

Ireland



Ireland – 24th May – 1st June 2024

Introduction

I sailed with Stena Line from Holyhead to Dublin with my car, stayed in B&B's some prebooked some booked on the day. The weather was pretty poor with rain on every day sometimes very heavy and prolonged on every day apart from the last two days. This made butterflies and moth trapping particularly challenging

Many thanks to people who helped me with information, moth trapping permission and the locals I met up with to show me sites.



Carrickfergus



Poulnabrone Dolmen

Friday 24th May

I arrived in Dublin and took a wander round, quite quickly it started to rain as I explored the parts of the city I had not been to before and revisited a few spots. The only wildlife of note was a Grey Squirrel.

I did touristy stuff until the late afternoon when I checked out the Corsican heath that was not in flower, and then popped to Malin head, here I saw plenty of Choughs, well just about in the rain and thick mist. I stopped in at Dark hedges at the end of the day to avoid the crowds before calling it a day as the heavy rain returned once again.



Dark hedges



Early Purple Orchid

Saturday 25th May

It rained most of the morning, so I did Touristy stuff, but as I made it to the Giants causeway the rain stopped and it was quite a pleasant afternoon, pity the crowds were there. A Gropper was reeling in the marshy hillside and there were stonechats and rock pipits ignoring the crowds.

I headed to Gortalughany where I had permission to moth trap but the rain was torrential and forecast to continue all night, so I gave up



Giants Causeway

Sunday 26th May

I could not find the Double crested cormorant in torrential rain only a few cormorants on Lough Gill, with nothing on Colgagh Lough or Doon Lough. This took most of the morning before retreating to a dry touristy location. Alan Lewis alerted me to a possible Yellow Crowned Night heron, which luckily was only 50 mins from my location at Belcarra, Co Mayo so I headed there to investigate. The rain finally stopped as I arrived and I took a look along the river. I bumped into another birder but neither of us had seen the bird. We decided on a strategy of staking the area out nearer dusk, so I headed to the next town for something to eat. I returned a while later where the crowd had swelled to 5 plus myself. We staked out the bridges along the river I hope of finding the bird. Some locals wandered past asking if we saw the bird, saying that they had just seen it, two birders went with them to investigate and shortly they must have disturbed it \as it flew across the river in front of us showing well. It flew down the river to the road bridge, for a bit then roosted in a tree.

I headed to Roundstone Bog to find some heathers but none were in flower, too late for Irish heath and too early for St Daboch's heath. I had permission to moth trap here so set up in a nice spot. But less than an hour in heavy rain and strong winds returned and I had to pack up, only 3 moths trapped in that time. 2 Eyed hawkmoths and a crambus sp.



Yellow Crowned Night Heron



Irish Saxifrage

Monday 27th May

I headed to the Burren stopping at a Lough for Fen Violets but none were in flower, plenty of leaves on show in the pouring rain. Next stop was Slieve Carran again in the pouring rain, I found some fly orchids and plenty of the common plants. As I left the rain stopped so I tried another nearby spot, the sun came out and so did the wood whites, and speckled wood butterflies. The walk also produced a nice Narrow bordered bee hawkmoth. With better weather I explored the Burren making several stops by the coast finding some Dense flowered orchids but they had pretty much gone over, I located plenty of the speciality plants of the area, mountain avens, mountain everlasting, bloody cranesbill and some patches of Irish saxifrage.



Tuesday 28th May

Again it was wet and windy, the orchids at Gorlecka were dripping with water in my photos. Loch Bunny was equally as wet. Early afternoon I headed up Blackhead, despite the poor weather I found spring sandwort, Irish saxifrage and a few plants of Arctic sandwort a very rare plant despite having no specific information on its location. I headed to Gorlecka where finally the rain had stopped, the sun tried to come out and a few butterflies made the effort to fly about during my walk. I had something to eat then went to do some moth trapping but the rain returned and I gave up.



Arctic Sandwort



St Patrick's Cabbage

Wednesday 29th May

More rain started the day off so I did some touristy stuff as I headed to Killarney National Park. The weather improved as I headed south and I began a search for the very localised Irish spleenwort. Despite a couple of hours I could only find a few small black spleenworts and a selection of other ferns, maybe I was a bit too early, anyway something for a return visit. I had run out of time and needed to meet up with Lorcan a local moth trapper. I was welcomed warmly by his family and we had cups of tea and chats before heading to a local wood to set up the moth traps, it was a 15min walk to get the kit on site and I set up 2MV's and actinic from the generator and two LED battery pop up traps. All was going well and we quickly had our target on the outside of a trap the very rare and localised white prominent. Lorcan headed for home and I waited a bit to top up the generator before heading back. I stopped on the way back to observe both Lesser horseshoe and soprano pipistrelle bats coming in and out of their roosts, but then the rain started, I was closer to the house than the traps and got back just before the torrential rain and strong wind hit.



White prominent

Thursday 30th May

I headed back down to the moth traps just before dawn to see the effects, there were 4 traps in the wood all were pretty dry apart from the sheets which were wet, the pop up trap in the meadow was very wet upside down and 5m from the sheet but was covered in moth and the light was still on. 57 species the total could and Lorcan help me get all the kit back and then made me breakfast while drying the sheets for me.

As I headed off I found a few Irish hares in the area eventually one allowed for some photos. Then I headed to the Ring of Kerry for a bit of an explore, eventually arriving at Abbey Island here was my target of Kerry Lily. Without any specific details I searched the island in rather poor weather and finding them proved quite difficult before eventually stumbling upon a patch of them flowering nicely. I finished off the Ring of Kerry then headed to the Killarney National park to see Scannell's whitebeam, a very rare tree. I was pretty tired so had an early night after some food.



Kerry lily

Friday 31st May

I met up with one of the local National park rangers to see Irish St John's wort but unfortunately despite finding plenty none were in flower. Then it was a short drive to the mountains, here was a long walk in now rather hot and sunny conditions (typical) across the ridge for a couple of hours where on a cliff face was plenty of Recurved sandwort plants in full bloom, well worth the effort. I had earnt a cold drink and an ice cream before heading to the Waterford area to find Irish Whitebeam before calling it a day.



Recurved sandwort

Saturday 1st June

There were two coastal plants in the Wexford area Irish Sorrel and Cottonweed and I visited sites for both finding the plants fairly easily. Then it was the drive to Dublin, I took a detour to Loch Tay, which is supposed to look like a pint of Guinness, well I suppose it sort of does. Just north of Dublin at Portrane a Least Tern has been present in the Little tern colony so I took a look. It took a few hours on site before I got a couple of flyby views, there was work going on in the Tern colony and I think it kept the Least Tern away for most of my visit. I did a quick touristy stop before heading to the ferry to return home.



Cottonweed

Lists



Birds - 79

Hooded Crow	Chough	Grey wagtail
Pied Wagtail	Yellow crowned Night Heron	Fulmar
Puffin	Razorbill	Guillemot
Raven	Rook	Jackdaw
Feral Pigeon	Collared Dove	Little tern
Least Tern	Ringed Plover	Rock Pipit
Bullfinch	Grasshopper warbler	Stonechat
Cormorant	Linnet	Gannet
Little grebe	Great crested grebe	Coot
Moorhen	Mallard	Tufted Duck
Grey heron	Rook	Jackdaw
Magpie	Lesser Black backed Gull	Greater Black backed Gull
Black Headed Gull	Herring Gull	Little Egret

Buzzard	Greylag Goose	Woodpigeon
Swallow	House Martin	Sand Martin
Jay	House Sparrow	Starling
Mute Swan	Robin	Wren
Dunnock	Meadow Pipit	Rock pipit
Chiff Chaff	Willow warbler	Sedge Warbler
Greenfinch	Goldfinch	Goldcrest
Oystercatcher	Corn bunting	Common Tern
Song Thrush	Feral Pigeon	Snipe
Redshank	Pheasant	Cuckoo
Skylark	Blue tit	Great tit
Wheatear	Kestrel	Stock Dove
Reed Bunting	Shag	Whitethroat
Dunlin		



Butterflies - 10

Wood White	Cryptic Wood White	Speckled Wood
Green Veined White	Small Blue	Common Blue
Pearl Bordered Fritillary	Dingy Skipper	Small Heath
Orange Tip		



Wood White

Moths - 62

Small White Wave	Oak Eggar	Crabus Lathoniellus
Eyed Hawkmoth	Lobesia littoralis	Capua vulgana
Burnet Companion	Map Winged Swift	Common White Wave
White prominent	Brown Silver Lines	Green Carpet
White Pinion Spotted	Lobster Moth	Small Angle Shades
Little Emerald	Marbled White Spot	Common Marbled Carpet
Common Lutestring	Satin Lutestring	Water Carpet
Scalloped Hazel	Pale prominent	Brimstone
Least Black Arches	Beautiful Snout	Welsh Wave
Common wave	Pale tussock	Square Spot
Clouded Silver	Common Pug	Peach Blossom
Broken Barred Carpet	Alder Moth	Pale Shouldered Brocade



Puss Moth

Double Striped Pug	Buff Ermine	Flame Shoulder
Scorched Wing	Lead Coloured Pug	Barred Umber
Dark Barred twin spot carpet	Buff tip	Pebble Prominent
Apotomis sororculana	Clouded Border	Green Silver Lines
Peppered Moth	Spruce carpet	Lesser Swallow prominent
Elephant Hawkmoth	Angle shades	Knotgrass
Puss Moth	Pecock Moth	Tawny Marbled Minor
Purple Bar	V Pug	Red Green Carpet
Nematopogon swammerdamella	Narrow bordered Bee Hawkmoth	



Flame carpet



Irish Hare

Selected Plants

Burnet Rose	Columbine	Danish Scurvy Grass
Thrift	Lousewort	Heath Spotted Orchid
Early Purple Orchid	Bloody cranesbill	Mountain Everlasting
Fly Orchid	Mountain Avens	Hairy Rockcress
Common Spotted Orchid	Common twayblade	Bugle
Sanicle	Field Mouse Ear	Mossy Saxifrage
Common rock Rose	Hoary Rock rose	Irish Eyebright
Dense Flowered Orchid	Common Dog Violet	Goldenrod
Spring Gentian	Southern marsh Orchid	Irish Marsh Orchid
Western eyebright	Bee Orchid	Juniper
Irish Saxifrage	Thyme Broomrape	Wall Rue
Spring Sandwort	Arctic Sandwort	Burnet Saxifrage
St Patrick's Cabbage	Black Spleenwort	navelwort
Kerry lily	Sea Sandwort	Scannell's Whitebeam
Irish Whitebeam	Irish St John's Wort (Not in flower)	Large Butterwort
Stagshorn Clubmoss	Recurved Sandwort	Irish Sorrel
Cottonweed		



Scannell's Whitebeam

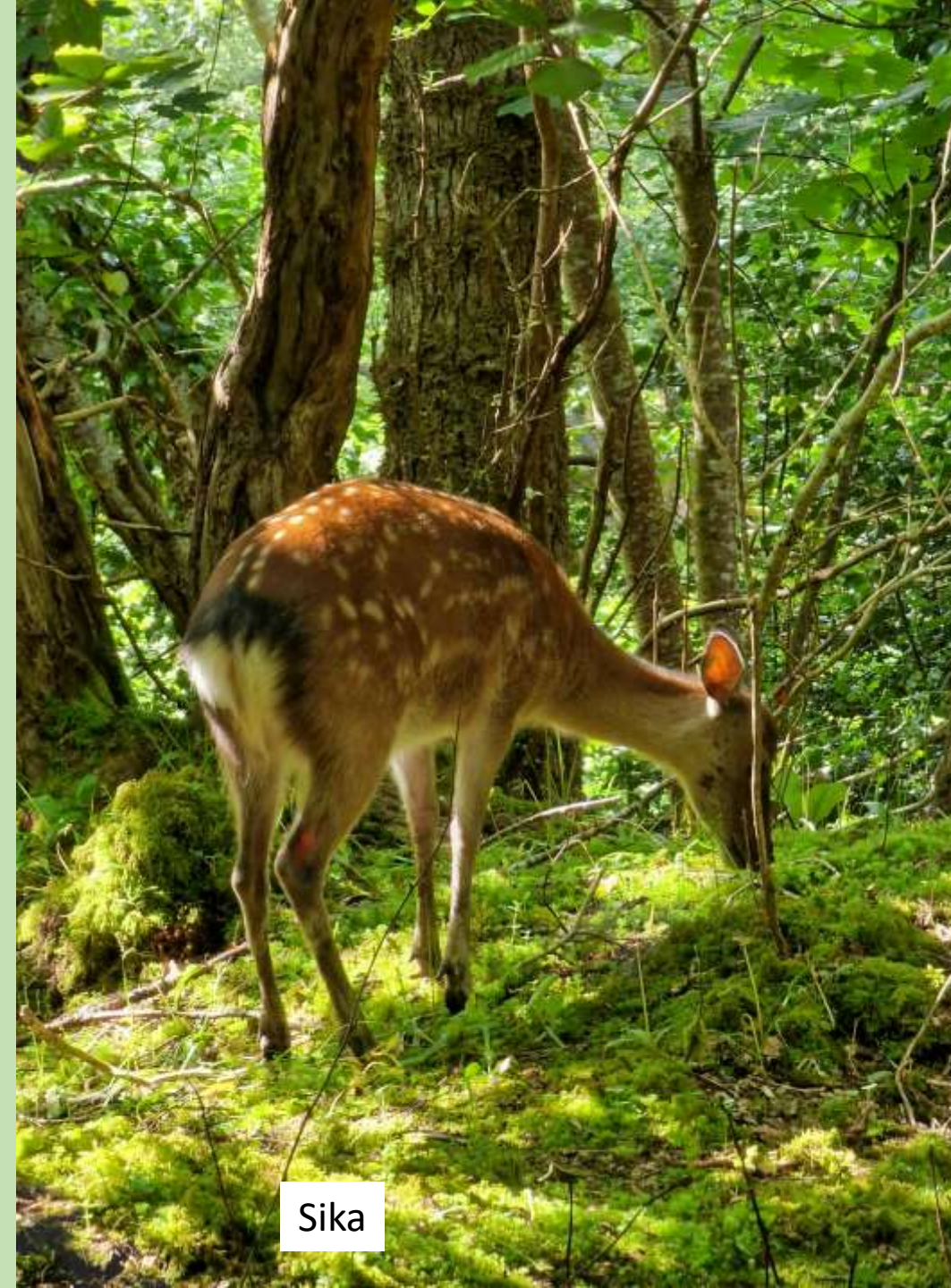


Spring Gentian

Mammals - 10

Common Pipistrelle	Irish Hare	Red Fox
Lesser Horseshoe bat	Grey Squirrel	Wood Mouse
Bank Vole	Red Deer	Sika
Rabbit		

flickr



Sika

