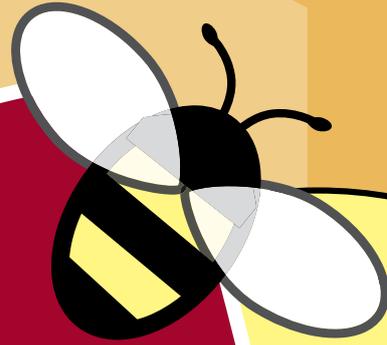
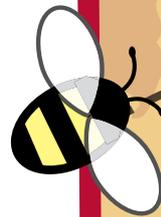


BUSY BEEES!



AUTUMN is the link between **Summer and Winter** – temperatures cool, days get shorter and nature must adjust to survive and prepare for the coming of wintery weather.



FACT!

Autumn is famous for its colours – red, orange, brown and gold. Before they fall, leaves lose their green chlorophyll pigment, and the other pigments in the leaf increase. This is what gives the trees their different shades in the autumn.

1
Start at the top of the Irish Room and find the **CORNCRAKE**
(hint: beside the shop!)



THE CORNCRAKE, sometimes known as a Landrail, is found all over Europe and Asia — as far east as China. They spend the summer raising chicks in the northern hemisphere and then migrate to South Africa for the winter months.



FACT!
The corncrake's scientific name, *Crex crex*, sounds like the bird's call — this is where the name came from. It is an endangered species and protected by law in Ireland.

2
Turn around, walk straight ahead until on your left you find the **OSPREY**
(hint: you'll have to look up!)

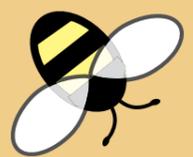


THE OSPREY is another rare migratory bird found in Ireland. During the autumn the Osprey makes the long journey to the warmer weather in Africa.

Question 1

Have a look at the Corncrake's long legs — why do you think they're so long?
(circle your answer)

FOR JUMPING
FOR RUNNING
FOR SKIPPING



FACT!
During the mating season the male Osprey performs a "sky dance" — to attract a female he flies in waves, hovering the odd time, with his legs dangling while holding a fish and giving out a screaming call.

Question 2

What do you think the Osprey uses its sharp beak for?
(circle your answer)

KILLING PREY
PECKING OTHER BIRDS
PICKING UP CHICKS

3

...now go to the other side of the room and find the...
OTTER FAMILY!



OTTERS are carnivores, eating all sorts of prey — eels, crayfish, fish, frogs and even ducks! Otters don't need to hibernate as their food is available all year round. The kits (baby otters) are born in Summer and early Autumn.

Question
3

Have a look at the Otters' heads — they are wide and flat. Why do you think that is? (circle your answer)

- FOR EATING FISH
- FOR PICKING UP PLANTS
- FOR MOVING IN THE WATER

FACT!

The Shoveler Duck prefers to live in wetlands and feed on zooplankton in the water. It is so good at feeding on this high-energy food that it can increase its bodyweight by up to 10% per day!

Question
4

Where do you think the Shoveler duck gets its name from? (circle your answer)

- THE SHAPE OF ITS BEAK
- THE SHAPE OF ITS FEET
- THE SHAPE OF IT'S BODY

5

Now go to the left and make your way to the
CUCKOO...



Now go to the middle of the room to the case with the swans, geese and ducks. Many of these animals are migrators— they arrive in Ireland in the autumn to spend the winter here. Look for the
SHOVELER DUCK!



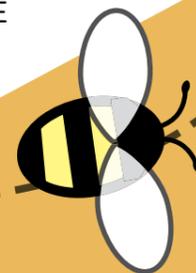
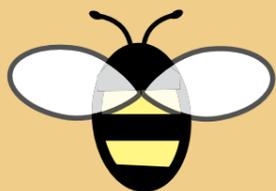
There are two Meadow Pipits hovering over the Cuckoo. What do you think the cuckoo is doing? (circle your answer)

- SAYING HELLO
- TRYING TO EAT THE EGGS
- FRIGHTENING THE MEADOW PIPITS

Question
5

FACT!

Cuckoos are well known as nest stealers — the female lays her eggs in the nests of other birds and leaves them to be reared by them. Each season a female will lay between 12 and 22 eggs, all in different nests.





Question 6

Have a look at the Lapwing's eggs and chicks — they have the same markings. Why is this? (circle your answer)

- SO THE PARENTS KNOW THEY'RE THEIRS
- TO HIDE THEM FROM PREDATORS
- THEY GOT SPLATTERED WITH MUD

THE LAPWING is resident in Ireland, but in the September its numbers increase as more birds migrate to overwinter here. It has a distinctive long feather that hangs off the back of its head, called a crest. This is longer on the males during the mating season.

Now go to the centre of the room, past the gulls and find the LAPWING...



7

Go to your left and look for the EEL! (hint: look on the bottom of the case with the large fish)

FACT! The Sargasso Sea is so named because there is a kind of seaweed which floats over its entire area called Sargassum. The sea is in the centre of the Bermuda Triangle, and is the only sea on Earth with no coastline!



Question 7

THE EUROPEAN EEL is one of the most mysterious of all animals — they begin life as a tiny transparent egg in the Sargasso Sea. Once they hatch, the tiny larvae travel the Gulf Stream to the coast of Ireland...

... They enter our rivers and become elvers (young eels) and move upstream. In September the adults prepare for their long migration back to the Sargasso Sea in the North Atlantic Ocean.

Have a look at the small fins on the Eel — what are these used for? (circle your answer)

- WAVING TO OTHER EELS
- USE IN MOVEMENT
- NOTHING — THEY'VE NO USE



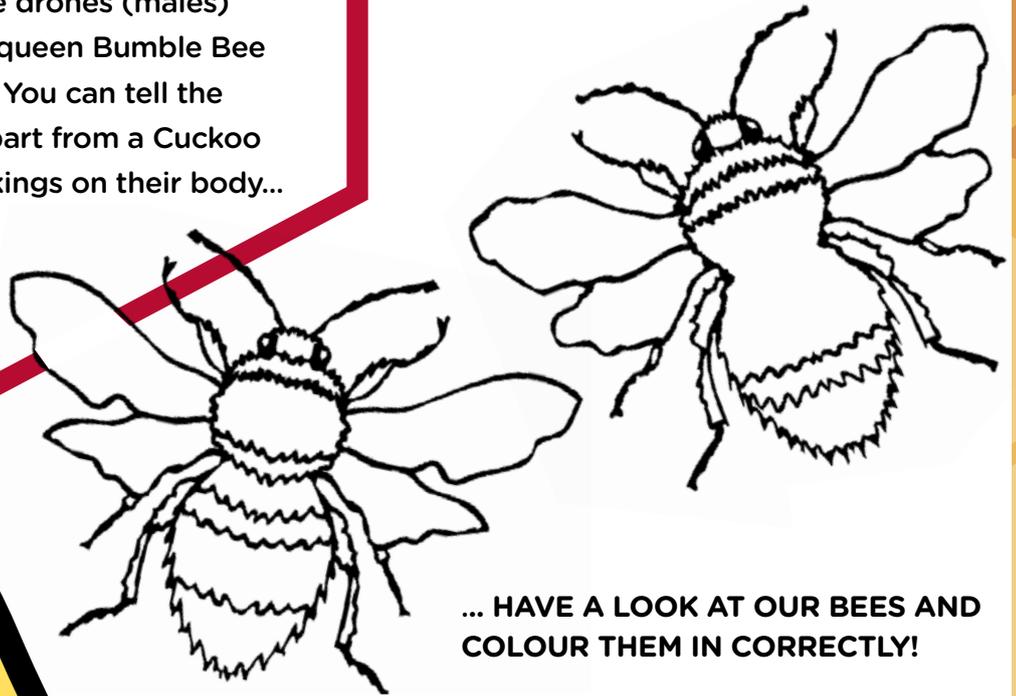
8

Now cross the room
and find and the
BUMBLE BEES.

There are 20 different species of **BUMBLE BEES** in Ireland – 14 true Bumble Bees and 6 Cuckoo Bumble Bees. In autumn when temperatures drop, the old queen Bumble Bee, her workers and the drones (males) will die. Only the young queen Bumble Bee survives and hibernates. You can tell the common Bumble Bee apart from a Cuckoo Bumble Bee by the markings on their body...

FACT!

The Cuckoo Bumblebee, like the bird it is named after, lays its eggs in another bumblebee's nest and leaves the workers of that nest to rear the young. Cuckoo Bumblebees don't have queens and workers like other bees, as it's the workers of other species who look after their young.



... HAVE A LOOK AT OUR BEES AND
COLOUR THEM IN CORRECTLY!



For more information on exhibitions and education programmes, contact the Education & Outreach Department of the National Museum of Ireland:

Tel: 01 677 7444
Fax: 01 661 9199
E-mail: bookings@museum.ie

- Answers:**
- 1) For running; 2) Killing Prey;
 - 3) For moving in the water;
 - 4) The shape of its beak;
 - 5) The Cuckoo has frighten the meadow pipsis;
 - 6) To hide them from predators;
 - 7) Use in movement.