

## Welcome to Ballyhoura Country

Ballyhoura Country is a nature enthusiast's paradise. Situated on Ireland's richest pasture land the area is an ideal destination to discover the wonders of the Irish Countryside. The richness of the landscape is reflected in the quality and variety of the flora and fauna to be found and discovering the birds and wildlife is an important part of any visit to the area.

This booklet focuses on the Slí Finn area, an archeological, mythological and historic driving route which follows quiet roads winding through scenic rolling hill country. The route offers plenty opportunities for bird watching in ancient and unspoiled landscapes.

Relax and enjoy a leisurely drive along the marked route visiting some of the most scenic and historic towns in Ireland. You will discover each with their own unique attractions and the uncongested country roads allow you to pull in and appreciate the invigorating views across Ballyhoura Country.

Why not make a day of it with your family, pack a picnic and marvel at the multitude of birds and butterflies with the use of our guide.

There are a large number of marked nature trails where you can enjoy watching and listening to wildlife in complete peace and tranquillity at leisure.



## The Slí Finn Drive

### Distance

30km

### Landscape

An archeological, mythological and historic discovery which follows quiet roads winding through scenic rolling hill country. It also offers opportunities for pleasant village stops, way-marked loop walks, nature trails and bird watching.

### Route

This sign-posted driving tour follows the following route with interpretative panels at key sites including Kilfinane; Ardpatrik; Glenosheen; Ballyorgan and Ballylanders.

### Birds

At anytime of the year when you walk in the countryside, the resident birds are all to be seen. These include **Robin, Blackbird, Wren, House Sparrow, Dunnock, Finches, Wagtails, Crows, Jackdaw, Greycrow, Tits, Starling** {all the migrant starlings from Northern Europe - stand and watch the aerial display of thousands of Starlings as dusk falls and they come together to roost in the woods around Kilfinane} In October and November the residents are joined by the winter visitors, fieldfare **Redwing, Lapwing, and golden Plover.**

The redwings and fieldfare can be seen eating the haws of the whitethorn trees or searching for earthworms in the fields. The **Lapwing** and the **Golden Plover** feed in areas where the ground is damp and soft. On ponds and fields that are flooded the **Mallard** are joined by **Widgeon, Teal** and occasionally by **Shovelar**. Also on damp wet areas **Snipe** are to be found. These





are usually seen taking flight in a zig zag pattern when disturbed. Another bird that flies over the area with its distinctive call is the **Curlew**. Not as much heard now as it once was - its call was usually taken as a sign that rain was on its way.

Our resident birds are also joined by migrants from Europe especially in cold severe winters by **Chaffinches**, **blackbirds etc...** **Brambling** can also come.

In March most of the winter visitors depart for their breeding grounds in Norway, Sweden, Iceland and other parts of northern Europe.

In April the summer visitors start to arrive from Africa, these include **Swallow**, **Swifts**, **Sandmartin** and **Housemartin**. The **Cuckoo** also comes at this time and if you stand on the boardwalk in Griston Bog in May you can hear the **Cuckoo's** song. Other birds also come, **Willow Warbler**, **Grasshopper Warbler** can also be heard but not easily seen in Griston Bog. The **Snipe** courtship display also occurs in May.

During the summer when you go up into Slieve Riadh or the Ballyhouras **Hen Harriers** and **Peregrine Falcons** are to be seen. If you are walking or driving along the road if you see a bluish grayish bird flying along this probably is a **Sparrow Hawk**. **Kestrels** can also be seen hovering in the sky in all parts of the area. In late July or Early August when walking around Griston Bog or in the woods on Slieve Riadh if you hear a screech it is the young of the **long eared owl** - they only fly at night so they are quite difficult to see.

In September or October the summer visitors return to Africa and the winter birds start to return.

### **B**utterflies

Butterflies are to be seen from February to October.



Many are residents but they are joined in the summer by migrants from Southern Europe and North Africa. The Migrants include **Clouded Yellow** and **Painted Lady**.

### **Wildlife Reserves along the Slí Drive**

#### **B**allylanders, Co. Limerick

Griston Wildlife Bog is situated on the west side of Ballylanders village. It is home to a wide range of flora and fauna, bees and insects and different types of water life, some of which are now in danger of extinction in many parts of the world. There is also **Brown Trout**, which have been placed purposely in the bog to cater for anglers. To facilitate easy viewing of the park, a special wooden walkway has been put in place which visitors can use as they guide themselves through this peat land with the help of the informative interpretative boards.

#### **B**allyhoura Mountain Park

The Ballyhoura Mountain Park is a Coillte nature park of woodland, rugged mountain, grouse moor and peat bog, which covers an area of approximately 10,000 hectares. With its abundance of beautiful trees and plants, it is an ideal venue for nature trails and bird watching. Thanks to its many marked walking routes, visitors can fully enjoy its peace and beauty at leisure, or one of the many activity sports available throughout the park.

Why not follow on and discover two other Ballyhoura Country signposted heritage driving routes:

**The Golden Vale Drive**

**The Ballyhoura Drive**





## Resident Birds



*Wren*  
Resident. All year.  
Hedgerows and gardens.

### Kids Challenge



*Q. What bird is this?  
Remember to always feed birds  
during the winter.*



*Robin*  
Resident. All year.  
Countryside and gardens.



*Blue Tit*  
Resident. All year.  
Countryside and Gardens.  
Feeds from peanut feeder  
in Winter.



*Goldcrest*  
Ireland's smallest bird.  
Resident. All year.  
All areas including gardens.



*Bullfinch*  
Resident. All year.  
All areas including gardens.  
Rarely uses feeders in Wintertime.



*Goldfinch*  
Resident. All year.  
All areas where seeds are present.  
Visits feeder in Wintertime.



*Blackbird*  
Resident. All year.  
All areas including gardens.  
Visits feeders on ground  
during Winter.



*Great Tit*  
Resident. All year.  
All areas including gardens.  
Visits feeders in Wintertime.



*Green Finch*  
Resident. All year.  
All areas including gardens.  
Visits feeders in wintertime when  
numbers increase with migrants  
from Europe.





*Grey Crow*  
Resident. All year.  
All areas.



*Long Eared Owl*  
Resident. All year.  
In this area in Gristan Bog and  
in woods in Slieve Riadh.  
Young can be heard screeching  
in Summertime.  
Flies by night.



*Pied Wagtail*  
Resident. All year.  
All areas including gardens.



*House Sparrow*  
Resident. All year.  
All areas including gardens.



*Mistle Thrush*  
Resident. All year.  
All areas including gardens.



*Siskin*  
Resident. All year but easier  
seen in Winter when its visits  
gardens and feeders.



*Magpie*  
Resident. All year.  
All areas including gardens.



*Jackdaw*  
Resident. All year.  
All areas. Nests in chimneys.



*Long Tailed Tit*  
Resident. All year.  
All areas where trees grow.  
Travel in small blocks.



*Meadow Pipit*  
Resident. All year. All areas.





*Lapwing*  
Resident. Mainly seen in wintertime in flocks and fields.



*Collared Dove*  
Resident. All year. Mainly seen near grain stores.



*Coal Tit*  
Resident. All year. All areas. Visits feeders in Wintertime.



*Wood Pigeon*  
Resident. All year. All areas including gardens.



*Crow*  
Resident. All year. All areas.



*Dunnock*  
Resident. All year. Hedgerows & Gardens. Visits feeders in Wintertime.



*Tree Creeper*  
Resident. All year. Where trees are growing. Feeds on grubs by climbing trees.



*Songchat*  
Resident. All year. All areas.



*Blackcap*  
Resident but numbers increase in Winter with migrants from Europe.



*Chaffinch*  
Resident. All year. All areas including gardens. Visits feeders in Wintertime.



*Starling*  
Resident but large flocks migrates from Northern Europe each Winter. All year. All areas.

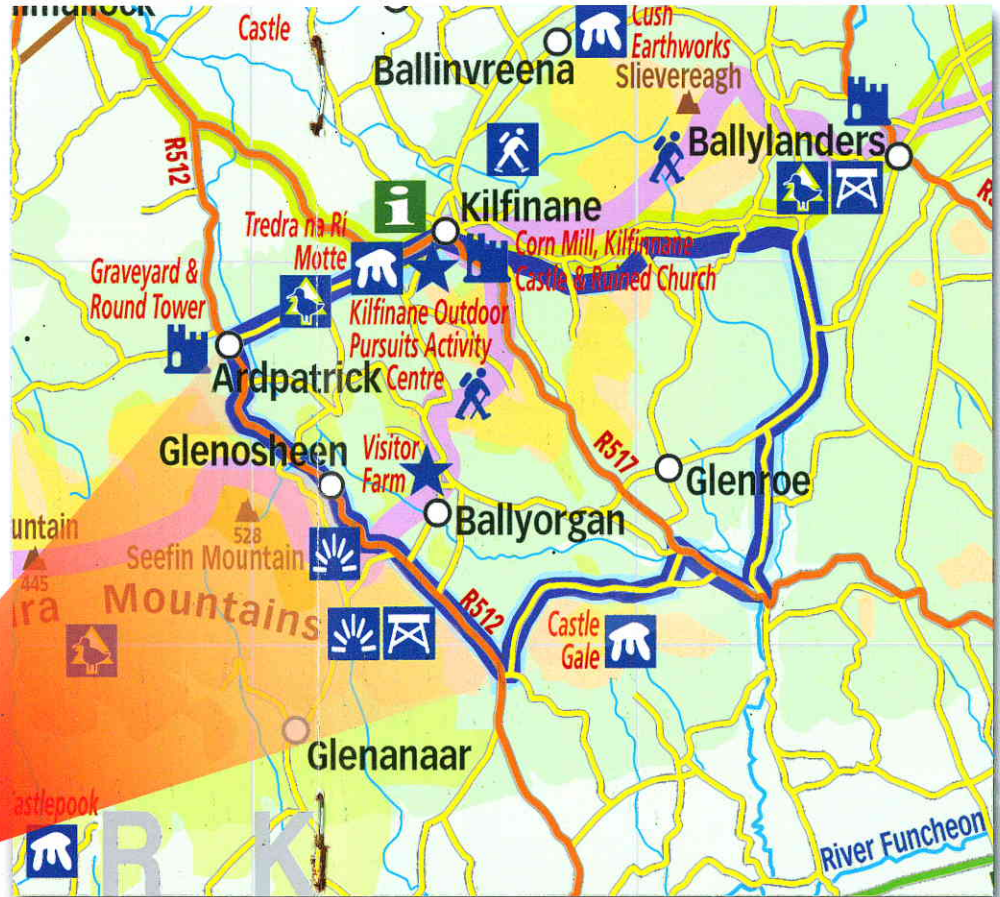


*Skylark*  
Resident. All year. All areas.





Simply different  
Ballyhoura Country



KEY TO VISITOR ATTRACTIONS			
	Tourist Information		Angling
	Golf Course		Town Walking Trail
	Historic Site		Walking Trail
	Visitor Attraction		Scenic Viewpoint
	Equestrian Centre		Archaeological Site
	Horse Racing		Picnic Area
	Forest Park/ Wildlife Sanctuary		Golden Vale Drive
	Ballyhoura Way Walking Route		Fianna Drive

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### Pheasant

Resident. All year. All areas.  
Will come to feed in Wintertime.



### Linnett

Resident. All year. All areas.



### Song Thrush

Resident. All year.  
All areas including gardens.  
Sings from top of tree in  
Springtime.



### Chiefchaf

Summer visitor.  
April to September.  
All areas.  
Winters in Africa.



### Cuckoo

Summer  
visitor.  
May to June.  
Scarce can  
be found  
in Gristan Bog.  
Lays eggs in other birds nests.  
Winters in South Africa.



### Willow Warbler

Summer visitor.  
April to September.  
Can be seen in Gristan Bog.  
Spends winter in Africa.



### White Throat

Summer visitor.  
August - September. Hedges &  
shrubs and woodland edges.  
Winters in Africa.



### Swallow

Summer visitor. April to  
September. Nests in sheds.  
Catches insects while flying.  
Winters in Africa.



### Spotted Fly Catcher

Summer visitor.  
April to September. Catches flies whi  
flying. Spends winter in Africa.



### Sedge Warbler

Summer visitor.  
April to September.

## Summer Visitors



### Grasshopper Warbler

Summer visitor - May to August.  
Gristan Bog.  
Spends winter in Africa.  
Sounds like a grasshopper and  
heard more often than seen.



### House Martin

Summer visitor - April to September.  
Feeds while flying, catching insects.  
Nests under fascia boards of houses.  
Winter in Africa.





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## Winter Visitors



### Brambling

Winter visitor.  
November to March.  
All areas.  
Spends Summer in Norway,  
Sweden and N.E Europe.  
Visits feeders in Wintertime.



### Field Fare

Winter visitor.  
October to March.  
All areas including whitethorn  
when feeding on haws.  
Breeds in Sweden and  
Northern Europe.



### Red Wing

Winter visitor.  
October to March.  
All areas including whitethorn,  
feeding on haws and berries on ivy.  
Breeds in Norway, Sweden and  
Northern Europe.

## Birds associated with water



### Snipe

Resident.  
All Year.  
Wetlands.



### Little Grebe

Resident. All year.  
Ponds and Rivers.  
Can be seen in Gristan Bog.



### Shoveler Duck

Winter visitor.  
November to March,  
On ponds and Lakes.



### Teal

Winter visitor.  
November to March.  
Ponds and Lakes.  
Breeds in Northern Europe.



### Water Hen

Resident. All year.  
On ponds, lakes and rivers.



### Wigeon

Winter visitor.  
November to March.  
Ponds and Rivers. Breeds in Northern Europe.



### Curlew

Resident. All year.  
Wet muddy areas.





*Dipper*

Resident. All year.  
In Rivers and Streams.  
Catches insects and grubs  
under water.



*Tufted Duck*

Resident but more plentiful  
in Winter.  
On ponds and lakes.



*Blackbearded Gull*

Resident. All year. All areas.



*Common Sandpiper*

Resident. All year.  
Mainly seen in Gristan Bog  
near the water.



*Grey Wagtail*

Resident. All year.  
Rivers and near water.



*Heron*

Resident. All year.  
Mainly by rivers and ponds  
where it catches fish.



*Reed Bunting*

Resident. All year.  
Mainly seen in wetter areas.



*Kingfisher*

Resident. All year.  
Rivers and Streams  
where it can fish.



*Mute Swan*

Resident. All year.  
Ponds, lakes and rivers.



*Mallard (Female)*

Resident. All year.  
Ponds and Rivers.







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## Birds of Prey



*Sparrow Hawk*  
Resident. All year.  
All areas.  
Bird of Prey.



*Kestrel*  
Resident. All year. All areas.



*Peregrin Falcon*  
Resident. All year.  
All areas. Areas where  
suitable nest sites are  
available.



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## Butterflies



*Ringlet*  
Resident.  
June to August.



*Speckled Wood*  
Resident.  
March to October. All areas.



*Small Tortoiseshell*  
Resident.  
March to October.



*Small Copper*  
Resident.  
April to October.



*Peacock*  
Resident.  
March to August.





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*Meadow Brown*  
Resident.  
June to September.



*Common Blue*  
Resident.  
April to October.



*Dark Green Fritillary*  
Resident.  
June to September.



*Orange Tip*  
Resident.  
April to June.



*Holly-Blue*  
Resident.  
March to September.



*Green-Veined White*  
Resident.  
April to September, All areas.

## Butterflies (Summer Visitors)



*Red Admiral*  
Summer visitor.  
April to November.  
Migrants from South Europe.



*Clouded Yellow*  
Summer visitor from the  
Mediterranean.



*Painted Lady*  
Summer visitor from  
North Africa.

## Other Insects



*Ladybird*



*Burnett Moth*



For more information on activities,  
attractions and accommodation in  
Ballyhoura Country visit:

Tourist Office  
Ballyhoura Fáilte,  
Main Street,  
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