attending is dressed in warm, comfortable clothes and sturdy shoes. Footwear that can get wet and still provide good grip is recommended.

Meet next to the coffee van in the main car park at Tower Bay, Portrane. This event is free but requires registration. Please contact [info@owls.ie](mailto:info@owls.ie) using the headline 'Public Event Booking' with the event(s) you wish to join, your family name and how many people will be attending.

**12**  
MAY**DAWN CHORUS WALK** with  
**BIRDWATCH IRELAND***7:00am at Turvey Nature Reserve*

Join our Dublin Fingal branch for this year's wonderful Dawn Chorus. Meeting at Turvey Nature Reserve car park at 7:00am to see and hear the sounds and sights of the new morning. All welcome, no booking necessary. For more information, see <https://birdwatchireland.ie/event/dawn-chorus-walk-14/>





**17  
MAY****HEDGE WALK with MARK McDOWELL**  
(Hedgerows Ireland)*7:00am - 8:30pm at Skerries*

Celebrate Biodiversity Week at a Hedge Walk in Co. Dublin. Join hedgerow expert Mark McDowell in exploring the plants and animals of hedgerows, how they protect our land from drought and flooding, and best practices for nature-friendly hedgerow management. Please note that the walk will be on uneven grassy terrain, so comfortable shoes and clothes are essential. Children are welcome if accompanied by a parent/guardian. Please note in the message section how many accompanying children/adults will attend.

Meet at Skerries Mills Car Park, Skerries, Co. Dublin. Sign up at <https://hedgerows.ie/skerries-hedge-walk-17th-may/> or contact [info@hedgerows.ie](mailto:info@hedgerows.ie) with any queries regarding access needs.

**18  
MAY****WOODLAND WALK with  
FAITH WILSON***11:00am - 1:00pm at St. Catherine's Park*

Join ecologist Faith Wilson on a guided walk around St. Catherine's Park. The park consists of about 200 acres of woodland and grassland. Plant enthusiasts may get a chance to see yellow archangel, wood anemone, hairy St. John's wort and toothwort. The woodlands support a diversity of trees, including ash, beech, horse chestnut, sycamore, hazel, holly and yew. You may also spot birds like treecreepers, siskins, blackcaps and jays among the trees.

All welcome, no booking necessary. The group will meet at the car park next to the ranger base and public toilets <https://maps.app.goo.gl/WHx7aF5ZKuZrdmAUA>. Please note that this event involves walking and standing outdoors, so bring comfortable and appropriate clothing and footwear.



**18  
MAY****WHALE WATCH IRELAND 2024 with  
IRISH WHALE AND DOLPHIN GROUP***5:00pm - 7:00pm at Howth Head*

This annual event, now in its 22<sup>nd</sup> year, comprises free and guided whale watches at local headlands and vantage points, as part of All-Ireland whale watch day. These simultaneous land-based watches at 11 sites around the Irish coast provide IWDG researchers, whale enthusiasts and Citizen Scientists alike with a unique overview of whale and dolphin activity on the day and you can play an important part. While there are no guarantees of sightings, given reasonable weather you have a good chance of seeing some of the marine species that can be viewed locally.

This event is suitable for all ages and is aimed at everyone from the novice wildlife enthusiast to the experienced naturalist. We advise participants to dress appropriately for the weather conditions on the day. There may be a short, elevated walk from the meeting point to your watch site, so sensible footwear is recommended, and your local watch may not be wheelchair accessible. You should bring binoculars, your sense of humour and refreshments, but please leave your pets at home.

**WHALE  
WATCH**  
Ireland 2024

The group will meet at Balscadden car park. This event is free and no registration is required. In the event of unsuitable weather your watch leader may need to cancel your local event at short notice; so, if any doubt, please check in with them using the contact details below or on [www.iwdg.ie/events](http://www.iwdg.ie/events).

Contact Ronan Hickey at [ronan.hici@gmail.com](mailto:ronan.hici@gmail.com) or 086 339 1142 for more information.



22  
MAY**MEET THE GOATS** with  
**MELISSA JEUKEN***11:00am - 1:00pm at Howth*

Come meet the firefighting goats of Howth Head and their goatherd, Melissa Jeuken. The goats graze the wildfire breaks and reduce the cover of gorse and brambles, offering a more sustainable solution to managing the landscape which also benefits local biodiversity. The animal stars of the Howth Conservation Grazing project hail from Co. Mayo and belong to the heritage Old Irish Goat breed, recognised as an Irish Native Rare Breed in 2022. Serving a dual role in fire prevention and breed preservation as part of the Old Irish Goat Breeding Programme, the herd has produced the first Old Irish Goats to be born in Dublin in over 70 years.



Two sessions on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2024: 11:00am - 1:00pm and at 2:00pm - 4:00pm. Please only register for one session. The meeting point for the event will be at the entrance to the Red Rock Lands off Strand Road, Google Map Coordinates: 53.372927, -6.097518. If you're driving to the event the closest area to park is along Strand Road and Shielmartin Park Road. This is an outdoor event on uneven terrain, so it is not suitable for people with limited mobility. Please wear sensible, sturdy shoes (such as hiking boots) and dress appropriately for the weather (rain or shine) and coastal winds. Any children must be accompanied and supervised by an adult. No dogs, including guide dogs, are permitted due to the presence of livestock. This is a free event. **BOOKING REQUIRED:** Please register by email to [biodiversity@fingal.ie](mailto:biodiversity@fingal.ie).

22  
MAY**WARD RIVER ENHANCEMENTS**  
with **ALAN SULLIVAN***1:00pm - 2:00pm - Online Webinar*

Join Alan Sullivan of Rivus Ltd. for a webinar on the wildlife of the Ward River in Swords and some of the river restoration projects proposed for the Ward in 2024. This is a free lecture. Access the webinar [here](#).



**23**  
**MAY**

## HOWTH SAFARI with SHANE'S HOWTH ADVENTURES

*11:00am - 3:00pm at Howth*



Take a day trip to Howth and explore the south facing cliffs on a guided hike in spectacular areas of natural beauty. Hike across heathlands and blankets of wildflowers to the cliffs overlooking Dublin Bay, follow quiet coastal trails to secret beaches and hidden coves and discover the famous Martello Towers and Baily Lighthouse. Finally, ascend the cliff path to the Summit with its panoramic views before heading back down to the village. Be ready for 10km to 15km (6 to 9 miles) in about 4 hours. We recommend cross trainers, boots or stout shoes and light weight long trousers to avoid nettle stings. Light waterproof, gloves, scarf and hat in a backpack may also be useful, depending on the weather. Bring along water and a snack to enjoy en route.



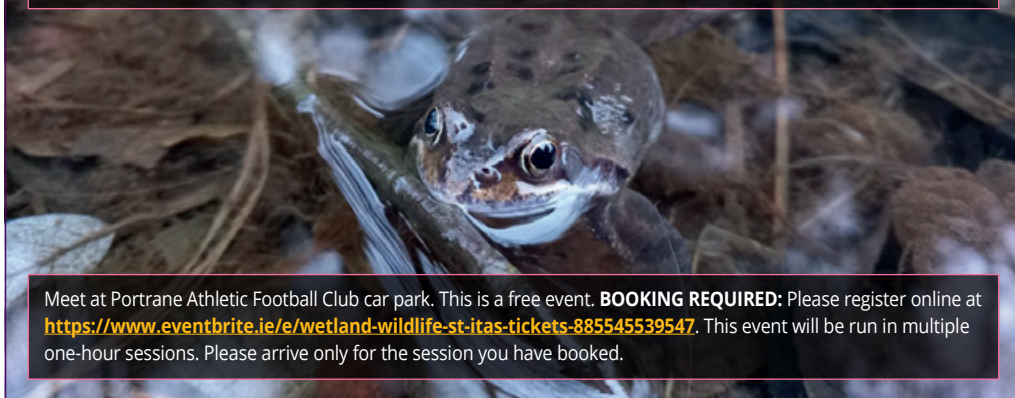
Meet outside Bodega, Howth Market at 11:00am. **BOOKING REQUIRED:**  
Reserve places online at <https://www.shaneshowthadventures.com/>.

**25**  
**MAY**

## POND DIPPING with **ROB GANDOLA** (Herpetological Society of Ireland)

*10:00am - 4:00pm at St. Ita's Hospital, Portrane*

A chance to look below the surface at the secret life of ponds. Most people are completely unaware of the many insects and amphibians that feed, breed and live in these environments. Join Rob Gandola on a guided walk to see and learn about what lurks in our freshwater ponds. As this is an outdoor event, make sure that anyone attending is dressed in warm, comfortable clothes and sturdy shoes. Footwear suitable for boggy conditions is ideal. The ground may be uneven and difficult for those with limited mobility.



Meet at Portrane Athletic Football Club car park. This is a free event. **BOOKING REQUIRED:** Please register online at <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/wetland-wildlife-st-itas-tickets-885545539547>. This event will be run in multiple one-hour sessions. Please arrive only for the session you have booked.



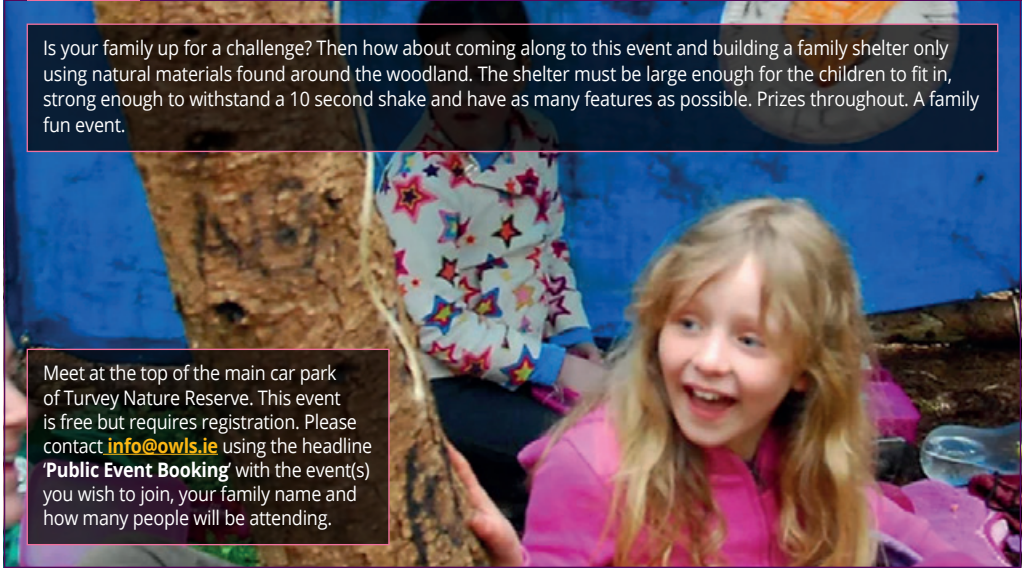
**25**  
MAY

## FAMILY DEN BUILDING CHALLENGE with OWLS

*10:00am - 12:00pm at Turvey Nature Reserve*

Is your family up for a challenge? Then how about coming along to this event and building a family shelter only using natural materials found around the woodland. The shelter must be large enough for the children to fit in, strong enough to withstand a 10 second shake and have as many features as possible. Prizes throughout. A family fun event.

Meet at the top of the main car park of Turvey Nature Reserve. This event is free but requires registration. Please contact [info@owls.ie](mailto:info@owls.ie) using the headline 'Public Event Booking' with the event(s) you wish to join, your family name and how many people will be attending.



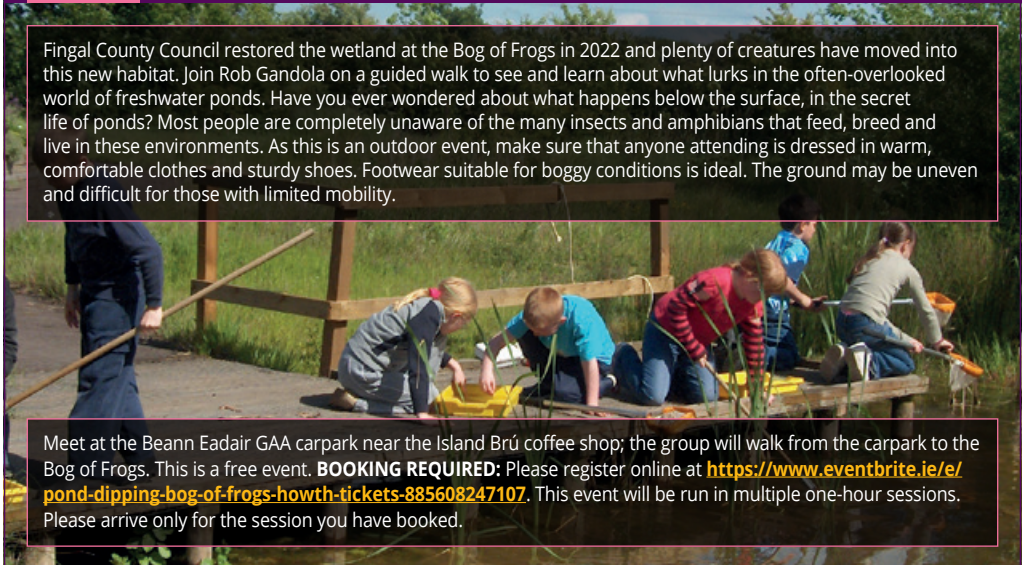
**9**  
JUNE

## POND DIPPING with ROB GANDOLA (Herpetological Society of Ireland)

*10:00am - 4:00pm at Howth*



Fingal County Council restored the wetland at the Bog of Frogs in 2022 and plenty of creatures have moved into this new habitat. Join Rob Gandola on a guided walk to see and learn about what lurks in the often-overlooked world of freshwater ponds. Have you ever wondered about what happens below the surface, in the secret life of ponds? Most people are completely unaware of the many insects and amphibians that feed, breed and live in these environments. As this is an outdoor event, make sure that anyone attending is dressed in warm, comfortable clothes and sturdy shoes. Footwear suitable for boggy conditions is ideal. The ground may be uneven and difficult for those with limited mobility.



Meet at the Beann Eadair GAA carpark near the Island Brú coffee shop; the group will walk from the carpark to the Bog of Frogs. This is a free event. **BOOKING REQUIRED:** Please register online at <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/pond-dipping-bog-of-frogs-howth-tickets-885608247107>. This event will be run in multiple one-hour sessions. Please arrive only for the session you have booked.

20  
JUNE**BEGINNERS' SEA SNORKELLING** with  
**PORTMARNOCK SUB-AQUA CLUB***7:00pm at Balscadden Beach, Howth*

Curious about sub-aquatic sports, but not sure where to begin? This event presents an opportunity to try snorkelling in an actual outdoors environment, with the safety and guidance provided by an instructor. See below the waves and experience greater freedom to move and explore than regular sea swimming. Following basic instruction in breathing, diving and swimming techniques, go below and take a closer look at the local sea life: seaweed, fish, crabs and maybe even seals. Suitable for complete beginners with no experience. Must be comfortable in the water, able to swim and over 18. Masks, snorkels and swim fins provided; participants must bring their own swimsuit or wetsuit. Refreshments will be available after the snorkelling session. **BOOKING REQUIRED:** Email [psacmembership@gmail.com](mailto:psacmembership@gmail.com) to register.

22  
JUNE**TEDDY BEARS' PICNIC FOR TOTS**  
with **OWLS***10:00am - 11:30am at Turvey Nature Reserve*

For the younger members of the family. Bring along your teddy bear and join the OWLS leaders as we discover the animals in the park through tracks and trails. Once we've hopefully seen Mr Fox, Mrs Rabbit and Grandad OWL, we'll find a nice spot to sit and listen to the story of the Stickman. Finishing off with making your own stickman to take home. A fun nature walk for families with children under 6. As this is an outdoor event, make sure that anyone attending is dressed in warm, comfortable clothes and sturdy shoes.

Meet at the top of the main car park of Turvey Nature Reserve. This event is free but requires registration. Please contact [info@owls.ie](mailto:info@owls.ie) using the headline 'Public Event Booking' with the event(s) you wish to join, your family name and how many people will be attending.





**23**  
JUNE**LEARN ABOUT BUTTERFLIES** with **JESMOND HARDING** (Butterfly Conservation Ireland)*10:00am - 2:00pm at Newbridge Demesne*

Jesmond Harding, Ireland's leading butterfly expert, will present an illustrated talk on Ireland's butterflies in Newbridge Farm followed by a walk through the demesne to search for butterflies. Butterflies and moths make up about 9-10% of all life found on the planet. Learn how butterflies develop, why butterflies matter, how to identify Ireland's butterflies, the habitats they need and how you can attract butterflies to your garden. The park has some good habitats for butterflies and weather and season permitting, we should be able to find and identify the area's butterflies. The event is suitable for people of all ages. The walk is mainly through grassland and does not involve strenuous activity.

Jesmond will have copies of his book on Ireland's butterflies available at a reduced price. This is a free event. **BOOKING REQUIRED:** Please contact Jesmond Harding by email at [jesmondmharding@gmail.com](mailto:jesmondmharding@gmail.com) to register.

**26**  
JUNE**GOAT GRAZING PROJECT HOWTH** with **MELISSA JEUKEN***7:00pm - 8:00pm - Online Webinar*

Learn about Melissa Jeuken's experiences as the goatherd for the Howth Conservation Grazing Project with indigenous Old Irish Goats, as well as her other work with the breed. This is a free webinar. Access the webinar [here](#).



**Comhairle Contae  
Fhine Gall**  
Fingal County  
Council



Fingal County Council,  
County Hall,  
Swords,  
Co. Dublin  
K67 X8Y2