

The Biodiversity Way

What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity, shorthand for biological (living things) diversity (different) refers to the variety of all life on earth including mankind. Loss or damage to biodiversity can adversely affect human health and well being.

Biodiversity is all around us, from gardens to hedgerows, woodlands to wetlands, rivers to coastlines. It underpins food production, timber, fibre and fuel production, water and air quality, climate balance, immunity from diseases, and even recreational activities (e.g. fishing). It is foremost in the interest of mankind to preserve and protect biodiversity; instead, it collapsing all over the world.

This short trail draws attention to the diverse plant life in the riverbank, woodland and grassland areas through which it travels, and some of the animals you might see.



Blackberries

Rye River Walk (Panel 1)



Barn Swallow

From Pound Street to the Scouts Den, various trees and shrubs have been planted over the years. Consequently, along this stretch there are many introduced species all designed to enhance colour and visual appearance, and complement the biodiversity of the existing native flora of the riverbank.

Buddleia, Bird Cherry, Hazel, Birch, Guelder Rose, Wild Fuchsia, Willow, Blackberry and Snowberry are some of the many 'woody' species found along here. Aside from their obvious visual impact, their real importance is the shelter and nutrition they provide to the many insects, birds and animals that thrive in this area.

From the Scouts Den to Distillery Bridge the tree canopy overhead is mainly Sycamore and Ash with Common Osier (also known as basket willow) along the riverbank. Whitethorn, Hazel and Blackthorn get some purchase where there is enough light. The spectacular aspect of this section is the ground cover plants which are many and varied. Ferns such as bracken and Hart's-tongue, together with the white trumpet flowers of Convolvulus (Bindweed) and Queen Anne's lace (wild carrot), grow through the carpet of Ivy along the left hand side of the walkway. Along the riverbank, Coltsfoot, Willowherb and Cow Parsley provide impressive cover for the riverside fauna. In Autumn, you'll see the fantastic red spikes of the Lords-and-ladies.

The Rye River – shaded by its many trees – hosts plenty of insects for bats to eat, and you'll see bat boxes overhead if you look up into the trees. Bat species identified along the Rye River include Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle and Leisler's Bat.



Red Admiral butterfly on Buddleia bush



Hazel tree



Butterbur flowers



Blackthorn

Left: Guelder Rose leaf. This plant is not a rose but a deciduous shrub that can be found in the hedgerows



Blackbird

Hart's-tongue Fern; 'hart' is an old term for a deer



Fern



A Dipper's nest, under Rye Bridge

Right: Lords-and-ladies has numerous names, many of which describe its shape in the Spring, as shown here



Great Willowherb flowers



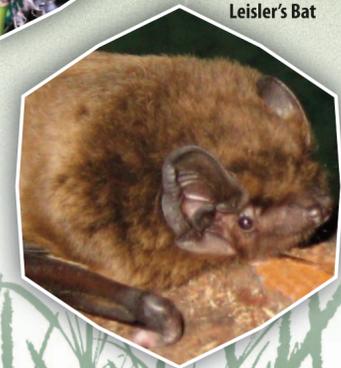
Coltsfoot flowers



Left: Lords-and-ladies in berry form, also known as Devil's Poker, as seen in Autumn



Bindweed



Leisler's Bat



The Biodiversity Way is a Leixlip Tidy Towns Association and Intel Pride of Place initiative.

The Leixlip Biodiversity Way is approx. 1.4 kms long. It is all made up of pavement and tarred pathways. As such it is suitable for everyone.



© Vincent Wildlife Trust
design: www.thedrawingboard.ie