

# Castlecomer Biodiversity Action Plan 2021



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## Summary:



Castlecomer is a rural market town in the north of County Kilkenny, Ireland. It is positioned at the meeting of N78 and R694 roads about 16 km north of Kilkenny city. At the 2016 census of the Central Statistics Office, the town's population included 1,502 people. Castlecomer is identified as a District town in the **Kilkenny County Development Plan** (CDP). Not surprisingly, agriculture is the main activity in the wider area surrounding the town, however, Castlecomer has had a long industrial heritage over hundreds of years, from coal mining to brick manufacturing, which have both ceased and non-agricultural employment is now centred on the tourism service industry, which has, as its hub the Castlecomer Discovery Park & Mining Museum.

The **Castlecomer Biodiversity Action Plan** project began in early December 2020, over the winter months NBDC records were downloaded and interrogated to get an understanding of Castlecomer's biodiversity recorded assets, against known gaps and expected outcomes. The project is the initiative of **Castlecomer Tidy Towns Group (CTTG)** and its partners, in particular Kilkenny CoCo, who arranged for base maps to be used for the habitat mapping element and Castlecomer Men's Shed Group who facilitate many of the manual project works required. The field surveys & desktop work was done by Lorcan Scott, past National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) Ranger, current Heritage Council Wildlife Officer, and resident.

It was agreed that the Castlecomer LAP area, would form the basis of the study area, this worked out to be covered by 13 x 1Km squares, which all culminated in **266 species records**, of these, **12 species** are considered **invasive species** (*3 of which are snail spp.*), **10 bird species** listed are on the amber list of **Birds of Conservation Concern**. 28 species overall are listed under National or International legislation (*Birds/Habitats Directives of Wildlife Acts of 1976-2020*) as being "Protected Species". Obvious gaps included, no fish species recorded, only one fungus (*Scarlet Elf cup*) made the records and similarly one bee, ladybird (7 spotted) and conifer (*Yew*) throughout the study area.

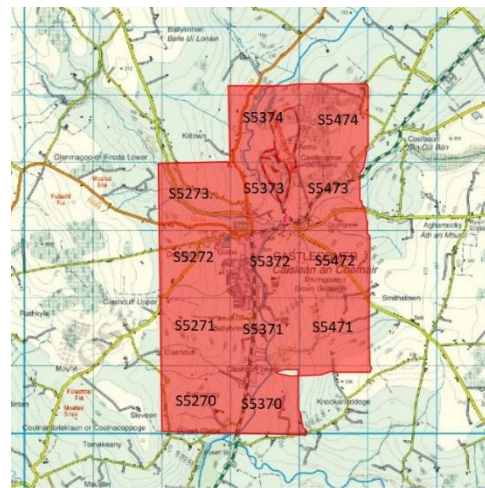
Complementary to this report and the habitat map, *which is in progress*, will come a sister **Castlecomer Pollinator Plan** (*Castlecomer Tidy Towns Group has already registered under the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan*). A draft of **20 actions** are to be agreed, these are designed to fill information gaps, conserve/improve important niche habitats and involving the community, to raise awareness and get involved in some practical conservation around the wider town.



## PART 1: Descriptive:

### Introduction:

In July 2020 the **Castlecomer Tidy Towns Group (CTTG)** developed their Tidy Towns Development Plan and identified a number of actions to take place between 2021 & 2023, the area of biodiversity, incorporating pollination and sustainability, was highlighted as a key action that the Committee wished to progress at an early stage and they approached **Lorcan Scott** (*author, past NPWS Ranger for Kilkenny & resident*) to assist with the formulation of a study and what has now evolved into a **Community Biodiversity Action Plan**. The author agreed with CTTG, to concentrate on the general **Castlecomer Local Area Plan (LAP)** boundary and the author matched the area to the relevant 1km squares to access **National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC)** data. In general terms, this report follows the **Community Foundation for Ireland: Resource Pack for Community Biodiversity Grantees & Ecologists 2019**. Work began in early December 2020 and while not an optimal season given flora/insect dormancy, desktop work started on researching the NBDC database of existing recorded species and seeking to partner with Kilkenny CoCo (*Heritage Officer, Dearbhala Ledwidge*) to get access to usable maps for habitat mapping. Despite the various lockdowns and curfews associated with Covid\_19, work progressed well and by early January a good understanding of Castlecomer's records emerged. It is hoped that this Community Biodiversity Action Plan will form the basis of future informed planning, allowing the conservation of Castlecomer's rich biodiversity, to target gaps in knowledge, to enhance the wider Castlecomer district by redressing some of the ecological imbalance, thus preserving a health environment for future Castlecomerians.



### Consultation:

This report could not have been made possible without the support of a small number of partners, in particular LAWPRO, who assisted in the funding of the report under their Community Grant Scheme 2021, it was also agreed to partner with Kilkenny CoCo (Heritage Officer) as this offered the access to use good base maps to carry out the **phase III Habitat mapping**, also the group have been very active with a range of Kilkenny CoCo staff from the Area Engineer's office to the Parks department, among others. Castlecomer Tidy Towns Group are very well established and have a long association with the **National Tidy Towns Competition** going back to the 1960s, over this time strong support has been built up with local businesses, community organisations and the residents, it was agreed that open access and regular briefings would take place, so all knew and understood the project and what it is hoping to achieve. Finally, the newly established CTTG Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Tidy-Town-Castlecomer-101160998325017>) was utilised greatly, to announce the project and to post regular information on both the project and Castlecomer's biodiversity as things progressed. As NBDC records were absent for fish species, the author requested relevant data from **Inland Fisheries Ireland**, we await their assistance to date. From research carried out, I contacted **Siobhan Atkinson**, a Ph.D. student in 2018 who carried out some published field surveys for UCD, in correspondence she confirmed the presence of **Salmon** (*Salmo*

*salar*), **Brown Trout** (*Salmo trutta*), **Eel** (*Anguilla anguilla*), **River Lamprey** (*Lampetra fluviatilis*), **Perch** (*Perca fluviatilis*) & **Stone Loach** (*Barbatula barbatula*) and while these species were known to be present, no other actual records are known to state this fact.

### Desktop research:

From December 2020 to January 2021, work set about researching available data, the NBDC data was well known to the author and many personal records are contained within. Once the 13 x 1km square records were cleaned up and any duplicates sorted, a clearer picture emerged. Details of these records are discussed within the report, but obvious gaps needed additional research and that followed without resolution (*to date*) and will be listed as both a weakness and an opportunity.

More general information, regarding Castlecomer's wildlife and habitats were found in old publications, such as the **An Foras Forbartha ASI report of 1981** and even further back in Lord Killanin's **Shell Guide to Ireland**. Finally, additional reports were accessed in the publication list for NPWS regarding the **River Barrow, River Nore cSAC IE0002162** and links to them can be found in the appendices.

Finally, I carried out a desk top search of recorded wetlands from the Wetland Survey Ireland website (<http://www.wetlandsurveysireland.com>) 3 such recorded wetlands are listed for the Castlecomer LAP area.

### Land history:



**Castlecomer Historic 6" Map**

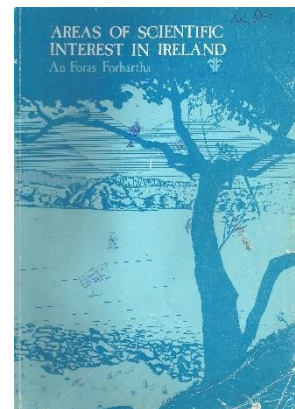
<sup>1</sup>“Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny, is a small market town where the Athy – Kilkenny road crosses the pretty valley of the little Dinin rua”.

The town takes its name from a castle erected at the Anglo-Norman invasion (probably by William the Marshal). Despite the castle, the Irish lords of the region, the O'Brennans, retained their hold hereabouts until 1635, when their lands were awarded to Sir Christopher Wandesford. The new proprietor planted English colonists, exploited the local anthracite mines, introduced haymaking to the district, and laid out “an elegant town exactly on the model of a famous one in Italy, viz Alisinore”. The buildings he erected included a castle on Colliery Hill and a Protestant Church. In November 1641, the town was captured by Confederate Catholics under Capt. O'Brennan and Bryan, but the castle held out until the following March. In 1798 the town was attacked and partly burned by the Insurgents who were driven off only after a sharp struggle. Nowadays, Castlecomer is best known as a coal-mining centre, but the mining has not spoiled the immediate vicinity.

The Protestant parish church (*St. Mary's*) has a window (1922) by Michael Healy.

On the east side of the town, in the grounds of Castlecomer House, is The Garrison, mutilated motte of the first Anglo-Norman castle. 2<sup>1/2</sup> miles south of the Dysart Bridge-Smithstown road in Knockanaddoge townland, is Rathcally, a bivallate ringfort. ¾ mile northeast is the pretty little Rock of Foyle waterfall; beside it is a large ringfort; nearby is Clais an Aifrinn a hollow where Mass was said in Penal times”.

<sup>2</sup>The 1981 An Foras Forbartha report: Areas of Scientific Interest in Ireland lists Castlecomer Estate Woodlands (#16) as of “Local (ecological) Interest”, stating: “Areas of neglected estate woodlands and small lakes, originally planted and maintained for ornamental purposes. Trees include exotic conifers and ornamental shrubs as well as native species of oak, ash and hazel. The area provides a refuge for many plant and animal species”. Although many AFF ASIs went on to be listed as **Natural Heritage Areas (NHA)**, as indeed Castlecomer Estate Woodland did, later revisions de-listed this site in later years, although a small portion along the River Dinin forms part of the River Barrow/ River Nore cSAC (2162).



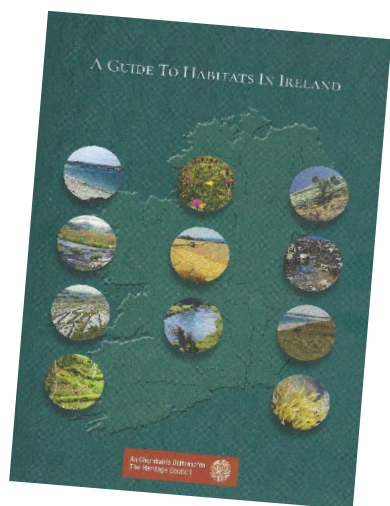
***According to local folklore, Saint Patrick cursed the reeds on the bank of the Dinan so that their tops were withered.***

<sup>1</sup> Shell Guide to Ireland Lord Killanin & Michael V. Duigan, The Ebury Press. London 1962

<sup>2</sup> National Heritage Inventory: Areas of Scientific Interest in Ireland AFF, The Heritage Trust, 1981.

## Surveys and inventory

Given the project began in December 2020, it was decided to spend the first month trawling the NBDC records to see what is recorded within the Castlecomer LAP currently, what it tells us about Castlecomer's biodiversity, as well as any invasive species, those protected under national and international legislation and those listed by various scientific bodies as threatened or of conservation



concern etc. This has been a very informative process and ranges widely as to the level of detail. One KM square (S5270) centred around the townland of Ballycomey held only two records; for Badger & Primrose, this generated a humorous picture of badgers, wandering around in a kilometre square of nothing but primrose. On the other hand, detailed species records for a small number of key species groups were also present, of note, a comprehensive list of mosses & lichens as well as molluscs were to be found – fertile grounds for future studies!

While December & January are poor months for most flora and insect species, while in the field any notable species were added as often as possible to supplement known absences, this recording will continue as much as possible into the future.

*It is hoped that we can support a targeted survey of Castlecomer's fish status later in 2021/2.*

## Part 2: Proscriptive:

### Strength, Weakness, Opportunity & Threats (SWOT) Analysis:

The resultant data, that has been gleaned from the records of the NBDC, indicate both a wide range of typical species to be expected in an Irish rural setting, but these typical species are complemented by some significant rare and or threatened species, which depend on specific environmental conditions to allow them to reproduce and thrive in clean, undisturbed habitats. This report will highlight some of the key findings under the SWOT topics and will list some actions that are designed to address them, where relevant.

#### Strengths:

The first and obvious strength is the rich diversity in both fauna and flora that still survives and at times thrives, in Castlecomer town and its hinterland, this is greatly assisted by the relatively clean rivers flowing into and through the town (EPA Q3 & 3-4) and the forethought of those who managed the species rich farm grasslands and old estate woodlands over generations. These habitats have been resilient up to now, despite a range of land use pressures, they hold the majority of sensitive species that are to be found. One exception to this rule, however, lies in fact the species rich grasslands that are to be found in the now abandoned clay pits and mounds around Ardra. This area is sensitive, even though it benefits from some limited disturbance, to ensure new habitat exists for these coloniser species, if just abandoned it would soon revert to a wet scrubby wood, of much lesser botanical interest. The other major habitat area within the town environs is the River Dinin, a first order tributary of the River Nore and designated as having European importance due to some of the rare species and sensitive habitats that form the river and its banks. The cSAC (candidate Special Area of Conservation) is monitored by a few State bodies, particularly the National Parks & Wildlife Service

(NPWS), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Kilkenny County Council, among others. The relatively clean water ensures annual passage for protected species such as Salmon and Lamprey and a stable home for Freshwater Crayfish, Brown Trout and Eel. Beyond these larger habitat types, we can find a range of pocket habitats, small areas of semi-natural woodlands, wet marshy areas and also includes Irelands distinctive hedgerows. Both the mix and condition of all of these habitats, when occurring in the wider town setting of Castlecomer, give us the biodiversity character found and we benefit from the services they provide – known as ecosystem services and relate to such activities as pollination of our apple trees, to control of agricultural pests. Finally, the Castlecomer Discovery Park, having as a core function the DPSM (***Discovery Programme Science & Maths***) programme, is a significant boost for Castlecomer’s biodiversity awareness and all Castlecomer Schools avail of their services.

### **Weaknesses:**

Castlecomer’s weaknesses in relation to this topic centre on the identified gaps in knowledge, particularly fish and fungi species, and Castlecomer’s exposure to the identified wider national crises pertaining to climate change and biodiversity loss. Although not immediately obvious both issues can be identified within the wider Castlecomer town area. Castlecomer will always be under pressure to redevelop the town, and rightly so, but development without knowledge can lead to poor decisions and poor outcomes. Castlecomer has its share of invasive species, many associated with historic planting of exotics in woodlands, some garden escapees, in recent years we have seen the spread of Ash dieback, which is having a serious negative impact on ash commercial woods planted for hurls as well as our native hedgerows, where they make a significant landscape feature.

### **Opportunities:**

Castlecomer boasts of a landscape made up of beautiful woodlands, relatively clean rivers with the Georgian town building stock set like a jewel within the rural hinterland. All these habitats support a myriad of fauna & flora, some of which have been captured and recorded in the NBDC database. Many species remain to be recorded, and this is a great opportunity for those who live in Castlecomer and love the joys that biodiversity offers. Timing has never been so right, we now know much of what is required to halt species decline in many situations, as well as the rich benefits we receive from floodplains, pollinators and the bird song that fill the Castlecomer air in spring and summer each year. The newly formed **NoreVision** (<http://www.norevision.ie>) programme has begun to look at facilitating invasive species workshops, farm walks and litter clean-ups throughout the wider Nore catchment. Castlecomer has an active Men’s Shed Group based in the town and they have been keen to be actively involved in construction and erection of bird boxes around the town. CTTG will work with such partners to achieve better outcomes for our built and natural environment.

### **Threats:**

Castlecomer, no different to all Irish communities, has seen habitat and species loss, from historical wolf populations to today, when iconic species such as Cuckoo and Corncrake no longer inhabit the agricultural fields as they once did in north Kilkenny. We have also witnessed new species, some invasive, such as Rhododendron or Balsam to other more benign species such as Little Egret & Great Spotted woodpecker, back after an absence of many hundred years, these are all features of present and future change – they will be both positive and negative.

Covid\_19 has forced us to relook at a number of previous lifestyles that we now can see are both unsustainable and a threat to our health and wellbeing. We are facing into enormous changes if we do not change our way of life and no one knows this better than those who will come after us, the next generation face more regular storms of greater intensity, more flooding and significant drought episodes. Methods of traditional agriculture are being threatened as they are unable to deal with these issues and all is compounded by a wider number of invasive species, probably best illustrated by the arrival of Ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) to Castlecomer estate woodlands and wider countryside. This has a real and immediate impact on our ability to manage native woodlands and comes at a great cost.



Castlecomer Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2023						
List of Top 20 Actions						
#	Action	Location	Year	By whom	Pollinator	SDG #
1	Create a Bee Banks	Immaculate Conception Cemetary & Prince's Grounds embankments	2021	CTTG & Men's Shed	YES	11; 13; 15 & 17
2	Create a wildflower meadows	Immaculate Conception Cemetary & Barrack Hill Pocket Park	2021	CTTG & Men's Shed	YES	11; 13; 15 & 17
3	Develop a Compost Pallet facility	Immaculate Conception Cemetary Barrack Hill Pocket Park	2022	CTTG & Men's Shed	NO	11; 12;13; 15 & 17
4	Create a Hoverfly water scrape	Barrack Hill Pocket Park	2021	CTTG & Men's Shed	YES	11; 13; 15 & 17
5	Participate in An Taisce's Spring Clean	Castlecomer LAP ( <i>Starting with Rivers in 2021</i> )	2021	CTTG & Kilkenny Sub A	NO	3; 6; 11; 12; 14; 15 & 17
6	Build a Bug Hotel	Barrack Hill Pocket Park	2021	CTTG & Men's Shed	NO	11; 12 13; 15 & 17
7	Clear-up & Develop a cycle/picnic area	Dysart Bridge North	2022	KCC & CTTG	NO	3; 11; 15 & 17
8	Clear-up & Develop a Woodland Glade	Glebe Railway Abutment	2022	KCC & CTTG	NO	3; 11; 15 & 17
9	Participate in BWT/KCC Swift Survey	Castlecomer LAP	2021	KCC/BWT & CTTG	NO	3; 11; 15 & 17
10	Seek to cease all balloon release events in Castlecomer	Castlecomer LAP	2021	KCC & CTTG	NO	11; 12;15 & 17
11	Seek to restore hedgerow plant-up a woodland spinny	Castlecomer Community School (Back entrance)	2022	CCS	NO	3; 11;13;15 & 17
12	Provide Bat / Bird boxes	Barrack Hill Pocket Park	2021	CTTG & Men's Shed	NO	3; 11; 15 & 17
13	Build 3x Hedgehog Hibernation houses	Barrack Hill Pocket Park & Dysart Bridge Nth	2021	CTTG & Men's Shed	NO	3; 11; 15 & 17
14	Collect local Wildflower seeds	Ardra Clay Pits / Muckalee Reservoir	2022	CTTG	YES	3; 11; 12; 13; 15 & 17
15	Participate in World Wetlands Day, Earth Hour & National Biodiversity Week	Castlecomer LAP	2021	CTTG	NO	4; 6; 11; 14; 15 & 17
16	Reduce Castlecomer's use of Herbicide, Insecticide & Rodenticide	Castlecomer LAP	2021	CTTG	YES	3; 6; 11; 12; 14; 15 & 17
17	Develop a Wildlife Guide to Castlecomer (PDF)	Castlecomer LAP	2023	KCC & CTTG	YES	4; 12 & 17
18	Make Castlecomer TTG "Peat-Free"	Castlecomer LAP	2023	KCC & CTTG	NO	7; 9; 11; 12 13 & 17
19	Develop closer links with Castlecomer Discovery Park	Castlecomer Discovery Park	2022	Castlecomer Discovery	YES	11; 14; 15 & 17
20	Review Castlecomer Biodiversity Action Plan	Castlecomer LAP	2025	KCC & CTTG	NO	17

## Table of Actions:

**Action #1: Create Bee Banks [2021]:** These simple, yet effective clay banks exposures are a positive way to provide nesting habitats for a range of solitary bees. Two sites have been identified, the Cemetery adjoining the Church of the Immaculate Conception and bank adjoining the Prince's Grounds. It is hoped that each site will expose just two metres x 0.75 metres and managed to allow



these features to remain intact. These should have almost immediate responses if completed in summer 2021.

**Action #2: Manage selected areas to promote native wildflower meadow species [2021-2025]:** We plan to start small and expand over the life of the plan. Currently the two grass banks identified in Church of the Immaculate Conception & Barrack Hill Pocket Park will have areas managed as wildflower meadows.

**Action #3: Develop compost recycling facilities associated with community grounds [2022-2025].** It is hoped that pallet style appropriate composting structures will replace general grass cutting dumps, with resultant compost being worked into community plantings in time. 3 sites are identified under this action: Barrack Hill Pocket Park, The Cemetery of the Church of the Immaculate Conception and Castlecomer Community School (*rear entrance area*).

**Action #4: Create a Hoverfly Scrape [2021]:** This too is a Pollinator Project Action, a simple shallow scrape of 1 metre to a depth of 10cm or so should suffice, this wetland feature will attract hoverflies if combined with decaying vegetation. It is hoped to carry out this action as part of **World Wetlands Day 2021**, or **National Biodiversity Week** at latest.

**Action #5: To participate in An Táisce's National Spring Clean [2021-2025]:** Castlecomer Tidy Towns Group have registered and participated in National Spring Clean 2021. Over the following years we will look at a river clean with volunteers from the Kilkenny Sub Aqua Club for 2021/2 & expand over life of CBAP.

**Action #6: Develop a Bug Hotel:** These are fashionable eco-features these days, but as fashionable as they are, they do focus communities on biodiversity actions in a very positive way and it is hoped that a hotel located at the Barrack Hill Pocket Park will be a positive addition to the site and Covid allowing it is hoped that Castlecomer Community School Transition students will work to design an impressive structure!

**Action #7: Clean-up and develop the old Dysart North limestone bridge area:** This bridge has long been by-passed by the new section of the N78, the old bridge, while not suitable for modern traffic would make a fantastic asset to Castlecomer, the N78 is identified as a cycling route by Kilkenny CoCo and with minimal intervention and just some pointing and ivy control management the old bridge could easily locate some picnic benches and bicycle parking bars. The vegetation is typical of disturbed ground but could be enhanced to support greater wildflower species and some sensitive native tree planting. The bridge was known as a bat roost, it is hoped to confirm their presence in 2021 and would be protected from any improvement works,

**Action #8: Clean up and develop the Railway buttress at Glebe.** A similar situation arises at Glebe, off Chatsworth Street, a small area under the shadow of the old railway bridge buttress has become overgrown and unmanaged. This is a small area along the Cloghogue river and is likely to be a frost pocket too. If cleared it could support a small wood of selected trees, perhaps a weeping willow along the river or similar. The buttress has been suggested as a location for community art and might be considered for a mural?

**Action #9: Participate in the proposed Kilkenny County Swift Survey 2021:** Castlecomer's Georgian building stock is a known site for small numbers of nesting swifts, CTTG will fully participate in any

citizen science element associated with this Kilkenny Heritage Office/ BirdWatch Ireland project if requested.

**Action #10: Seek to cease all balloon release events in Castlecomer.** This type of event is rare in Castlecomer, but CTTG will seek to have all businesses and events to commit to not participating in these litter events. CTTG will look into a Charter of Commitment by Castlecomer businesses/ partners by 2025.

**Action #11: Seek to restore the hedgerows and to establish a small wood spinney at the rear to Castlecomer Community School:** This will be a longer-term action. To the rear of Castlecomer Community School a small section of old hedgerow still exists, it is hoped to facilitate the restoration of the old hedgerow and perhaps add a small number of native trees to the wet unkept corner to the rear of the playing fields, these could be set against CO<sup>2</sup> emissions and raise awareness of some climate changes adaptations.

**Action #12: Provide additional locations to support Bird & Bat boxes:** Castlecomer Men's Shed has been instrumental in construction and erection of a number of bird boxes around the town, within the golf club and other locations. We hope in 2021 to supplement these, replace any damaged boxes and to construct some and place out some appropriate bat boxes. Certainly, the Barrack Hill Pocket Park (Coill Muire) will feature but it is hoped additional sites too with the agreement of our partners.

**Action #13: Create a small number of Hedgehog hibernation cells:** CTTG & Castlecomer Men's Shed hope to construct 3 hedgehog cells, constructed from up-cycled old/seconds bricks at a few quiet locations around the town.

**Action #14: Collect local wildflower seed:** This action is based on seeking local seed to boost wildflower locations around Castlecomer, there are a number of sites in the locality that would bear some minor harvesting, and this might become a feature as part of National Heritage Week each year, weather permitting. Source locations at Muckalee Reservoir & Ardra clay pits (*if access is permitted*).

**Action #15: Participate with event(s) as part of World Wetlands Day (February 2<sup>nd</sup>), Earth-Hour (Last Saturday in March: 20:30) & National Biodiversity Week (May 22<sup>nd</sup> each year).**

**Action #16: Reduce Castlecomer's use of Herbicide, Insecticide & Rodenticide.**

**Action #17: To produce a biodiversity publication of Castlecomer and its hinterland, mostly as a PDF file to download.** It is envisaged that this publication might suit tourists and visitors to Castlecomer, particularly the Discovery Park but also taking in the town's biodiversity and special features such as the waterfall at Rock of Foyle etc. Any hard copy would attract a recouping cost, while the PDF version would be freely available to download.

**Action #18: To declare Castlecomer Tidy Towns Group & Castlecomer "Peat-Free by 2025.**

**Action #19: Develop closer links with Castlecomer Discovery Park.** Look to assist the Discovery Park in managing invasive riverine species; look to involve the estate in the wider Castlecomer Wildlife trail.

**Action#20: To review Castlecomer Biodiversity Action Plan in early 2025.**

## Linkages

The Castlecomer Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2025 follows the broad format of the **Community Foundation for Ireland** model, it will assist to inform future Kilkenny County Council Local Area Plans, it complements actions in the County Kilkenny Biodiversity Action Plan (**Kilkenny County Council Cultural Strategy Arts, Heritage and Libraries 2018–2022** - <https://kilkennyheritage.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/KK-Cultural-Strategy-English-version.pdf> ) and thus the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021. The follow-on **Castlecomer Pollinator Plan** will also support the **Kilkenny County Council Pollinator Programme 2019**.

**Action funding opportunities** (e.g. Leader, corporate sponsorship of individual actions, etc.):

- **LAWPRO** (Local Authority Waters Programme Officers) **DHLGH: Community Water Development Fund** - <http://watersandcommunities.ie>
- **Heritage Council Community Grants**: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/funding/funding-schemes>

## Methodologies for data collection:

As stated, this report is based primarily on the open source data retrieved from the National Biodiversity Data Centre, 13 1 Kilometre squares were identified as making up the Castlecomer LAP (and adjoining lands). Records were as per listed to 2020 and every effort was taken to remove any duplicate species and errors (a record submitted by the author was in fact located in Kylemore, Connemara Co. Galway and was not referenced in this report.

## Data sources for desk study (References):

National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC): <https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie>

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## NBDC Species list:

*It should be again noted that this report refers, almost solely, to records of species uploaded to the NBDC Database. There are many, many other species that persons have identified, but have not recorded with NBDC to date.*

From desktop searches, the author was able to identify a total of **266 individual species records**. Of these **12 are considered “Invasive Species”**, *three of which are snail species*, interestingly! **28 species are identified as holding a protected designation**, this may include EU Habitat & Birds Directives, The Wildlife Acts of 1976 – present, or listed under the Birds of Conservation Concern (**10 species**).

## Castlecomer LAP NBDC Species List (2020)

#	Spp Group	Spp Name	No.
1	Amphibian	Common Frog ( <i>Rana temporaria</i> )	2
2	Amphibian	Smooth Newt ( <i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i> )	
3	Bird	Blackcap ( <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i> )	32
4	Bird	Chaffinch ( <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> )	
5	Bird	Common Bullfinch ( <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i> )	
6	Bird	Common Buzzard ( <i>Buteo buteo</i> )	
7	Bird	Common Chiffchaff ( <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> )	
8	Bird	Common Kestrel ( <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> )	
9	Bird	Common Moorhen ( <i>Gallinula chloropus</i> )	
10	Bird	Common Raven ( <i>Corvus corax</i> )	
11	Bird	Common Snipe ( <i>Gallinago gallinago</i> )	
12	Bird	Common Starling ( <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> )	
13	Bird	Common Swift ( <i>Apus apus</i> )	
14	Bird	Eurasian Jay ( <i>Garrulus glandarius</i> )	
15	Bird	Eurasian Sparrowhawk ( <i>Accipiter nisus</i> )	
16	Bird	Eurasian Treecreeper ( <i>Certhia familiaris</i> )	
17	Bird	Eurasian Woodcock ( <i>Scolopax rusticola</i> )	
18	Bird	Goldcrest ( <i>Regulus regulus</i> )	
19	Bird	Great Cormorant ( <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> )	
20	Bird	Great Tit ( <i>Parus major</i> )	
21	Bird	Grey Heron ( <i>Ardea cinerea</i> )	
22	Bird	Hooded Crow ( <i>Corvus cornix</i> )	
23	Bird	House Martin ( <i>Delichon urbicum</i> )	
24	Bird	Lesser Redpoll ( <i>Carduelis cabaret</i> )	
25	Bird	Little Egret ( <i>Egretta garzetta</i> )	
26	Bird	Little Grebe ( <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i> )	
27	Bird	Long-tailed Tit ( <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i> )	
28	Bird	Mute Swan ( <i>Cygnus olor</i> )	
29	Bird	Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> )	
30	Bird	Redwing ( <i>Turdus iliacus</i> )	
31	Bird	Reed Bunting ( <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i> )	
32	Bird	Rook ( <i>Corvus frugilegus</i> )	
33	Bird	Spotted Flycatcher ( <i>Muscicapa striata</i> )	
34	Bird	White-throated Dipper ( <i>Cinclus cinclus</i> )	
35	Bird	Willow Warbler ( <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i> )	
36	Annelid	Glossiphonia complanata	1
37	Crustacean	Freshwater White-clawed Crayfish ( <i>Austro-potamobius pallipes</i> )	1
38	Fern	Bracken ( <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> )	5
39	Fern	Hard fern ( <i>Blechnum spicant</i> )	
40	Fern	Hart's-tongue ( <i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i> )	

41	Fern	Lady-fern ( <i>Athyrium filix-femina</i> )	
42	Fern	Male-fern ( <i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i> )	
43	Fern	Soft Shield-fern ( <i>Polystichum setiferum</i> )	
44	Flowering plant	Alder ( <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> )	73
45	Flowering plant	Ash ( <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> )	
46	Flowering plant	Apple ( <i>Malus pumila</i> )	
47	Flowering plant	Barren Strawberry ( <i>Potentilla sterilis</i> )	
48	Flowering plant	Beech ( <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> )	
49	Flowering plant	Bee Orchid ( <i>Ophrys apifera</i> )	
50	Flowering plant	Bluebell ( <i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i> )	
51	Flowering plant	Bramble ( <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.)	
52	Flowering plant	Branched Bur-reed ( <i>Sparganium erectum</i> )	
53	Flowering plant	Broad-leaved Helleborine ( <i>Epipactis helleborine</i> )	
54	Flowering plant	Brooklime ( <i>Veronica beccabunga</i> )	
55	Flowering plant	Bugle ( <i>Ajuga reptans</i> )	
56	Flowering plant	Bush Vetch ( <i>Vicia sepium</i> )	
57	Flowering plant	Butterbur ( <i>Petasites hybridus</i> )	
58	Flowering plant	Cherry Laurel ( <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> )	
59	Flowering plant	Cleavers ( <i>Galium aparine</i> )	
60	Flowering plant	Cock's-foot ( <i>Dactylis glomerata</i> )	
61	Flowering plant	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil ( <i>Lotus corniculatus</i> )	
62	Flowering plant	Common Dog-violet ( <i>Viola riviniana</i> )	
63	Flowering plant	Common Nettle ( <i>Urtica dioica</i> )	
64	Flowering plant	Common Spotted-orchid ( <i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i> )	
65	Flowering plant	Common Twayblade ( <i>Listera ovata</i> )	
66	Flowering plant	Cow Parsley ( <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i> )	
67	Flowering plant	Creeping Bent ( <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i> )	
68	Flowering plant	Creeping Buttercup ( <i>Ranunculus repens</i> )	
69	Flowering plant	Cuckooflower ( <i>Cardamine pratensis</i> )	
70	Flowering plant	Daisy ( <i>Bellis perennis</i> )	
71	Flowering plant	Early-purple Orchid ( <i>Orchis mascula</i> )	
72	Flowering plant	Great Mullein ( <i>Verbascum thapsus</i> )	
73	Flowering plant	Greater Stitchwort ( <i>Stellaria holostea</i> )	
74	Flowering plant	Great Wood-rush ( <i>Luzula sylvatica</i> )	
75	Flowering plant	Enchanter's-nightshade ( <i>Circaea lutetiana</i> )	
76	Flowering plant	False-brome ( <i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i> )	
77	Flowering plant	Foxglove ( <i>Digitalis purpurea</i> )	
78	Flowering plant	Hawthorn ( <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> )	
79	Flowering plant	Hazel ( <i>Corylus avellana</i> )	
80	Flowering plant	Hedge Woundwort ( <i>Stachys sylvatica</i> )	
81	Flowering plant	Hogweed ( <i>Heracleum sphondylium</i> )	
82	Flowering plant	Herb-Robert ( <i>Geranium robertianum</i> )	
83	Flowering plant	Holly ( <i>Ilex aquifolium</i> )	

84	Flowering plant	Honeysuckle ( <i>Lonicera periclymenum</i> )	
85	Flowering plant	Ivy ( <i>Hedera helix</i> )	
86	Flowering plant	Japanese Knotweed ( <i>Fallopia japonica</i> )	
87	Flowering plant	Kidney Vetch ( <i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i> )	
88	Flowering plant	Lady's-mantle ( <i>Alchemilla vulgaris</i> agg.)	
89	Flowering plant	Lesser Celandine ( <i>Ranunculus ficaria</i> )	
89	Flowering plant	Lords-and-Ladies ( <i>Arum maculatum</i> )	
90	Flowering plant	Marsh-marigold ( <i>Caltha palustris</i> )	
91	Flowering plant	Meadow Vetchling ( <i>Lathyrus pratensis</i> )	
92	Flowering plant	Meadowsweet ( <i>Filipendula ulmaria</i> )	
93	Flowering plant	<i>Malus sylvestris</i> sens.lat.	
94	Flowering plant	Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage ( <i>Chrysosplenium oppositifolium</i> )	
95	Flowering plant	Oxeye Daisy ( <i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> )	
96	Flowering plant	Pedunculate Oak ( <i>Quercus robur</i> )	
97	Flowering plant	Pendulous Sedge ( <i>Carex pendula</i> )	
98	Flowering plant	Primrose ( <i>Primula vulgaris</i> )	
99	Flowering plant	Ragged-Robin ( <i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i> )	
100	Flowering plant	Reed Canary-grass ( <i>Phalaris arundinacea</i> )	
101	Flowering plant	Ramsons ( <i>Allium ursinum</i> )	
102	Flowering plant	Remote Sedge ( <i>Carex remota</i> )	
103	Flowering plant	<i>Rumex sanguineus</i>	
104	Flowering plant	Snowberry ( <i>Symphoricarpos albus</i> )	
105	Flowering plant	Spindle ( <i>Euonymus europaeus</i> )	
106	Flowering plant	Sycamore ( <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> )	
107	Flowering plant	Water-cress ( <i>Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum</i> )	
108	Flowering plant	Wavy Bitter-cress ( <i>Cardamine flexuosa</i> )	
109	Flowering plant	Wild Strawberry ( <i>Fragaria vesca</i> )	
110	Flowering plant	Wood Anemone ( <i>Anemone nemorosa</i> )	
111	Flowering plant	Wood Avens ( <i>Geum urbanum</i> )	
112	Flowering plant	Wood Speedwell ( <i>Veronica montana</i> )	
113	Flowering plant	Wood-sorrel ( <i>Oxalis acetosella</i> )	
114	Flowering plant	Wych Elm ( <i>Ulmus glabra</i> )	
115	Flowering plant	Yorkshire-fog ( <i>Holcus lanatus</i> )	
116	Flowering plant	Yellow Iris ( <i>Iris pseudacorus</i> )	
117	Flowering plant	Yellow rattle ( <i>Rhinanthus minor</i> )	
118	Conifer	Yew ( <i>Taxus baccata</i> )	1
119	Fungus	Scarlet Elf cup ( <i>Sarcoscypha austriaca</i> )	1
120	Insect - Beetle (Coleoptera)	7-spot Ladybird ( <i>Coccinella septempunctata</i> )	2
121	Insect - Beetle (Coleoptera)	<i>Elmis aenea</i>	
122	Insect - Butterfly	Comma ( <i>Polygonia c-album</i> )	17
123	Insect - Butterfly	Common Blue ( <i>Polyommatus icarus</i> )	
124	Insect - Butterfly	Dingy Skipper ( <i>Erynnis tages</i> )	
125	Insect - Butterfly	Green-veined White ( <i>Pieris napi</i> )	

126	Insect - Butterfly	Holly Blue ( <i>Celastrina argiolus</i> )	8	
127	Insect - Butterfly	Large White ( <i>Pieris brassicae</i> )		
128	Insect - Butterfly	Marsh Fritillary ( <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> )		
129	Insect - Butterfly	Meadow Brown ( <i>Maniola jurtina</i> )		
130	Insect - Butterfly	Orange-tip ( <i>Anthocharis cardamines</i> )		
131	Insect - Butterfly	Peacock ( <i>Inachis io</i> )		
132	Insect - Butterfly	Red Admiral ( <i>Vanessa atalanta</i> )		
133	Insect - Butterfly	Ringlet ( <i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i> )		
134	Insect - Butterfly	Silver-washed Fritillary ( <i>Argynnis paphia</i> )		
135	Insect - Butterfly	Small Copper ( <i>Lycaena phlaeas</i> )		
136	Insect - Butterfly	Small Tortoiseshell ( <i>Aglais urticae</i> )		
137	Insect - Butterfly	Small White ( <i>Pieris rapae</i> )		
138	Insect - Butterfly	Speckled Wood ( <i>Pararge aegeria</i> )		
139	Insect - Butterfly	Wood White ( <i>Leptidea sp.</i> )		
140	Insect - Dragonfly ( <i>Odonata</i> )	Azure Damselfly ( <i>Coenagrion puella</i> )		8
141	Insect - Dragonfly ( <i>Odonata</i> )	Beautiful Demoiselle ( <i>Calopteryx virgo</i> )		
142	Insect - Dragonfly ( <i>Odonata</i> )	Blue-tailed Damselfly ( <i>Ischnura elegans</i> )		
143	Insect - Dragonfly ( <i>Odonata</i> )	Brown Hawker ( <i>Aeshna grandis</i> )		
144	Insect - Dragonfly ( <i>Odonata</i> )	Common Blue Damselfly ( <i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i> )		
145	Insect - Dragonfly ( <i>Odonata</i> )	Common Darter ( <i>Sympetrum striolatum</i> )		
146	Insect - Dragonfly ( <i>Odonata</i> )	Four-spotted Chaser ( <i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i> )		
147	Insect - Dragonfly ( <i>Odonata</i> )	Large Red Damselfly ( <i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i> )		
148	Insect - Hymenopteran	Grey Mining Bee ( <i>Andrena (Melandren cineraria)</i> )	1	
149	Insect - Mayfly ( <i>Ephemeroptera</i> )	Serratella ignita	1	
150	Insect - Moth	Cinnabar ( <i>Tyria jacobaeae</i> )	8	
151	Insect - Moth	Dusky Pearl ( <i>Udea prunalis</i> )		
152	Insect - Moth	Humming-bird Hawk-moth ( <i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i> )		
154	Insect - Moth	Phyllonorycter maestingella		
156	Insect - Moth	Shaded Broad-bar ( <i>Scotopteryx chenopodiata</i> )		
157	Insect - Moth	Straw Grass-veneer ( <i>Agriphila straminella</i> )		
158	Insect - Moth	Stigmella hemargyrella		
159	Insect - Moth	Udea lutealis		
160	Insect - True bug (Hemiptera)	Green Shieldbug ( <i>Palomena prasina</i> )	3	
161	Insect - True bug (Hemiptera)	Hawthorn Shieldbug ( <i>Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale</i> )		
162	Insect - True bug (Hemiptera)	River Skater ( <i>Aquarius najas</i> )		
163	Liverwort	Blueish Veilwort ( <i>Metzgeria violacea</i> )	4	
164	Liverwort	Dilated Scalewort ( <i>Frullania dilatata</i> )		
165	Liverwort	Even Scalewort ( <i>Radula complanata</i> )		
166	Liverwort	Forked Veilwort ( <i>Metzgeria furcata</i> )		

167	Mollusc	<i>Ancylus fluviatilis</i>
168	Mollusc	Arion (Arion)
169	Mollusc	Arion (Carinarion) <i>circumscriptus</i>
170	Mollusc	Arion (Kobeltia)
171	Mollusc	Brown Lipped Snail ( <i>Cepaea (Cepaea) nemoralis</i> )
172	Mollusc	Brown Snail ( <i>Zenobiella subrufescens</i> )
173	Mollusc	Budapest Slug ( <i>Tandonia budapestensis</i> )
174	Mollusc	Cellar Snail ( <i>Oxychilus (Oxychilus) cellarius</i> )
175	Mollusc	Chestnut Slug ( <i>Deroceras (Deroceras) panormitanum</i> )
176	Mollusc	Clear Glass Snail ( <i>Aegopinella pura</i> )
177	Mollusc	Columella
178	Mollusc	Common Chrysalis Snail ( <i>Lauria (Lauria) cylindracea</i> )
179	Mollusc	Common Garden Snail ( <i>Cornu aspersum</i> )
180	Mollusc	Crystal Snail ( <i>Vitrea crystallina</i> )
181	Mollusc	Darparnaud's Glass Snail ( <i>Oxychilus (Oxychilus) draparnaudi</i> )
182	Mollusc	Dwarf Snail ( <i>Punctum (Punctum) pygmaeum</i> )
183	Mollusc	English Chrysalis Snail ( <i>Leiostyla (Leiostyla) anglica</i> )
184	Mollusc	Euconulus
185	Mollusc	Garlic Snail ( <i>Oxychilus (Oxychilus) alliarius</i> )
186	Mollusc	Great Grey Slug ( <i>Limax maximus</i> )
187	Mollusc	Hedgehog Slug ( <i>Arion (Kobeltia) intermedius</i> )
188	Mollusc	Jenkins' Spire Snail ( <i>Potamopyrgus antipodarum</i> )
189	Mollusc	Long-toothed Herald Snail ( <i>Carychium tridentatum</i> )
190	Mollusc	Milky Crystal Snail ( <i>Vitrea contracta</i> )
191	Mollusc	Netted Slug ( <i>Deroceras (Deroceras) reticulatum</i> )
192	Mollusc	Pellucid Glass Snail ( <i>Vitrina pellucida</i> )
193	Mollusc	<i>Pisidium casertanum</i>
194	Mollusc	Plated Snail ( <i>Spermodea lamellata</i> )
195	Mollusc	Point Snail ( <i>Acicula fusca</i> )
196	Mollusc	Prickly Snail ( <i>Acanthinula aculeata</i> )
197	Mollusc	Red-cruste'd Pea Mussel ( <i>Pisidium personatum</i> )
198	Mollusc	Rosy Pea Shell ( <i>Pisidium milium</i> )
199	Mollusc	Rounded Snail ( <i>Discus (Gonyodiscus) rotundatus</i> )
200	Mollusc	Short-ended Pea Mussel ( <i>Pisidium subtruncatum</i> )
201	Mollusc	Short-toothed Herald Snail ( <i>Carychium minimum</i> )
202	Mollusc	Slippery Moss Snail ( <i>Cochlicopa cf. lubrica</i> )
203	Mollusc	Smooth Glass Snail ( <i>Aegopinella nitidula</i> )



204	Mollusc	Strawberry Snail ( <i>Trochulus (Trochulus) striolatus</i> )	
205	Mollusc	Tree Slug ( <i>Lehmannia marginata</i> )	
206	Mollusc	Two-toothed Door Snail ( <i>Clausilia (Clausilia) bidentata</i> )	
207	Mollusc	Wandering Snail ( <i>Radix balthica</i> )	
208	Mollusc	Yellow Slug ( <i>Limacus flavus</i> )	
209	Moss	Bir+C211:C249d's-claw Beard-moss ( <i>Barbula unguiculata</i> )	39
210	Moss	Blunt Feather-moss ( <i>Homalia trichomanoides</i> )	
211	Moss	<i>Bryum dichotomum</i>	
212	Moss	Capillary Thread-moss ( <i>Bryum capillare</i> )	
213	Moss	Clustered Feather-moss ( <i>Rhynchostegium confertum</i> )	
214	Moss	Common Feather-moss ( <i>Eurhynchium praelongum</i> )	
215	Moss	Cylindric Beard-moss ( <i>Didymodon insulanus</i> )	
216	Moss	Cypress-leaved Plait-moss ( <i>Hypnum cupressiforme</i> )	
217	Moss	Elegant Bristle-moss ( <i>Orthotrichum pulchellum</i> )	
218	Moss	Flat Neckera ( <i>Neckera complanata</i> )	
219	Moss	Fox-tail Feather-moss ( <i>Thamnobryum alopecurum</i> )	
220	Moss	Great Hairy Screw-moss ( <i>Syntrichia ruralis</i> )	
221	Moss	Greater Water-moss ( <i>Fontinalis antipyretica</i> var. <i>antipyretica</i> )	
222	Moss	Grey-cushioned Grimmia ( <i>Grimmia pulvinata</i> )	
223	Moss	Hair-pointed Feather-moss ( <i>Cirriphyllum piliferum</i> )	
224	Moss	Intermediate Screw-moss ( <i>Syntrichia intermedia</i> )	
225	Moss	Larger Mouse-tail Moss ( <i>Isoetecium alopecuroides</i> )	
226	Moss	Lateral Cryphaea ( <i>Cryphaea heteromalla</i> )	
227	Moss	Lesser Yoke-moss ( <i>Zygodon conoideus</i> )	
228	Moss	Long-beaked Water Feather-moss ( <i>Rhynchostegium riparioides</i> )	
229	Moss	Lyell's Bristle-moss ( <i>Orthotrichum lyellii</i> )	
230	Moss	Nicholson's Beard-moss ( <i>Didymodon nicholsonii</i> )	
231	Moss	Pointed Spear-moss ( <i>Calliergonella cuspidata</i> )	
232	Moss	Rough-stalked Feather-moss ( <i>Brachythecium rutabulum</i> )	
233	Moss	Silky Wall Feather-moss ( <i>Homalothecium sericeum</i> )	
234	Moss	Silver-moss ( <i>Bryum argenteum</i> )	
235	Moss	Slender Bristle-moss ( <i>Orthotrichum tenellum</i> )	

236	Moss	Smaller Lattice-moss ( <i>Cinclidotus fontinaloides</i> )	19
237	Moss	Small Hairy Screw-moss ( <i>Syntrichia laevipila</i> )	
238	Moss	Spiral Extinguisher-moss ( <i>Encalypta streptocarpa</i> )	
239	Moss	Springy Turf-moss ( <i>Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus</i> )	
240	Moss	Swartz's Feather-moss ( <i>Oxyrrhynchium hi-ans</i> )	
241	Moss	Tender Feather-moss ( <i>Rhynchostegiella tenella</i> )	
242	Moss	Thickpoint Grimmia ( <i>Schistidium crassipilum</i> )	
243	Moss	Wall Screw-moss ( <i>Tortula muralis</i> )	
244	Moss	Wavy Beard-moss ( <i>Didymodon sinuosus</i> )	
245	Moss	White-tipped Bristle-moss ( <i>Orthotrichum diaphanum</i> )	
246	Moss	Wood Bristle-moss ( <i>Orthotrichum affine</i> )	
247	Moss	<i>Zygodon viridissimus</i> var. <i>viridissimus</i>	
248	Terrestrial Mammal	Brown Long-eared Bat ( <i>Plecotus auritus</i> )	
249	Terrestrial Mammal	Brown Rat ( <i>Rattus norvegicus</i> )	
250	Terrestrial Mammal	Daubenton's Bat ( <i>Myotis daubentonii</i> )	
251	Terrestrial Mammal	Eastern Grey Squirrel ( <i>Sciurus carolinensis</i> )	
252	Terrestrial Mammal	Eurasian Badger ( <i>Meles meles</i> )	
253	Terrestrial Mammal	Eurasian Pygmy Shrew ( <i>Sorex minutus</i> )	
254	Terrestrial Mammal	Eurasian Red Squirrel ( <i>Sciurus vulgaris</i> )	
255	Terrestrial Mammal	European Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> )	
256	Terrestrial Mammal	Fallow Deer ( <i>Dama dama</i> )	
257	Terrestrial Mammal	Greater White-toothed Shrew ( <i>Crocidura russula</i> )	
258	Terrestrial Mammal	House Mouse ( <i>Mus musculus</i> )	
259	Terrestrial Mammal	Irish Hare ( <i>Lepus timidus</i> subsp. <i>hibernicus</i> )	
260	Terrestrial Mammal	Irish Stoat ( <i>Mustela erminea</i> subsp. <i>hibernica</i> )	
261	Terrestrial Mammal	Lesser Noctule ( <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i> )	
262	Terrestrial Mammal	Pipistrelle ( <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu lato</i> )	
263	Terrestrial Mammal	Pine Marten ( <i>Martes martes</i> )	
264	Terrestrial Mammal	Soprano Pipistrelle ( <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> )	
265	Terrestrial Mammal	West European Hedgehog ( <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i> )	
266	Terrestrial Mammal	Wood Mouse ( <i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i> )	

#### Notable records/gaps are as follows:

Only one fungus is recorded, Scarlet Elf Cup (*Sarcoscypha austriaca*), also one Bee species – Grey Mining Bee (*Andrena Melandren cineraria*) and a single Ladybird -7-Spot (*Coccinella septempunctata*), these all show that there are significant information (record) gaps. One butterfly, Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*) Ireland's only legally protected insect has a breeding site in Castlecomer and is one of a total of 17 Butterfly species. 2 amphibian species are recorded,

**Common Frog** (*Rana temporaria*) & **Smooth Newt** (*Lissotriton vulgaris*), 32 bird species and 19 mammals.

The records for flowering plants is also incomplete, 73 species are listed, ranging from agricultural weed species right up to deciduous trees; interestingly, **Lime** (*Tilia platyphyllos* x *cordata* = *T. x europaea*) probably the town's signature tree species is not recorded – *this has since been amended!*

Some other notables, of personal note, include **Bee Orchid** (*Ophrys apifera*), everyone's favourite orchid, **Common Swift** (*Apus apus*), an iconic bird of some older well-established Irish towns and the **Comma** (*Polygonia c-album*) butterfly, a species expanding its range, possibly as a result of climate change, but is not invasive. It was a bit disconcerting to find that the only records for rats and mice were associated with my home square!



**Rock of Foyle waterfall, Castlecomer.**

## Selected Community Areas of Biodiversity potential / richness:

### a). Dysart Bridge North:



*The old Dysart Bridge North remains as a testament to past stone mason skills and their architectural knowledge. I feel this feature, a known bat roost (possible Daubenton's, need to confirm), could be cleaned, repointed and with Co Council assistance and fitted with both picnic tables and bicycle park bars to service the significant numbers of cyclists now using the N78. The general area could also be enhanced to feature pollinator species. I would recommend no car parking or waste bins to deter anti-social behaviour.*



### b). Barrack Hill Pocket Park

This "Pocket Park" forms a triangular green at the junction of the R694 & the Old Ballyragget Road / Barrack St. It has been in community care for many years and the upper section has been planted with mature Sitka Spruce, reflecting the "Pit-Props" of Castlecomer's mining heritage. The lower sections are steep in places and are kept as mown lawns currently, with the upper lawn featuring the statue of Our Lady – 2021 represents 100 years since it's erection and the community hope to acknowledge this anniversary in a small but appropriate way.



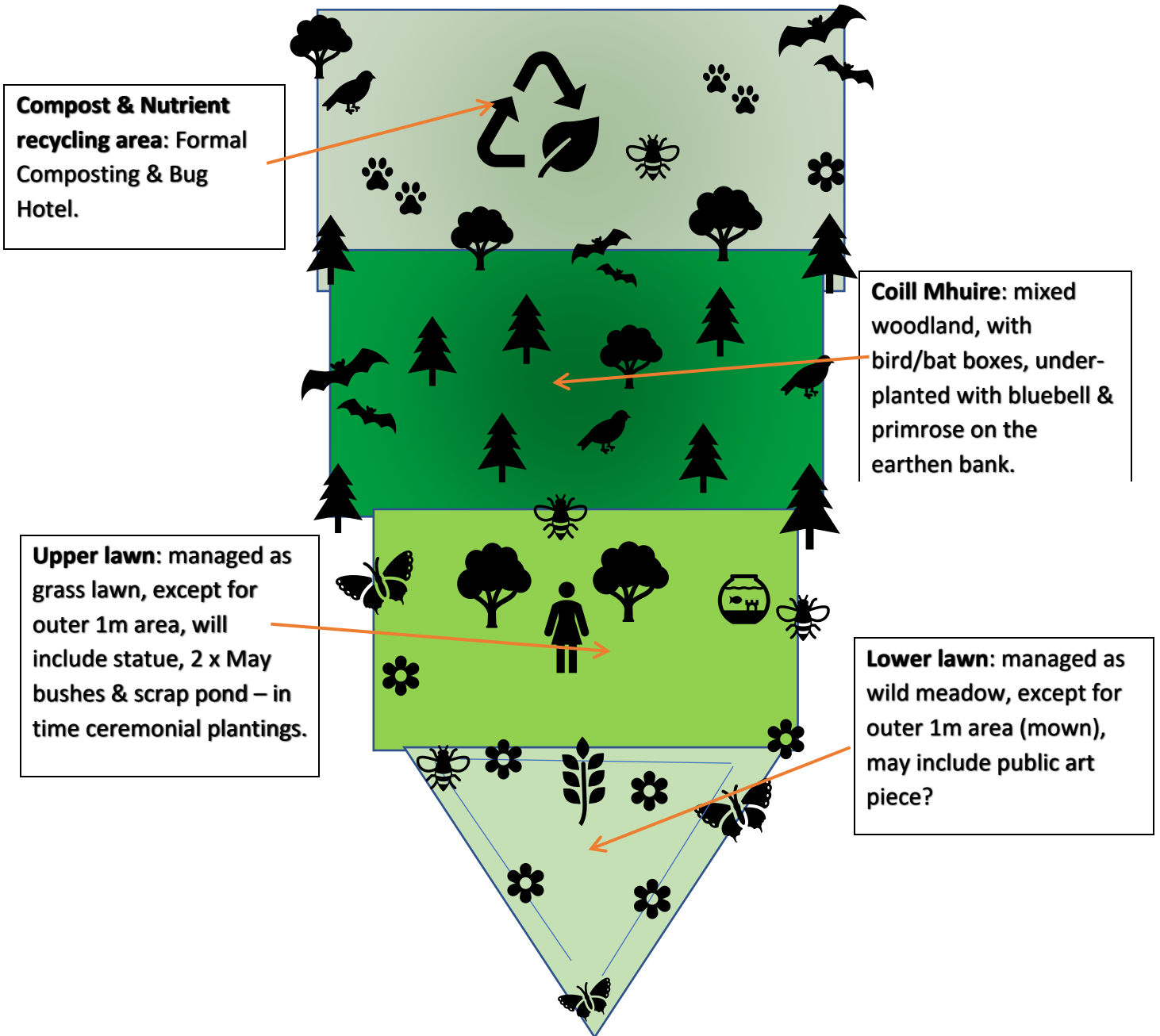


*Coill Muire, Barrack Hill Pocket Park*

Going forward the **Castlecomer Tidy Towns Group** are looking to agree a new design plan & purpose for this public space, although not agreed in full, current thoughts revolve around designating the Pocket Park as an area to formally recognise past and future important persons, and events associated with Castlecomer – this will not impact on the current monument to Coill Mhuire. The Sitka spruce will be used to act as nursery trees for a new phase of more appropriate tree species, that will ensure continuity but also will be closer in appropriateness, so spruce will over time give way to perhaps Scots Pine and Oak, the surrounding understorey will feature hawthorn; the May bush (*echoing the association with Our Lady*) and Holly, both pollinator friendly species and robust enough to withstand the public nature of this area. In time it is hoped that trees might ceremonially be planted as occasion demands and might perhaps be supplemented with some public art – perhaps in line with Kilkenny CoCo’s Bluebell sculpture on the N78 – perhaps even of a Bee Orchid in line with Kilkenny County’s adopted emblem?

Some floral planting is also planned, in particular on the steeper sections to aid soil conservation from slippage, but in general the lower lawn will be managed as wildflower meadows - as an action of the Castlecomer All Ireland Pollinator Plan submission. To the rear of this community space, there is a significant composting area, CTTG will seek to formalise this activity and add to it by erecting some bug-hotels, a small scrap-pond to support hoverflies and will manage the bird & bat boxes to ensure they are available to several different species from tits to spotted flycatcher. CTTG will partner with Castlecomer Men’s Shed and Castlecomer Community School to achieve this work.

## BARRACK HILL POCKET PARK – PROPOSED DESIGN



### c). The Old Glebe Railway



Current buttress



Buttress with possible Community Art

This site is all that now remains of the railway embankment bridge supports for the mine works and date back to pre-1960s, as this location is on the **Castlecomer International Wellie Race Route**, perhaps it might be both fun & fitting to commission a public mural of the “**Major Regrets**”, this will both draw the eye, preserve an aspect of cultural heritage and instil a sense of community pride. It is envisaged that the adjoining lands on the Kiltown Road will be cleared and managed for wildlife & pollinators – this is a naturally dark frost pocket and not suitable for general planting but with the adjoining Cloghogue river, it might support a feature tree such as a weeping willow, which would be fitting, with other riparian plants.

## Appendices:

### Reference Documents:

**National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021** – Ireland’s overarching strategy for biodiversity conservation –

<https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/National%20Biodiversity%20Action%20Plan%20English.pdf>

**Shell Guide to Ireland:** Lord Killanin & Michael V. Duigan, The Ebury Press. London 1962.

**National Heritage Inventory: Areas of Scientific Interest in Ireland** AFF, The Heritage Trust, 1981.

**All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020** - <https://pollinators.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Pollinator-Plan-2018-WEB.pdf>

**Gardening for Biodiversity** - <https://laois.ie/wp-content/uploads/Garden-Wildlife-Booklet-WEB-17MB.pdf>

**Ballybrilliant:** Heritage-led Regeneration in 5 Irish Towns -

<https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/Ballybrilliant.pdf>

**NPWS (2019) The Status of EU Protected Habitats & Species in Ireland (Vol 1).** Summary Overview. Unpublished report.

**IT Article:** Searching for salmon using the bar code of life – October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

[https://www.irishtimes.com/news/science/searching-for-salmon-using-the-bar-code-of-life-1.3668018#.X\\_xoJX9FcA0.mailto](https://www.irishtimes.com/news/science/searching-for-salmon-using-the-bar-code-of-life-1.3668018#.X_xoJX9FcA0.mailto)

**Kilkenny County Council Pollinator Programme 2019,** Actions undertaken in support of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Report to Kilkenny County Council, D Ledwidge, Kilkenny CoCo Report.

**Conserving and Enhancing Wildlife in Towns and Village:** A Guide for Local Community Groups. The Heritage Council (Local Authority Heritage Officers).

### Reference Websites:

**National Biodiversity Data Centre** - <https://www.biodiversityireland.ie> - The National Biodiversity Data Centre is a national centre for the collection, collation, management, analysis and dissemination of data on Ireland’s biological diversity.

**All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020** – a national strategy for pollinator conservation, including a range of actions and many sub-guides for different sectors including farmers, businesses and communities - <https://pollinators.ie>

**Castlecomer landing page:** <https://castlecomer.ie>

**Castlecomer Wikipedia page:** <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castlecomer>

**National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS)** - <https://www.npws.ie> - The role of National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is to secure the conservation of a representative range of ecosystems to maintain and enhance populations of flora and fauna in Ireland.

**Heritage Maps:** <https://heritagemaps.ie/WebApps/HeritageMaps/index.html> - Find or identify heritage sites and explore heritage datasets anywhere in Ireland.

**United Nations: Strategic Development Goals:** <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> - provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership.

**The Heritage Council:** <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie>

**River Obstacles website:** <https://www.river-obstacles.org.uk/>

## River Barrow, River Nore EU Special Area of Conservation related documentation:

**River Barrow, River Nore Special Area of Conservation: Conservation Objectives** - [https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation\\_objectives/CO002162.pdf](https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002162.pdf)

**River Barrow, River Nore Natura2000 Form:**

<https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/natura2000/NF002162.pdf>

**River Nore cSAC (candidate Special Area of Conservation) Site Synopsis, Code: IE 0002162**

<https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY002162.pdf>

The River Barrow, River Nore is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (\* = **priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes**):

### **River Nore cSAC IE0002162 - HABITATS LISTED:**

[1130] Estuaries [1140] Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats [1170] Reefs [1310] Salicornia Mud [1330] Atlantic Salt Meadows [1410] Mediterranean Salt Meadows & [4030] Dry Heath.

[3260] Floating River Vegetation

[6430] Hydrophilous Tall Herb Communities

[7220] Petrifying Springs\*

[91A0] Old Oak Woodlands

[91E0] Alluvial Forests\*

### **River Nore cSAC IE0002162 - SPECIES LISTED:**

[1016] Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*)

[1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*)

[1092] White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*)

[1095] Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*)



***Kiltown Petrifying springs.***



[1096] Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*)

[1099] River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*)

[1103] Twaite Shad (*Alosa fallax*)

[1106] Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*)

[1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

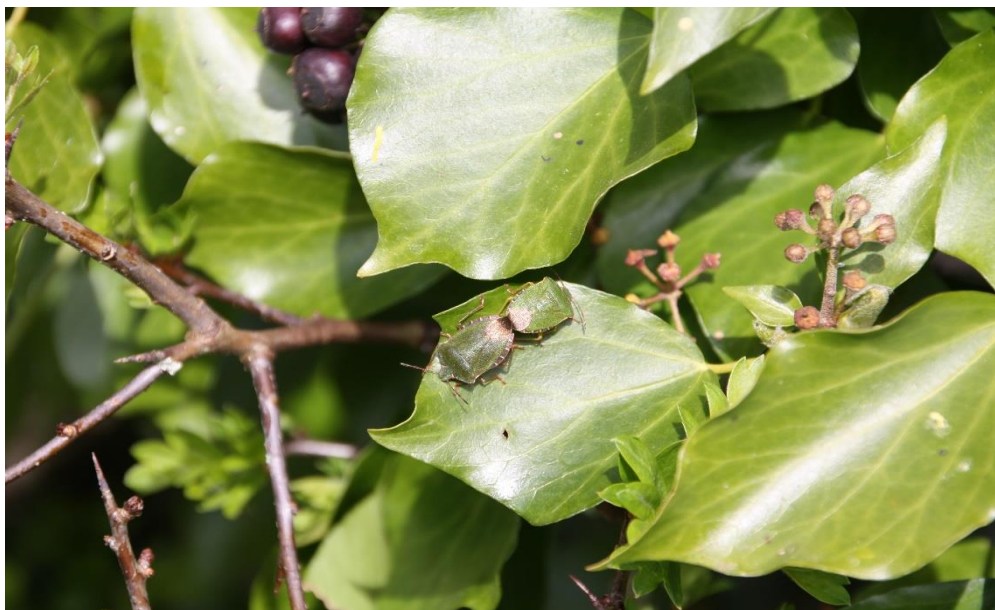
[1421] Killarney Fern (*Trichomanes speciosum*)

[1990] Nore Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera durrovensis*)

### Some of *our community partners*:



*Special thanks are due to several people who greatly assisted in the culmination of this report. Firstly, a big shout out to the **volunteers** and the **TTGC committee** who give so much of their time and energy to make Castlecomer the beautiful, welcoming town it is – special mention to **Cathriona Normoyle, Maurice Shortall, Richard Brennan & Michael**, who have too given up time and committed to works above & beyond reasonable requests. Much thanks is also due to **LAWPRO, Ann Phelan for support and advice, to Kilkenny County Council, Dearbhala Ledwidge (Heritage Officer) and to Aisling Byrne (GIS Section) and finally, to Siobhan Atkinson (UCD), for the only fish records to be found for Castlecomer.***



**Mating Green Shieldbugs**

**END**