

# Your Burren National Park Newsletter

## Summer 2021

Welcome to the second edition of our Newsletter

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The Burren National Park is open and with summer upon us different flowers are emerging, bird chicks are being fed, pollinators are busy and the sun is shining!

In this edition we feature two of our sites – Slieve Carran and Cahercommaun – outline some improvements in the park and cover recent wildlife sightings and lots more!

The flowers shown in the pictures in the first edition of the newsletter were – Common Dog-violet, Wood Anemone, Primrose and the Bluebell

The six National Parks in Ireland provide visitors with fabulous experiences and stunning scenery. Recently the National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) released a short video to mark National Biodiversity Week 2021 which can be viewed by accessing the Burren National Parks Facebook page (see 23 May Post). The video contains stunning wildlife and landscape photography and explains the educational services provided by NPWS guides and rangers

On the Home Based Learning page on the Burren National Parks website you will find downloadable instructions and supporting sheets to enable you to complete educational, fun events including bird surveys, minibeast hunts and a quiz. If you haven't already, do have a go!

Above you can see the new logo for the National Parks in Ireland

The Burren National Park consists of five areas of nearly 1,500 hectares. The principal area is Mullach Mór, with the distinctive folded mountain and the surrounding land. One of the smaller sites is Cahercommaun (Cathair Chomáin). This site of nearly 50 hectares includes calcareous grassland, limestone pavement, hazel scrub woodland and the remains of a stone fort. The fort is a 1km walk off the L5096 road. The walk starts just north of the Clooncoose green road and Burren Way route. Parking is available at the entrance

Cahercommaun is an impressive trivallate fort encompassing 0.8 hectares and situated on a 30m high cliff overlooking a lush gorge which served as one of the few natural routeways in the south-east Burren uplands

Excavations carried out in 1934 indicate the importance of the location since prehistory. Artefacts found during excavation included stone axes, saddle querns and items of chert. There are a profusion of wedge tombs, cist graves and cairns throughout the landscape, including one a short distance to the east of the fort

The phasing of the fort is complex and items of iron work and several brooches and pins found at the site indicate activity during the 5th to the 8th centuries AD. The innermost ramparts of the fort enclose an area 30m in diameter and are up to 8.5m in thickness and 4.3m high as they stand at their present highest point. The remains of 11 structures, two with souterrains and 22 hearths were also uncovered. The two semi-circular outer fort walls are less formidable but may have provided areas for livestock and other structures. Finds included bracelets and brooches of lignite, as well as spindle whorls, bone points, quern-stones and grinding stones. A large quantity of animal bone was found of which the vast majority (97%) were cattle, the rest being made up of sheep, goat, pig, horse and red deer

A new boardwalk has been installed by the Office of Public Works around the perimeter and up to the entrance of the inner enclosure walls

Recent sightings in the area include a cuckoo hiding on the fort walls and several Common or Viviparous Lizards basking on the boardwalk (see photo below). The lizard in the picture has shed its tail. If a predator seizes the tail the lizard can shed it and escape. A new tail grows slowly from the stump. The site is also home to Marsh Fritillary and Dark Green Fritillary butterflies which should be emerging in the coming weeks

We highly recommend a visit to this unique site. The 360° views from the fort are astounding. Watch out for the resting lizards!



Slieve Carran Nature Reserve is situated at Keelhilla in the north east of the Burren plateau and was established in 1986. It comprises 145 hectares of limestone pavement, scrub woodland and limestone grassland. There are two waymarked walks, the Brown and Yellow trail. Our website contains full details on each walk, a downloadable trails map and directions. You can enjoy beautiful views of Eagle's Rock cliff, the Turloughmore Mountains, and the site includes a stone oratory, cave and holy well associated with St. Colman MacDuagh, who reputedly set up a hermitage at the base of the cliff in the 7th century

Recently a looped extension to the Brown Trail has been opened. It starts approximately 100 metres before the entrance path off the trail to the oratory, and the extension will take around 20 minutes to walk. You will find an inviting wooden seat with a panoramic view about halfway around the loop. The photograph below was taken from the seat. Eagle's Rock is on the left, the Turloughmore Mountain range on the right. We hope you enjoy this new walk







The Yellowhammer bird has recently been seen and heard again in the Park around Mullach Mór. Its sightings have been irregular. The bird is typical of open farmland, scrub and hedgerows. Its numbers have fallen in Ireland as a result of changes in cereal crop production. The bird is a resident breeding bird and is a bit bigger than a Robin. Its colours and song are distinctive. The Yellowhammers high pitched loud insistent long song is said to sound like *a little bit of bread and no cheese*. The song is delivered from a high perch. It feeds on cereals, grass grains and seeds. The young birds eat insects. The bird remains on the Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland Red-list species of high conservation concern



We are pleased to announce we are now providing free guided tours of the Park. The general tours last about an hour and will cover the flora and fauna, geology, turloughs and other park features. Please note numbers are limited and Covid-19 measures are in place

If you are interested in joining us, please email [burrennationalpark@housing.gov.ie](mailto:burrennationalpark@housing.gov.ie)

## Insect of the Month



This beautiful moth, the Green Carpet, was recently seen on the Orange Trail in the Burren National Park. Grassland moths include both day and night-flying species. The Green Carpet is active at night and uses its colours to camouflage itself during the day. The moth was disturbed which enabled the photographer to take this image. The moth overwinters as a larva and its food plants are the bedstraw plants. The vivid green colour fades with age – this moth must have just emerged. One of its favoured habitats is limestone or calcareous grassland

### List of animals, birds and flowers recently seen along the trails in the Park:

Red Fox, Feral Goat, Slow Worm, Cinnabar, Chimney Sweeper and Speckled Yellow moths, Garden Chafer beetles, Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown, Common Blue and Wood White butterflies, Black-tailed skimmer dragonflies and lots of frogs

Swan, Raven, Yellowhammer, Blackcap, Wren, Skylark, Meadow Pipit, Little Egret, Heron, Robin

Bee, Butterfly, Pyramidal and Common Spotted orchids, Harebell, Ox Eye Daisy, Herb Robert, Milkwort, Birds-Foot Trefoil, Bloody Cranes-Bill, Selfheal, Yellow-wort, Wall Lettuce, Shrubby Cinquefoil, Heather and many more

The National Parks & Wildlife Service work closely with Leave No Trace Ireland which is an outdoor ethics programme designed to promote responsible outdoor recreation and enhance the protection of natural landscapes. As we enter summer, Leave No Trace Ireland is encouraging everyone to

***‘Love This Place, Leave No Trace’***

We would like to remind visitors of the following principles:

- ✓ Plan Ahead and Prepare
- ✓ Be Considerate of Others
- ✓ Respect Farm Animals and Wildlife
  - ✓ Travel on Durable Ground
  - ✓ Leave What You Find
  - ✓ Dispose of Waste Properly
  - ✓ Minimise the Effects of Fire

Thank You

Further information is available on [www.leavenotraceireland.org](http://www.leavenotraceireland.org)  
#LoveThisPlace, #LeaveNoTrace



**Burren National Park:**

**Information Point:** Clare Heritage Centre, 2 Church Street, Corofin, Co. Clare, Ireland, V95 T9V6 (please note this is currently closed)

**Website:** <https://www.burrennationalpark.ie>

**Email:** [burrennationalpark@housing.gov.ie](mailto:burrennationalpark@housing.gov.ie)

**Facebook, Twitter and Instagram**

