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IRD Duhallow's Raptor LIFE Project
Supported by the LIFE Financial Instrument of the European Community
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Restoration of riverbanks

Early winter is always a busy time for RaptorLIFE's crew. This winter, despite the difficult weather conditions, the crew has revegetated many riverbanks with willow. This task is necessary to strengthen the banks as many of them are in poor condition due to overgrazing and poaching by cattle. Collapsing banks are source of fine sediment, which has disastrous effect on many in-stream animals. Restoration of riparian vegetation also provides a buffer between the river and adjacent agricultural environments. When revegetating riverbanks, excessive shading of the stream must be avoided. Light is essential in maintaining river productivity and determines the health and abundance of food at the bottom of the food chain. Aquatic plants and tiny creatures such as diatoms and plankton are essential components of the food web, providing a source of energy for invertebrates and predators such as salmon and trout. The amount of available sunshine also determines the rate at which pollutants are broken down! It is important to remember that only eroding sections of the rivers need to be re-vegetated. It is beneficial to use native trees and shrubs that are growing nearby rather than plants of foreign origin. Planted trees should be also given some protection and/or sufficient time to grow otherwise livestock will eat them. The riverside fields where our crew have completed bank restoration works will soon contain well-developed margins bringing multiple benefits to nature and us all.

Hunting corridor for Hen harrier - The creation of hunting corridor for Hen harriers along the Upper Blackwater is one of the biggest endeavours undertaken by RaptorLife. The last remaining blocks of conifers are now being removed and shortly our crew will be able to commence remediation works. Clear-felled sections of conifer monocultures are often biological deserts, with very little wildlife other than a few species of moss. It has been many decades since the area was first afforested, thus, seed banks deposited by native plants are often no longer viable. Natural regeneration of flora has to occur through seed dispersal from neighbour ring areas which is a slow process and recreation of the original habitat in this way can take several decades. Clear-felled sites are thus excellent candidates for habitat restoration work, with the aim to speed up recovery of wildlife on degraded sites. The area of corridor, similarly to its surrounding, would have once been rich in heather. Therefore, heather should be the first and main component of flora reintroduced here. The rehabilitation works started with harvesting of heather capsules from nearby sites in the early winter. The seeds were then generously scattered over a clear-felled area. Semi-permanent monitoring plots established on the ground will help RaptorLife scientists to monitor the effects of this action. It was critical to complete all work in this sensitive area in the winter, when hen harriers are away from their breeding grounds. Some of the area will also see addition of native trees including alder, willow and mountain ash. In time, they will provide shelter and foraging grounds for small birds – most favoured by the hen harriers of Duhallow.

Winter roost monitoring

Hen harrier winter roost monitoring recommenced in September. After a slow start, with only a few birds coming to roost, birds are now arriving in bigger numbers. It is expected that this trend will continue until late March, when hen harriers start to disperse into their breeding grounds. The collection of data on hen harrier roosting behaviour is an essential tool in the management of habitats that are so important for the conservation of our birds of prey.

Birds in the winter

Winter is a difficult time for many of our winged friends. The berries and seeds that are very abundant in the autumn are now rapidly disappearing from shrubs and trees of the hedges. Birds like humans are hot-blooded animals and spend most of the energy obtained from food to generate heat. Maintenance of constant body temperature is important factor regulating activity of enzymes that catalyze chemical reactions and help our organisms to maintain so-called homeostasis (steady state). It is a phenomenon in nature that large animals can retain the heat much more efficiently than small ones. In other words, the smaller the bird the more vulnerable it is in cold weather. In addition to that, as winter days become shorter and shorter, birds have less daylight so necessary for foraging. It is thus a good idea to put out seeds, nuts, oatmeal and raisins. Fruits such as apples or pears are a delicacy winter visiting thrushes, while tits are very fond of suet or lard. If you haven't put out a bird feeder in your garden yet do so and you will soon find yourself enjoying a colourful spectacle in your backyard. If the temperatures outside fall below zero, it may be also necessary to provide water for birds. With little effort, keeping water de-iced may reward you with visits of rare birds such as snipes or lapwing.

100 bogs of Duhallow

Ireland holds one of the most important natural resources of Europe and indeed the world – peatlands. Our country has a higher proportion of bogs than any other European country, with the exception of Finland. Open landscapes have long been part of Duhallow's identity, hosting a wealth of natural and cultural heritage. Bogs also have a special place in the Irish landscape and can embody all that is wild and beautiful in nature. A relatively recent study has identified and mapped 100 different blanket bogs in Duhallow. They expand over an area of 7,716 hectares and provide many invaluable ecosystem services. They clean and filter our water, protect us from flooding and regulate our climate by acting as carbon sinks. Bogs also provide habitat for wildlife. They are home to many important species such as Red Grouse, Irish Hare, Common Frog, Hen Harrier, Golden Plover, Snipe, Merlin, Curlew, Marsh Fritillary, a multitude of rare plant species and much more. However, despite their wildlife value and conservation effort bogs are still often degraded. Given various pressures bogs, together with their unique assemblage of flora and fauna have become threatened habitat.

Look out for our 2019 LIFE calendar featuring the best of Duhallow Nature.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

QQI LEVEL 5 IN HORTICULTURE

UPDATE ON RAPTOR LIFE

WOMEN FOR CHANGE WORKSHOP

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Community Working Group

1.

Enterprise Working Group

2.

Youth & Education Working Group

2.

Women's Forum

3.

Equality Working Group

3.

Raptor LIFE

4.

Community Development Working Group

LEADER News

IRD Duhallow's LEADER Programme is progressing apace. We have already committed over € 915,281. We are now focusing on projects under the Protection and Sustainable use of Water Resources and also the Protection and Improvement of Local Biodiversity. For help and assistance in making an application **please contact Ellen on 029-60633**. We are also accepting Expressions of Interest from project applicants wishing to receive grant aid under the LEADER Food Initiative (for Artisan, Micro and Small food producers). 50% funding is available for Artisan Food Businesses. **For further details please contact louise.bourke@irdduhallow.com / 029-60633.**

IRD Duhallow Warmer Homes Scheme

A well insulated home can cut fuel bills by over 50% and reduce carbon emissions. If you are in receipt of any **one** of the following payments you will be eligible to receive insulation services **free of charge**; Fuel Allowance, Working Family Payment, Domiciliary Care Allowance, Care Allowance, One Parent Family Payment, Jobseekers Allowance for more than 6 months & have a child under 7 years of age. Houses must be owner occupied and constructed before 2006.

Additional Measures have been added to the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme which include; Attic Insulation, Cavity Wall Insulation, External Wall Insulation, Internal Wall Insulation, Boiler Upgrade, Window Replacement, Lagging jackets, draught proofing and energy efficient lighting.

** Due to high demand, SEAI has decided that houses that have already received an upgrade under the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme will not be eligible for further works.*

To apply contact Colm or Eileen on 029-60633 or email whs@irdduhallow.com

Duhallow Community Food Services based at the James O'Keeffe Institute, Newmarket, provides a home delivery meal service. Meals can be booked on a long or short term basis. Dinner and Dessert cost €6.00 per day, delivered to your door. We also provide a wide range of hot or cold dishes for any catering event such as Special Occasions and Functions. **For further information on our services contact Orlaith at 029-76375 or email duhallowfoods@eircom.net visit www.foodinduhallow.com**

Duhallow REVAMP.... January Specials

Do not miss out on our unbeatable value this month on suites and sofas, wardrobes, tables and chairs, bedside lockers and more. Our collection and delivery service is there for your convenience and there is a discount available for individuals in receipt of a social welfare payment! Visit our showroom, opened Monday to Friday, 9am to 5.30pm. We gratefully accept donations of unwanted, reusable furniture and household items including chairs, sofas, tables, lockers, chest of drawers, mirrors, wardrobes, shelving, curtains and fabric, etc. Also, if you have a piece of furniture in need of some attention, you can avail of our restoration and upholstery service. **For more details please contact Colm at 029-60633, email: revamp@irdduhallow.com or visit us on Facebook: Duhallow Furniture Revamp.** *Finalists: PAKMAN Awards 2018—Excellence in Waste Management and Recycling*



"The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 is funded by the Irish Government through the Department of Rural and Community Development and co-funded by the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020"

Duhallow Community Laundry at the James O'Keeffe Institute, Newmarket, assists the elderly, low income households and carers with washing and drying clothes, bed linen and towels. Laundry can be dropped into Duhallow Community Laundry, Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 5.30pm. We also provide a free collection and delivery service to households who may have transport difficulties. **For further details contact 029-60633.**

Duhallow Arenas (Situating adjacent to the James O'Keeffe Inst. Newmarket) are available to hire for all equestrian related events at a rate of €20 per hour. Become a key holder for €180, which will allow full access to the arenas. **For further information contact Louise on 029-60633.**

Historic Grave Surveying

IRD is seeking to train communities in the digital recording and publication of historic graveyard related stories in their localities. We are asking that all communities who are interested in participating in this training to make contact, as it is only with the help of community volunteers we will be able to record and publish these important local stories. Training will commence in April 2019, and will take place during day time hours. **To register your interest in participating in this LEADER funded training programme, please contact Nollaig on 029-60633.**

Enterprise Working Group

Duhallow Skillnet is accepting enrolments for a wide selection of training courses, which will be commencing in Spring 2019, please visit www.irdduhallow.com/upcoming-events to book online or email duhallowskillnet@irdduhallow.com or for enquiries contact 029 60633.

Bachelor of Arts In Applied Early Childhood Education & Care—One year QQI Level 7

IRD Duhallow will be proceeding with this 1 year Degree in Spring 2019 in the James O'Keeffe Institute, Newmarket, following approval from the DCYA. This 1 year Degree is recognised by the DCYA and eligible for the extra capitation grant for childcare facilities. Eligibility for this Degree: All participants must have a QQI level 6 and 3 years experience in the childcare sector. Expressions of Interest are now being taken for this Level 7 Degree please contact Louise at 029-60633 or email louise.bourke@irdduhallow.com

Employment and Training Working Group

Local Training Initiative: Horticulture

Following on from the success of our QQI Level 4 in Horticulture, IRD Duhallow is inviting expressions of interest for a QQI Level 5 in Horticulture for Spring 2019. This Local Training Initiative in Horticulture is a full time, 44 week programme where participants will gain the skills necessary to grow their own produce, learn landscaping techniques and much more. **To register your interest or find out more please contact Rachel or Ellen on 029-60633.**

IRD Duhallow and Duhallow Beekeepers Association intends to run a beginners beekeeping course in early Spring 2019. Please contact Ellen at 029-60633 to register your interest.

IRD Duhallow Job Centre

Are you looking for a New Job or Changing your Career? Do you need advice / support to get your career kick started? IRD Duhallow Job Centre provides a free & confidential recruitment service to job seekers. We know that finding a job can be sometimes difficult and as a job seeker we are here to help you avail of the many supports you need such as: one to one guidance with career planning, assistance with Cover Letters and CV's, Interview Preparation and up-skilling opportunities through further training. **For details, contact Jennifer or Jacinta on 029-60633.**

Youth & Education Working Group

IRD Duhallow Afterschool Service operates from 2pm to 6pm for any primary school children in Duhallow. However, the service offers transport only from Newmarket Boys and Girls National school. A warm nutritious home cooked dinner is provided along with homework support daily. Please note IRD Duhallow offers a tiered pricing system allowing families in receipt of a social welfare payment or medical card to receive a reduction in price. Parents also have the flexibility of sending their children for the whole week or daily as they wish. **For further details contact Stephanie at 029-60633 or email newmarketafterschools@irdduhallow.com**

IRD Duhallow is holding an information session for Young People with disabilities and their parents on the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE). DARE is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school-leavers whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education. DARE offers reduced points places to school leavers who, as a result of having a disability, have experienced additional educational challenges in second level education. Deirdre Madden of UCC's Disability Support Service, will provide vital information on the application process for the DARE funding. Additional information and live demonstrations will be also be provided on Assistive Technology Supports in Third Level Education. This information session will take place on **Wednes. 30th January at 7.30pm** in the James O'Keeffe Institute, Newmarket. **Places are limited, booking for this event is essential. For further details or booking contact Jacinta on 029-60633 or e-mail jacinta.carroll@irdduhallow.com.**

Duhallow Women's Forum

Genealogy, Local History and Heritage Training Courses

IRD Duhallow is currently seeking expressions of interest from people who are interested in participating in Genealogy, Local History and Heritage training. Training will commence in early 2019 in Beginners Genealogy, Local History and Heritage. This will be followed on by Advanced Training in Genealogy, Local History and Heritage, which will build on the existing skills attained in the Beginners course. **To register your interest in these LEADER funded training programmes, please contact Nollaig on 029-60633.**

Women for Change Workshop

IRD Duhallow in conjunction with the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCi) is hosting a free training workshop on influencing Policy. This workshop will cover how policy works and will look at how to influence it. The workshop will also offer women an opportunity to learn skills in leadership, lobbying, campaigning and influencing policy. This workshop will take place on **Wednesday 23rd of January** in the **James O'Keeffe Institute, Newmarket at 7.00pm.** Booking is essential as spaces are limited. Please contact Jacinta on 029-60633 or e-mail jacinta.carroll@irdduhallow.com.

Equality Working Group

PEIL- Duhallow Work Opportunities for Women

IRD Duhallow has been awarded funding through the **Department of Justice and Equality supporting ESF PEIL Gender Equality – Women Returning to the Workforce. This Measure is supported by the European Social Fund (ESF).** This grant will support women in order to assist their return to the labour market.

This programme will be primarily targeted at women who are: engaged in home duties; newly unemployed not on the live register; may have left the workforce but are now preparing to return to employment; Women parenting alone; Women with disabilities; Carers and Migrant Women. IRD Duhallow is seeking expressions of interest for the following upcoming courses including: First Aid; Patient Moving and Handling; ECDL Start; Palliative Care QQI Level 5; Childminding Practices QQI Level 5; Intellectual Disability Studies QQI Level 5 and Personal Development. **For further information on the PEIL Prog. contact Jacinta on 029-60633 or e-mail jacinta.carroll@irdduhallow.com or visit www.irdduhallow.com** This project is part supported by the Irish Government and European Social Fund (ESF) Fund 2014-2020 as part of the Programme

Ability Programme 2018-2021 - The Ability Programme aims to support young people with disabilities (15-29 years of age) to improve their employability through a range of person-centred supports. It is proposed that participants on the Ability Programme will be supported with tailored training and career guidance support. Training will include the development of soft skills, confidence, communication, self-awareness, life-skills/personal development. A focus will be placed on work preparation training for young people with disabilities including job search strategies. Existing linkages on the ground with local employers will be utilised to facilitate supported work sampling, work experience placements, work shadowing, volunteer placements and place and train schemes. For the purpose of the Ability Programme, people with disabilities refers to people with physical or sensory disabilities, mental health conditions, acquired disabilities, intellectual disabilities, hidden disabilities and people on the autistic spectrum. In order to qualify for support, Ability participants must also be: **in receipt of disability allowance or invalidity pension; or in receipt of illness benefit for more than three months; or other referrals may be accepted on a case-by-case basis.** Referrals from GPs and mainstream schools are not eligible. **For further information or to register please contact Triona or Jacinta on 029-60633.** "Ability is co-financed by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020."

Resilient Youth (ReY) IRD Duhallow's Resilient Youth Initiative aims to support young people aged 15-24 years who are not in education, employment or training through participation on a part-time programme offering a range of pre-employment training supports, mentoring, group development and skills based training. Where possible, training will be based on the young person's needs, capacity and aspirations ranging from unaccredited introductory courses to minor accredited modules. Young people will be supported to complete their driver theory test and will receive 3 free driving lessons as this has been identified as a major barrier for young people in their pursuit of employment. **For further information or to register please contact Jennifer or Jacinta on 029-60633.**

IRD Duhallow's Shine Phrenz Self Help Support Group is for people who have experience of Mental Ill Health. Sharing experiences with others can be a great way of learning new coping skills, growing your support network and making new friends. The groups are peer facilitated, and supported by the SHINE Regional Development Officer. The next meeting of this group will take place on **Thurs. 17th of January** from **2.00p.m-4.00p.m** in the James O'Keeffe Institute, Newmarket. For further details, please contact Emily Daly, Shine Regional Development Officer on 086-8525755 or by e-mail on edaly@shine.ie.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS - Closed meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous is held in the James O'Keeffe Institute, Newmarket every Sunday Morning at 11.30am and Thursday at 8.30pm.

AI ANON If you're affected by somebody else's drinking, come and hear the experience of others at the James O'Keeffe Institute, Newmarket, every Thursday night at 8.30pm or to the Health Centre in Millstreet on Sunday nights 6pm wintertime.

Emotional Support Service IRD Duhallow is offering a One to One Integrative Counselling service. This service is being offered by Mature Student Counsellors, working towards their accreditation, and is free of charge. **If you would like to make an appointment or have any further enquiries please contact Aoife on 087-1179990.**