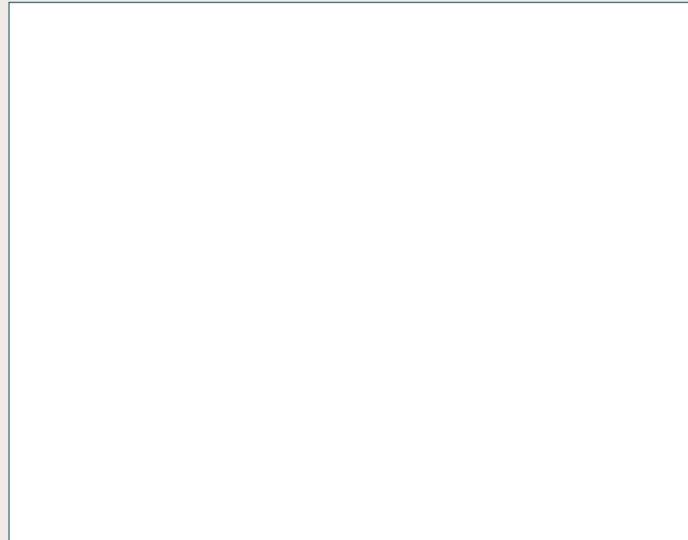


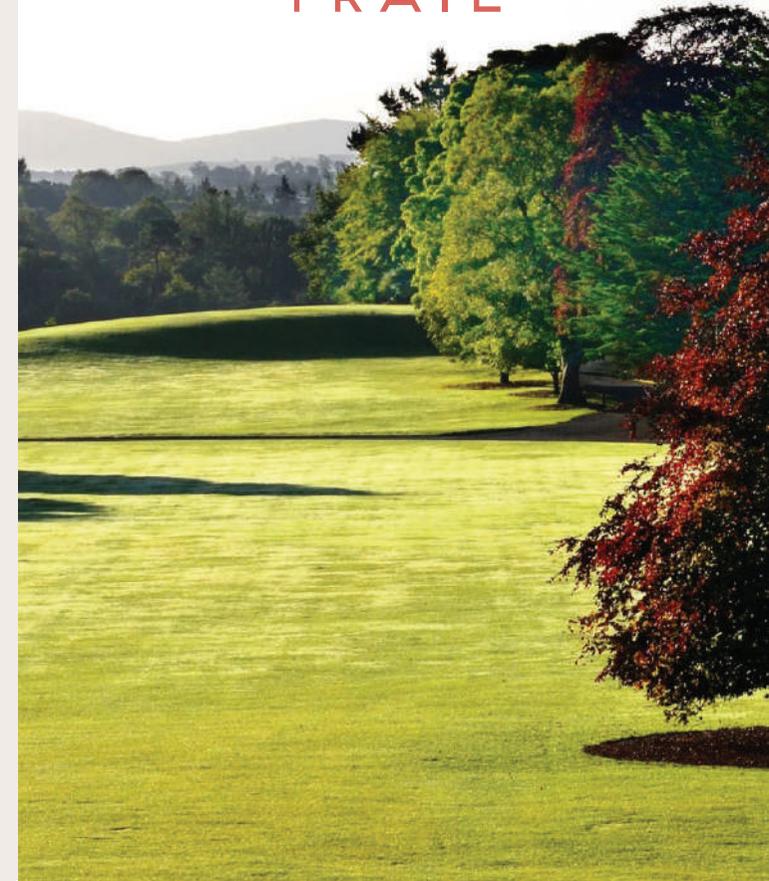
BIODIVERSITY IN THE CASTLE PARK

- Biodiversity refers to the variety of plants and animals and the interactions with each other. Kilkenny Castle Park has lots of different places for you to explore biodiversity and lots of plants and animals for you to spot. There are so many different species of trees, plants, invertebrates, birds, amphibians and even mammals using the park that we couldn't possibly list them all.
- This nature trail is a guide to help you discover some of the different homes or habitats that exist in the park for plants and animals and to give you some tips on how to discover them for yourselves. The trail doesn't follow a set route, we have the map below to help you on your visit.

There are many more trees around our fantastic castle, if you have time have a stroll and discover the amazing flora & fauna on view. Do you have a favourite tree, leaf, bark, bug, bird or building? Draw it here...



NATURE TRAIL



Leave No Trace
It is important when exploring nature to always leave things as we find them. Flowers are important for bees, butterflies and other insects so we shouldn't pick them and we should never damage trees. It is also important to clean up after ourselves and bin our litter home or bring it home.

AT KILKENNY CASTLE PARK



OPW

Oifig na nOibreacha Poiblí
Office of Public Works

Kilkenny



IRELAND'S
ANCIENT EAST

WOODLAND

Some of the larger trees in the Castle Park are specimen trees that were planted by the Butler family but there are also a range of native Irish trees of various sizes that form a narrow woodland all around the edges of the park. In a woodland, you can see different layers.

In a woodland, the tallest trees form the **canopy**. Underneath we have an **understory** of smaller trees and a **shrub layer** of plants like bramble, ivy, raspberry and dog rose.

What is the tallest tree you can find in the park?

Can you name any of the trees?

Can you spot any flowers on the trees?

Can you spot any fruits, nuts or seeds on the trees?



Scotts Pine

Dogrose



ACTIVITY

LEAF SCAVENGER HUNT:

Hunt for fallen leaves on the ground. Collect them together and see how many different ones you can find.

The park is home to many species of birds. Some of the largest are the owls and if you look up into some of the tallest trees closest to the cemetery, you might see some owl nest boxes. You will also see some nest boxes lower down for tree creepers. Other types of nest boxes are scattered throughout the park.

Can you spot any nest boxes?

How many different types and colours of wildflowers can you spot in the woodlands?



ACTIVITY

LEAF AND BARK RUBBINGS:

Try making leaf or bark rubbings of some of the trees using a sheet of paper and a thick crayon

THE LAKE

The lake is home to a number of water birds such as ducks and swans. You may also see flying insects such as mayflies, dragonflies and damselflies who begin their lives in the water.

How many different types of water birds can you spot?

Can you see any plants growing in the water?

What about the stone walls? Can you see any plants growing on the walls?



ACTIVITY

ALPHABET SCAVENGER HUNT:

Working with your friends or family see if you can spot a natural item in the park beginning with each letter of the alphabet (you might have trouble with x and z)

GRASS

Short grass is great for sitting on or playing games like football or even for rolling down hills, but it is not very good for nature. Pollinators like bees, butterflies and hoverflies need to collect pollen and nectar from the flowers that grow in longer grass. This is why you will see lots of patches of grass that are only cut once a year to allow native wildflowers to bloom.

How many different types and colours of wildflowers can you see in the longer grass?

Are they different from the ones you spotted at the woodland edges?

Can you see any bees or other insects feeding on the flowers?



Speedwell



Buttercups



ACTIVITY

BUG SPOTTER:

Look around on the trunks or leaves of trees, the cracks in stone walls or among dead leaves on the ground and see if you can spot any small animals. How many different types can you see? How many legs have they got? What way do they move?