



The Burren National Park is still in full late summer bloom, the flower rich meadows along the white and orange trails have seen different species of orchid come and go as well as an abundance of other fantastic wild flowers. Out on the limestone pavements clints and grikes play host to a variety of ferns, flowers and mosses. It is still a good time to see one of the many species of Orchid that grow in the Burren which can be found, depending on the species, in meadows, woodlands, close to turloughs and out on the exposed limestone pavement.

The sound of grasshoppers, bees and birds fills the air and if you have a keen eye you may spot our featured insect, the incredible little frog-hopper. This is also a good time to see an actual frog as frogs and froglets which love the damp grasses and cool shady woodland floors are a regular encounter along the tracks and trails.

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Orchids

BURREN
NATIONAL
PARK



Pyramidal Orchid

ORCHIDS IN THE BURREN NATIONAL PARK

Of the 27 species of orchid that grow in Ireland 23 are found at different times in the park. Orchid season kicks off with the Early Purple Orchid *Orchis mascula*, the Dense Flowered Orchid *Neotinea maulata*, Fly Orchid *Ophrys insectifera*, Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera* in April, May and June.

Species that might be seen during July and August include the Broad-leaved Helleborine *Epipactis helleborine*, the Dark-red Helleborine *Epiactis atrorubens*, the Common Spotted Orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, the Common Fragrant Orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea* and the Frog Orchid *Dactylorhiza viridis*.



Broad-leaved Helleborine

SOME ORCHIDS FLOWERING NOW:

- Pyramidal Orchid
Anacamptis pyramidalis
- Fragrant Orchid
Gymnadenia conopsea
- Common Spotted Orchid
Dactylorhiza fuchsii
- Broad-leaved Helleborine
Epipactis helleborine



Common Spotted Orchid

STILL TO COME:

- Autumn Ladies Tresses
Spiranthes spiralis

What is 'cuckoo spit'?

BURREN
NATIONAL
PARK



When walking along the tracks and trails around the park in May and June you might have noticed a frothy bubbly substance on the stems of some plants often referred to as 'cuckoo spit'. This substance is often seen from spring around the same time as cuckoos arrive in Ireland but has nothing to do with the migratory bird. This foam is actually secreted by the nymph of an

invertebrate called a Frog Hopper *Philaenus spumarius*. The delicate green baby frog hopper can be found nestled in this froth where it is protected from predators, wind and dehydration especially in warmer weather. It feeds on the sap in plant stems which they then excrete to produce the foam we are so familiar with, they create this protective cocoon in under fifteen minutes! They use the air bubbles in the froth to breathe though they also come out of the froth for air. The nymph and its frothy secretion do very little damage to the plant and it does not need to be removed if found in your garden.

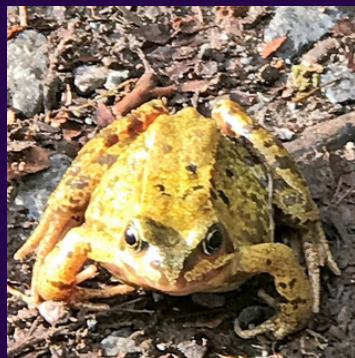
The adult Common Frog Hopper is just 6-8mm long but can jump up to 70cm, this is roughly the same height as a flea, however the frog hopper is considerably heavier so this is a remarkable feat. They do this by means of highly specialised back legs that are used exclusively for jumping and simply trail behind them when walking around! These legs have a catapult like mechanism that allows them to contract their jumping muscles

and store energy like a tightly coiled spring before launching themselves into the air. Adult frog hoppers can vary in colour from yellow, green, brown, very dark brown and sometimes even purple, they can also have striped or mottled patterning. They can be found in a many different habitats as they feed on a wide variety of plants, sucking sap from the stems. They are an important food source for swifts and other birds.



Páirceanna Náisiúnta
National Parks

Fabulous Frogs!



Walk any of the trails in the Burren National Park and you may well encounter the Common Frog *Rana temporaria*, one of the three amphibian species found in Ireland. The Common Frog is the only frog species found in Ireland and is protected by both the EU Habitats directive and the Irish Wildlife Acts. They can vary greatly in colour from yellowish green to a much darker olive brown colour and they can in fact change to a darker colour in just two hours in order to blend in with their habitat. They all have dark bar like markings across the limbs and streaks in front of and behind the eyes, other markings vary from one individual to the next. They have muscular back legs and webbed feet which makes them excellent jumpers and strong swimmers.

Frogs require suitable fresh- water sources for breeding, the turloughs in the Burren National Park are an ideal location and the damp long rough grasses and hazel woods provide the perfect habitat for froglets to grow and thrive. Frogs use their sticky tongues to feed on insects, slugs, worms and spiders and they are themselves a prey item for herons, stoats, foxes and birds of prey.

Frogs are ectotherms, that is cold-blooded animals that require heat from an external source such as the sun. This means they like to find fairly frost free locations in which to hibernate for the colder winter months such as existing animal burrows, under tree stumps or perhaps in dense leaf litter. They emerge in February to spawn, with tadpoles usually hatching and growing during April and May before they metamorphosise into froglets in June or July.

According to Irish folklore fairies could take on the form of a frog to travel from place to place undetected! In Co. Clare they were also involved in an unusual remedy for whooping cough and elsewhere as a cure for toothache neither of which thankfully seemed to cause any lasting harm to the frog!



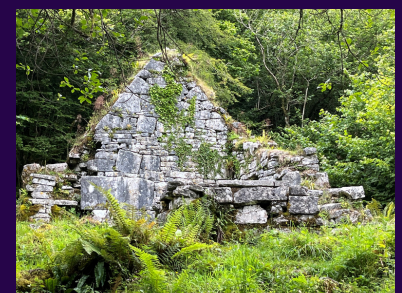
Slieve Carran Nature Reserve



Slieve Carran Nature Reserve is a stunning area of limestone pavement, mixed woodland and grass scrubland located in the townland of Keelhilla in the East Burren. It is managed by the NPWS and is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) where you will find distinctive communities of flora, including many species of orchid. The woodlands hold rare species of fungi and some rare lichen species including Hazelgloves *Hypocreopsis rhododendri* and Lungwort *Lobaria pulmonaria*. The spectacular cliff-face overlooking the reserve is known locally as 'Eagle's Rock' and though no longer home to eagles it is possible to see Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus*, Kestrels *Falco tinnunculus* and Ravens *Corvus corax* soaring in the skies above.

There are four waymarked trails on the Slieve Carran Nature reserve, two of which run towards the base of Eagle Rock and into a wooded area where you will find medieval ecclesiastical remains associated with St. Colman. The pink trail was added in recent years and can now be seen on our updated Burren National Park walking trail map which is available online at: <https://www.burrennationalpark.ie/> It is also possible to pick up a free copy of this map at the Burren Information Point in Corofin.

See our events guide below to book one of our scheduled guided tours of the Slieve Carran Nature Reserve.





ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

The Burren National Park Information Point in Corofin is currently open seven days a week from 9:30am to 5:30pm.

A daily shuttle bus service runs from the Information Point in Corofin to and from the trailheads at Gortlecka Crossroads in the Burren National Park fourteen times daily, until the end of August.

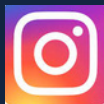
Burren National Park:

Information Point: Clare Heritage Centre, 2 Church Street, Corofin, Co. Clare V95 T9V6

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

Email: burrennationalpark@npws.gov.ie

Phone: 065 6827693





Heritage Week in the Burren National Park



Sat 12th Aug: Art in the Park at 10.15am

Sat 12th Aug: Irish Folklore tour at 2.15pm



Sun 13th Aug: Tour of Slieve Carran Nature Reserve at 10.30am

Sun 13th Aug: Irish Folklore tour at 2.15pm



Tues 15th Aug: Tour of Slieve Carran Nature Reserve at 10.30am

Wed 16th Aug: Tour of Cahercommaun at 10.30am



Thurs 17th Aug: Irish Folklore tour at 10.15am

Fri 18th Aug: Irish Folklore tour at 10.15am



Sun 20th Aug: Tour of Cahercommaun at 2pm

Each event lasts approx 1.5 to 2 hours and require a reasonable level of fitness.

Please contact us at 065 6827693 or burrennationalpark@npws.gov.ie for full details and to book.

Events are free but booking is required as places are limited.



**National
Heritage Week**

A Heritage Council programme