

Trailgazers is a European partnership project established with a common set of economic, social & environmental Key Performance Indicators; it will develop innovative technologies & systems to capture trails activity and develop plans to sustainably manage trails.

Trailgazers will measure socio-economic impacts from investing & promoting trails in areas of rich natural heritage. The project aims to create a trails dashboard, utilise tools to digitally target visitors and boost Tourist numbers.

Flora and Fauna

INCH WILDFOWL RESERVE



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://www.trailgazers.eu>

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Partners:



Inch Wildfowl Reserve is an 8km trail loop which meanders through a wildlife refuge, a landscape of movement with the songs of the birds and the sounds of the lake. It is a safe place for wildlife to feed, bath, reproduce, protect, migrate, hibernate and shelter.

What you see today is very different, an island, a lake and a farm of 2000 acres. This was created over 160 years ago by people who wanted to farm the land. Two embankments were built to hold back the tides, and one to separate the lake from the farm. The Reserve now forms part of the reclaimed land from the sea. Since the earliest of times about 10,000 years ago, the land and water surrounding Inch Island and Inch Wildfowl Reserve has provided a safe haven for people, animals and birds. Depending on the season, as you move through the site you will see an array of flora and fauna.



"An Endless Trail of Possibilities"



1

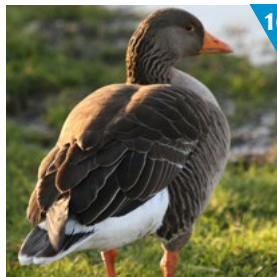
WHOOPER SWAN

The majestic Whooper Swan visits the lake between October & April

It has a yellow and black bill, with the yellow projecting below the nostril. Takes flight in April to nest in Iceland for the summer.

It has a diet of water plants and grasses in the fields as well as eats leftover potatoes and sugarbeet in the ploughed fields. Nearly 7,000 pass through or stop off for a rest at Inch and around 500 remain for the winter.

There are only seven species of swan in the world.



10

GREYLAG GOOSE

Large bulky grey goose with pinkish-orange bill and dull pink legs visits from October to April

Its plumage is plain grey/brown. Around 3,000 visit from Iceland where they breed. They love to feed mainly on grass, leaves and stems and can often be seen grazing alongside the cattle and sheep at the Wildfowl Reserve.

It weighs 3.3kg, it has an orange beak and pink legs. Its name refers to the fact that it is the last bird to migrate.

The greylag goose is a large bird measuring 29-36 inches in length.



9

SWIFT

A little summer visitor that visits between April - July

Short forked tail and very long swept-back wings that resemble a crescent or a boomerang. It is among one of the fastest birds. Watch the swifts swooping and dancing through the skies looking for food and feeding on clouds of flies.

The most amazing thing about swifts is that when the babies fly from the nest they do not touch the ground for at least two years. They love the tasty bugs and flies at Inch.

Migration is triggered by the lack of enough insects high in the air. They spend the winter in Africa.



2

HERRON

The heron symbolises stillness & tranquillity

It is a medium to large sized bird with a distinctive long neck and legs, grey plumage, long head crest and dagger-like bill.

It can be found standing on the banks of the lake waiting to catch a fish for its tea.

When in flight it is one of the most powerful birds.



3

SANDWICH TERN

Travels a long distance from West Africa in March to Ireland to find a safe place for their chicks

The sandwich tern is a very white tern, with a black cap on its head, a long black bill with a yellow tip and short black legs.

In flight it shows grey wedges on its wings tips and it has a short forked tail. This little bird comes every summer from West Africa to make her nest and find a safe place for her chicks.

Flight light and buoyant, will hover over the sea before diving into the water.



4

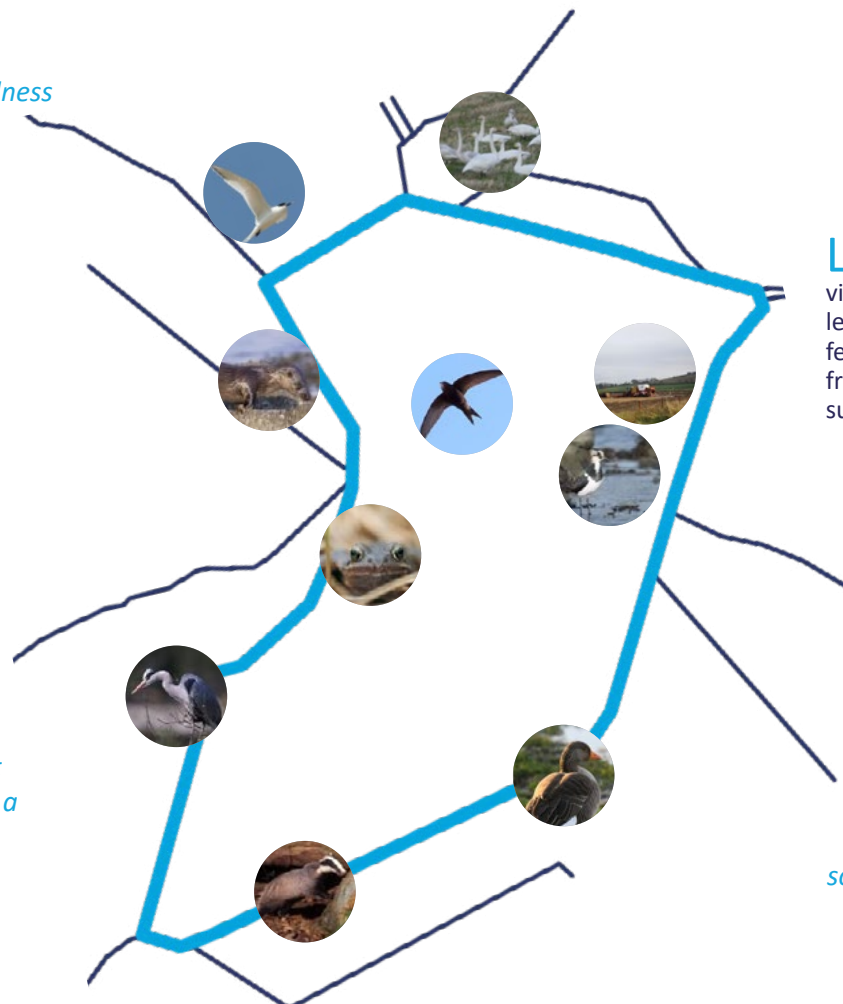
OTTER

Otters are fun creatures to watch and they are highly intelligent

They live in lakes, streams and rivers but tend to find the water that is clean as they don't do well with pollution. This makes them mother natures 'blue flags'.

Fish make up the majority of their diet, but they also consume a wide variety of items like birds, frogs and crustaceans. They take the opportunity to feed both from the land and in the water.

Otters are found almost everywhere in the world. The highest density being in Ireland.



5

BADGER

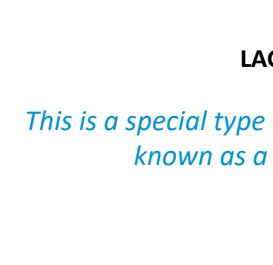
Is the largest terrestrial carnivore in Ireland



It is recognisable by its white head with distinctive dark stripes through the eyes. It can grow up to 1 meter in length.

The badger has a small head with stocky body and a short thick neck, short muscular legs and a bushy tail. They dig burrows under ground called a sett.

It can run up to 30km/hr for a short period of time.



8

LAGWING

This is a special type of bird known as a wader

Lapwings are summer visitors. They have long legs, agile toes, iridescent feathers that change colour from purple to green in the sunlight.

The lapwings are seen in the flooded fields, marshy areas and soft muddy shorelines that surround us looking for lunch amongst the grass.

Its rounded wings and slow wing beats make it look lazy in flight.



7

AN GRIANAN FARM

This farm is famous in Ireland because at one time it was the biggest farm in the country with some of the largest fields in Ireland

These grassland fields and mixture of crops (potatoes, carrots, barley and wheat) provide a safe haven for the birds, to feed on, but also are located close to the reserve to fly back to if they feel scared or disturbed.

During the late spring and summer the lake edges are grazed by cattle to keep the grass and other plants at the correct height for lapwing and other nesting birds.

The farmers work closely with the NPWS to make sure there is enough grass for the birds to eat each winter.



6

COMMON FROG

It is the only species of frog found in Ireland

Frogs are amphibians which means they can survive in the water and on land. Their large eyes bulge out of the top of their head so the frog can keep a sharp lookout for food and danger.

When frogs leap they draw their eyes back into their sockets to protect them from danger.

Under water frogs breathe through their skin.