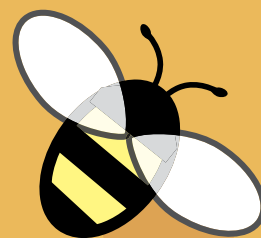


BUSY BEEES!



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.

museum

National Museum of Ireland
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

Natural History

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.

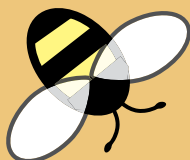
Question 1

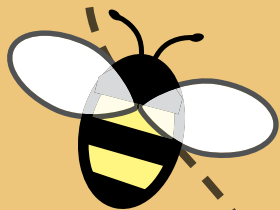
Have a look at the
Corncrake's long legs —
why do you think they're so long?
(circle your answer)

FOR JUMPING

FOR RUNNING

FOR SKIPPING





2

Cross the room to
the bird of prey cabinet
and until 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.

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.

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

KILLING PREY

PECKING OTHER BIRDS

PICKING UP CHICKS

Question
2

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!



4

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!

FACT!

There are only about 124 breeding pairs of curlew in Ireland today! Numbers of curlew have decreased by 97% since the 1980's! They can live for up to 30 years and they mate for life.

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

CURLEW...

Curlews nest on the ground in habitat such as boglands. How do they stay hidden or camouflaged from predators?
(circle your answer)

FEATHERS STREAKED BROWN, GREY & WHITE

THEY DON'T HAVE PREDATORS

THEY MAKE A LOUD WHISTLE

Question
5





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.

6

Now walk straight ahead
until you find the
LAPWING...



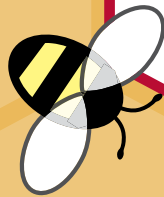
7

Go to your left
and look for the

EEL!

*(hint: look on the
bottom of the case
with the large fish)*

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...



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!

... 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

Question
7



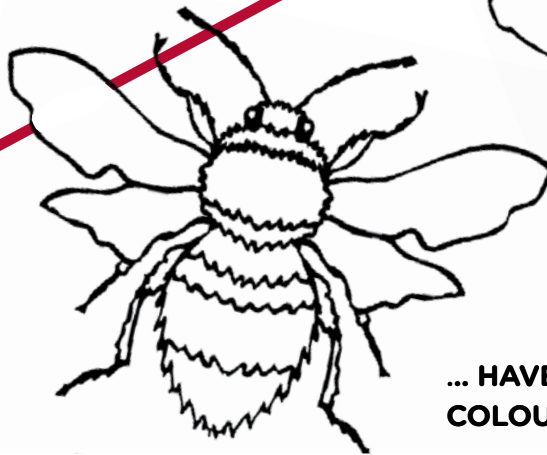
8

Now cross the room
and find 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

7) Use in movement.
6) To hide them from predators;
5) The curlew is camouflaged with its feathers streaked brown, grey & white;

4) The shape of its beak;
3) For moving in the water;
1) For running; 2) Killing Prey;

Answers: