
Páirc Náisiúnta Néifinne Fiáine
Wild Nephin National Park

Spring 2026

Newsletter

January/February



Some frosty mornings in Wild Nephin National Park at the start of the year!



Litter Picks



Park Guides doing a litter pick at Letterkeen Trailhead



Litter collected at the Claggan Mountain Coastal Trail

The beginning of the year is naturally a quiet time, which gives staff the opportunity to work on upcoming projects and do a litter pick or two! While most visitors respect our beautiful countryside and public spaces we still need to occasionally get the pickers out! We encourage all those exploring the outdoors to do so responsibly and follow the principles of leave no trace, especially to dispose of waste properly; you can find more info here <https://www.nationalparks.ie/wild-nephin/> in the useful tips section.



Dark Sky Walks and Planetarium shows

Our 2025/2026 season of guided Dark Sky Walks in Mayo Dark Sky Park came to a close on March 27th. These weekly walks took place every Friday night on the 2.5km Vary's Loop. We took the opportunity to visit Vary's cottage along the way where stories, songs or poems were often shared by the group, as they enjoyed a cup of hot chocolate. Highlights included seeing the aurora borealis, viewing the moons of Jupiter, meteor showers and even fireballs.

Back in Ballycroy, our dark sky team presented planetarium shows in the "Pale Blue Dot" enthralled families with the wonder of the cosmos and a tour of the solar system. Special thanks to guest astronomer Rok Nežić of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium for sharing his expertise with us at the February event.

Weekly dark walks will be back again late October, and during our 2026/27 season we will be celebrating our 100th Dark Sky Walk in the park!
#HalftheParkIsAfterDark



Lá Fhéile Bríde / Imbolc

We had a wonderful group join us on the eve of St. Bridget's Day for an evening nature walk where we enjoyed the early signs of Spring and participated in setting intentions with a Bratóg Bríde to mark the eve of Imbolc.

Native Woodlands and Start-up of Tree Nursery



To further our conservation and educational projects in the park. A new Nursery was set up at Ballycroy Visitors Centre. Last autumn seeds and cuttings were harvested from native trees and shrubs in Wild Nephin National Park. Several different species were sourced i.e. Oak, Holly, Whitethorn, Blackthorn, Spindle and Rowan, Alder and Guelder Rose. All seeds went through different methods of stratification to prepare them for propagation. The results are showing a yield

already, which is very exciting. The long-term plan is to set the new trees out in the greater park.

New Woodland



Over a 1000 native trees have been planted by staff at the Ballycroy Visitor Centre on the hill at the rear of the building and along our walk ways. This is to extend our native woodland cover and encourage wildlife and biodiversity to thrive in the area. We will also benefit from this future woodland, as it will contribute to our educational programs that we run at the centre.



March/ April

Claggan Coastal Mountain Trail



Repair works on the Claggan Coastal Mountain Trail have begun, thank you to all the staff involved in this unplanned for infrastructure project, much missed by the local community and visitors. It is quite an extensive undertaking to remove and replace c. 1km of boardwalk and will take some time. The carpark remains closed to facilitate these works, we thank the public for their understanding and although we all wish we could take in the stunning views of Bellacragher Bay remember the Ballycroy Visitor Centre is just 10mins up the road and has a wonderful trail too.

Seachtain na Gaeilge and St. Patrick's Weekend



One of our guides attended a weekly Irish class in Mulranny Arts and devised two events for Seachtain na Gaeilge. We hosted two of Máire Mic Níá's Irish classes, where attendees enjoyed celebrating World

Wildlife Day and the opportunity to sing, dance and speak as gaeilge.

We continue to engage with creative communities around the Park, from Mulranny's Gift of Hands to The Mullet Women's craft group. Locally, Mary Bradley (pictured right), who organises the Ballycroy Knit & Natter, crocheted a beautiful themed piece in celebration of the 10th anniversary of Mayo Dark Sky Park.



We were delighted to take part in the Ballycroy St Patricks Day Parade and held badge making sessions, card making sessions as well as indoor games for families visiting the visitor centre, while Ginger and Wild café settled back for the season.

Easter events and Textile workshops



The two weeks of Easter were as busy as ever. The daily self-led treasure hunt went down well with families, as well as the Wild Child nature sessions: life in the pond, early birds and pollinator bees. We had good attendance at the textile workshops where nature themed hand puppets were fashioned, as well as other creative pieces using weaving and imagination. All materials used were reused, sustainable and recycled.

Schools Outreach



The beginning of the year is a busy time for our Primary Schools Outreach. Staff always enjoy bringing the wonder and joy of the natural world out to the county schools.

Wild Nephin National Park is one of only six national parks that are open to the public and have educational visits, we are so fortunate we have one of these parks in County Mayo and get to share it with local and visitors alike.

We offer an on-site and outreach service to all interested groups. We have a range of special programmes and we can also tailor make visits to suit requirements including talks and walks.

Schools outreach is fully booked for this term. However, we are currently taking bookings for September 2026. If your school or group are interested place contact ballycroyvisitorcentre@npws.gov.ie



Taxidermy on Tour!

Guided Park Walks

A selection of snaps from guided walks the last few months; keep an eye on our social media for the next upcoming guided walk!



We had the Maumturks Walking Club back again for a walk along the Western Way in March.



We celebrated International Women's Day back in March with a walk of the Jamesies Well Loop.



We were blessed with gorgeous views and great company on our monthly guided walk of the Letterkeen Loop, this April.



The New Ross Ramblers joined us all the way from Wexford and enjoyed our new loops in Srahreevagh.



A group of former overseas volunteers enjoyed a guided walk of our Vary's Loop at the end of April.

Upcoming May Events

May Bank Holiday – Mayo Day and Mayo Dark Sky Park 10th Anniversary Celebrations



The poster features a central white area with a red and green border. At the top is a colorful geometric logo. Below it, the text reads 'LÁ MHAIGH EO 2026' in red and green, followed by '2 Bealtaine 2026' and 'Maigh Eo - An Contae Ceangailte' in smaller text. The main title 'BALLYCROY CELEBRATES' is in large, bold, red and green letters, with 'MAYO - THE CONNECTED COUNTY' underneath. A date and event information line follows: 'Saturday 2nd May 2026 | All Events Free | All Welcome'. The poster is divided into two columns by a vertical line. The left column is headed 'BALLYCROY COMMUNITY CENTRE' and lists three events: a Lego Workshop at 12:30pm-2:00pm, another at 2:30pm-4:00pm, and an afternoon Duplo Play Area. The right column is headed 'BALLYCROY VISITOR CENTRE' and lists three events: a dawn chorus walk at 9:00am, a pond dipping activity at 11:30am-1:00pm, and a native trees workshop at 2:00pm-4:00pm. At the bottom, there are logos for Mayo County Council, Ballycroy Community Centre, and NPWS.


LÁ MHAIGH EO 2026
2 Bealtaine 2026
Maigh Eo - An Contae Ceangailte

BALLYCROY CELEBRATES
MAYO - THE CONNECTED COUNTY

Saturday 2nd May 2026 | All Events Free | All Welcome

BALLYCROY COMMUNITY CENTRE

12:30pm – 2:00pm | Mixies Brixies Lego Workshop – Session 1

2:30pm – 4:00pm | Mixies Brixies Lego Workshop – Session 2

All afternoon | Duplo Play Area – open throughout for younger children

Places are limited – book your spot at info@ballycroycc.com

Parents are asked to stay with children aged 5 and under.

Refreshments will be served on the day

BALLYCROY VISITOR CENTRE

9:00am | The Mayo Dawn Chorus – guided walk & birdwatching experience

11:30am – 1:00pm | Guided Pond Dipping – life in a Mayo pond

2:00pm – 4:00pm | Native Trees of Mayo Workshop – learn about our native trees & take home a free Oak tree!

All day | Mayo Day Treasure Hunt – self-guided trail & fun games at the Visitor Centre

All National Park activities are free and open to the whole family – no booking required.

 Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council



 NPWS

MAYO DARK SKY PARK 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Wild and Dark



Special Event for MAYO DAY

Saturday 2nd May 2.30pm

W Cinema, Westport

“Reflections on Artemis II”

Dr Niamh Shaw

Space Reporter & Adventurer

Plus news on
Mayo Dark Sky Park
and Mayo Dark Sky Festival

Book Free on Eventbrite:

<https://mayodarkskies.eventbrite.com>

Mayo Dark Sky Park Celebrations

Sunday 3rd May & Monday 4th May

From 11am

Ballycroy Visitor Centre
Wild Nephin National Park
& Ballycroy Community Centre

10th Anniversary Weekend :

TALKS | MUSIC | ARTS |
SCIENCE | CIRCUS | NATURE |
PLANETARIUM | FILMS

More Info:

www.mayodarkskypark.ie



NPWS

An tSúilíne Náisiúnta
Náisiúnta agus Eorpacha
Donáil Náisiúnta agus Eorpacha
Donáil



MAYO DARK SKY PARK 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Wild and Dark



Ballycroy Visitor Centre,
Wild Nephin National Park



SUNDAY 3RD MAY 2026

11.30am - Dr Niamh Shaw
"Space and Sustainability"



Drop in events include:
**MUSIC | DANCE | CIRCUS |
SCIENCE | FILMS | ARTS**

4pm - Community Constellations
Special Launch Event and
10th Birthday Reception

MONDAY 4TH MAY 2026

11.30am Arts in the Park Event (Talk)

1pm - Louise Beer, Artist in Residence
(Talk) 'Earth, a Cosmic Spectacle'

Family friendly events

Planetarium shows (Both Days):

in Ballycroy Community Centre

Show times:

11:00 | 11:30 | 12:00 | 12:30 | 15:00 | 15:30



More info: www.mayodarkskypark.ie



NPWS

AN tSúilíocht
Náisiúnta na hÉireann
National Parks and Wildlife
Service

Mayo Dark Sky Park



National Biodiversity Week 15th to 24th May 2026

National Biodiversity Week 15th -24th May 2026



Wild Nephin National Park



All week – Self- Guided Treasure Hunt at Ballycroy Visitor Centre

Self- Guided Nature Spotter Worksheet at the Ballycroy Visitor Centre

Day Events:

Friday 15th – Meet & Greet with Native Trees

Saturday 16th – Pond Dipping and Outdoor Classroom tours

Sunday 17th – Pond Dipping and Outdoor Classroom tours

Wednesday 20th – Celebrate World Bee Day –
Ballycroy Visitor Centre Biodiversity BioBlitz
1-3pm Workshop on Citizen Science &
Recording Nature all around us!



Saturday 23rd Biodiversity Talks at Ballycroy Visit Centre 12-3pm

12:15pm Mammals and Birds of Wild Nephin National Park
Snapshot Europe - Sara Sheridan CR

12:45pm – 1:45pm Short Film Screening –
during lunch we will have a collection
of short nature films about the park screening.

2:00 pm The Pine Martin - Brian Hughes CR

2:30 pm Birds of Prey - Irene O'Brien DCO

Sunday 24th European Day of Parks

Guided Hike of Western Way and Cruckgurrú



NPWS

An tSeirbhís Páircianna
Náisiúnta agus Faothlra
National Parks and Wildlife Service



Biodiversity
Week
Ireland's National



If you would like to be added to our mailing list and kept up to date throughout the year with news and events, please email ballycroyvisitorcentre@npws.gov.ie with the subject line: Mailing List.

Páirc Náisiúnta Néifinne Fiáine |

Wild Nephin National Park

Ballycroy Visitor Centre | Ballycroy | Co Mayo

Phone: +353 (0)98 49888

Email: ballycroyvisitorcentre@npws.gov.ie

Website: www.nationalparks.ie/wild-nephin/

[@WildNephinNationalPark](#)

[@wildnephin_official](#)



Páirc na Spéire Dorcha, Maigh Eo |

Mayo Dark Sky Park

Ballycroy Visitor Centre | Ballycroy | Co Mayo

Phone: +353 (0)98 49888

Email: mayodarkskypark@npws.gov.ie

Website: www.mayodarkskypark.ie

[@mayodarkskies](#)



NPWS

An tSeirbhís Páircuairne
náisiúnta agus Fiadhúla
National Parks and Wildlife Service