

THE ISLAND OF IRELAND

Wherever you are on the island of Ireland, you're never far away from amazing wildlife.

Join us as we head off on an adventure to discover the best this island has to offer, from colourful birds and loud amphibians to some very unusual goats. Let's go, gang!

Puffin

Nicknamed 'sea parrots' because of their brightly-coloured bills, puffins are frequent visitors to the coast of Ireland in the summer months, particularly in the west.

These colourful seabirds spend most of their time swimming, feeding and even resting at sea. They use their wings to glide underwater where they catch and gobble up a mixture of fish, crustaceans, squid and marine worms. They can dive down more than 60m!

Flocking together

But each spring and summer puffins come ashore to breed, nesting in colonies that can number thousands and sometimes *hundreds* of thousands of birds!

Each pair of puffins digs a burrow, about 90cm long, into a soft slope near the sea. If that's not possible, they'll sometimes burrow into crevices or cracks in cliffs. Once inside, the male bird builds a nest and the female lays an egg. Both parents take turns looking after the egg and even share the feeding duties until the chick is ready to fly the nest. Cute!

Fly over to birdwatchireland.ie to find out more!



DID YOU KNOW...?

Puffins swallow their food underwater, but can carry up to 30 small fish at once when bringing food home to their young!



Irish hare

Reaching speeds of more than 50kmph and jumping up to two metres into the air, this special creature is unique to the island of Ireland and is arguably Ireland's oldest surviving mammal. It's believed to have been living on the island since before the last Ice Age, which ended around 10,000 years ago! Look out for these hares roaming the hills or even grazing on seaweed by the coast. However, you're most likely to see one if you keep your eyes peeled in areas rich with tall plants, such as rushes. These helpful plants provide food, shelter and a good hiding place from the Irish hare's pesky predators — foxes and birds of prey.

Natterjack toad

Easily recognised by the yellow stripe that runs down its back, the natterjack is the only toad species in Ireland! It also has short legs, which means that rather than hopping like other toads, this warty character *runs* along the ground! In the spring, you'd know if you were near a male natterjack because of its super-loud croaking call which can be heard from up to 1km away! The male's call is amplified by a large vocal sac found under its chin, which expands like a balloon with each call. Cool, huh?!



Also found in



Bilberry goat

These shaggy-haired beauties are the only feral goat herd to be found in the centre of a city anywhere in the world! The Bilberry goat herd was formed when French Protestants came to Waterford, south-east Ireland, in around 1700. When they arrived, they brought the goats that they had on board their ship up to Bilberry Rock to graze — and they've been there ever since! However, over the years the land the goats need to graze has been eroded by development and in 2000 there were only seven animals left! Visit bilberrygoatheritagetrust.com to help these unique animals!



Wild things to do ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND!



Giddy up for a wild ride!

County Antrim

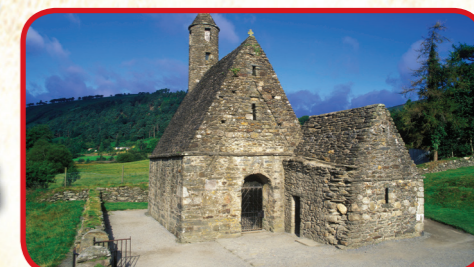
At Sheans Horse Farm you can jump on a horse and ride into the hills to enjoy breathtaking views of Northern Ireland's countryside — including the Giant's Causeway, Lough Foyle and the Sperrin mountains. You'll ride across quiet streams, hills and hollows — it's the perfect adventure for animal lovers! sheanshorsefarm.com



Have an island adventure!

County Sligo

Hop on a boat to Coney Island and you'll have loads of fun hillwalking, cycling and spotting wildlife. This awesome island got its name because it's home to a *huge* number of rabbits — 'coney' means rabbit fur! How many you can spot?! Then relax with a picnic or swim in Coney's crystal-clear waters. Splash! sligoboatcharters.com



Take a mystery tour!

County Wicklow

Join this tour in 'The Garden of Ireland' and you'll spend the day having a magical adventure, as you explore the beautiful county of Wicklow. From rolling hills to historic sights, you'll have a great time as you find out loads of fascinating facts, discover Irish culture and uncover some mysteries along the way, too! wildwicklow.ie