

WATER IS LIFE

Water is vital for life: it flows through plants, animals and whole ecosystems. We rely on clean freshwater every day to stay hydrated, for hygiene and sanitation. Water is also crucial to produce food and most goods.

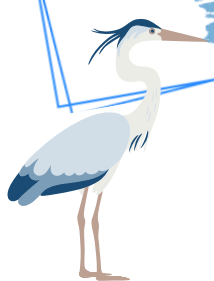


Did you know that Ireland has over 73,000 kms of river channels, 12,000 lakes and 33 different types of freshwater wetlands? We are connected to water physically and culturally as nearly every river or lake's name comes from the gods and goddesses of the Tuatha Dé Danann. Many of us grew up with the stories of the Children of Lir and the Salmon of Knowledge.

DID YOU KNOW?

The heron has numerous names in Irish including 'Máire Fhada' or 'Síle na bportach' or 'Sheila of the Bog'.

FACT: In ancient Egypt, herons were depicted as messengers from God!



The beautiful kingfisher (*Cruidín*) is found along slow moving rivers and canal.



Salmon (*Salmon Bradán*) may travel 3,000km in their ocean migration before returning to their home river.



Ireland is one of the best places in Europe to see otters (*madra uisce*)!

FACT: Otters have been around for 30 million years!



LEARN MORE >>

Ireland's rivers and lakes are home to 29 species of fish, the common frog, the smooth newt, dozens of species of water birds, many insects and mammals such as otters and bats. For these important ecosystems to function properly, our waterways need to be protected from pollution and degradation, so that wildlife can thrive.

Also, 80% of the water we use daily comes from a river or a lake. The cleaner it is at source, the less treatment it requires. How about adopting a local river or lake and:

- Organise an activity such as a walk, a clean-up or arts outdoors. You may get some inspiration to draw your poster or make a video!
- Investigate the health of your local river or lake by visiting <https://gis.epa.ie/mylocalenvironment/>.
- Learn about Global Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 14 (Life Below Water) and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). Visit <https://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/> to find out more.
- Raise funds for a charity that is providing access to clean water and sanitation overseas.