



Mammals in a Sustainable Environment

Press release 30th March 2012

Seafield NS – Inspiring you to open your “Bio-Eye”

6th class pupils from Seafield National School, Bonmahon, Co. Waterford presented their project entitled “Bio-Eye” at the ECO-UNESCO headquarters in Dublin on Thursday 29th of March. The school was asked to pitch their project at a Dragon’s Den style Eco-Den following the submission of their project report at the end of February. The judging panel that included members of the National Youth Council, Dublin City Council and the Director of ECO-UNESCO (a youth organisation aimed at creating environmental knowledge among young people) were full of praise for the Seafield pupils and their knowledge of the local environment in Bonmahon. They were also impressed with their decision making, team work and communication skills. The school is pursuing its 5th Green Flag themed “Biodiversity” and have engaged in a wide range of wildlife and environmental related projects throughout the year.

Their project outlines the environmental work that the entire school has been involved with during the academic year with help from the Mammals in a Sustainable Environment “MISE” project. The MISE project is funded under the European Regional Development Fund under the Ireland Wales Programme 2007-2013 (INTERREG IVA), and aims to foster community involvement in mammal conservation www.miseproject.ie Denise O’Meara (Waterford Institute of Technology) and Andrew Harrington (Waterford County Council) have visited a number of schools in the county, and were engaged in a range of talks and projects at Seafield NS throughout the year. The pupils participated in wildlife surveys including the search for small mammals on the school grounds using bait pots and went on an otter walk to spot signs of otter holts (homes) and spraints (poo) along the river Mahon which flows near the school. The school also conducted a bat research project and preserved a specimen of a Leisler’s bat after it became trapped in a garage. The school called the bat “Wings” and it is now a featured item on the school nature table.

The project aimed to create awareness of the local wildlife near the school by illustrating the elusiveness of mammals and teaching the pupils how to spot signs of these animals without necessarily seeing them. The school also attempted to make their school more wildlife friendly by building bat boxes, bird tables and bug hotels which they hope will encourage more bats, birds, insects and pygmy shrews to visit and reside near their school. Some of the pupil reactions to the project included: “*I could not believe otters live so close to the school*”, Alannah, 3rd Class and “*This was fun. I told Dad and Mam all about Wings*”, Sean, Junior infants. Throughout the project, the school opened their “Bio-Eye” to the interesting world around them and have created awareness of their local environment throughout their locality. The entire school has been involved in this project which has involved all of the staff; Ann Coffey, Paddy Doyle, Susan Mooney, Collete Cullinan, Paula Willins, and Deirdre Keane.

Meanwhile, we eagerly anticipate the Eco-Den results to see if Seafield will be asked to participate in the national final which will be held in Mansion House, Dublin on May 8th. There is also a “People’s





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Choice Award” where members of the public can vote for their project online and voting remains open until the end of April http://ecounesco.ie/eco-dev/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=279&Itemid=195. We wish them the very best of luck.



6th Class pupils from Seafield NS at the ECO-UNESCO’s ECO Den presenting their project entitled “Bio-Eye”. Pictured at the back from left to right are: Niamh McKeon, Thomas Coffey. Second row from left to right: Hannah Walsh, Aislinn Keane, Percy O’Callaghan and Evan Keane and below are Orla Lennon and Rachel Keane.

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