

Seasonal Activity Trail Series —
Summer

SUMMER SUN



FACT

SUMMER IS HERE AND THE WARM WEATHER GETS EVERYONE OUT AND ABOUT!

FOR SOME ANIMALS IT'S WARM ALL YEAR LONG, DEPENDING ON WHERE THEY LIVE- FOLLOW THIS TRAIL TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WHICH LIVE IN THE SEA AND WHICH LIVE IN THE SUN!

During Summer the Earth's axis tilts toward the sun, so the number of daylight hours increase and the weather gets warmer. This encourages plants to start growing and animals to become active.

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National Museum of Ireland
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

Natural History

START

AT THE SEAL CASE
AT THE TOP MIDDLE
OF THE IRISH ROOM

Male grey seals are much larger than females- some males weigh three times as much as some females. Grey seals eat a wide variety of fish, squid, octopus, and crustaceans such as shrimp- sometimes they eat a seabird or two!!

In the summer seals have their pups. Have a look at the seals in the display case - why are the young seals lighter in colour? (Circle your answer)

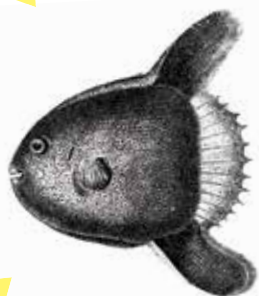
HE'S NOT FEELING WELL

HE'S CAMOUFLAGED

HE GOT A FRIGHT

1

TURN AROUND. MOVE
TO THE RIGHT UNTIL
YOU FIND THE SUNFISH.



The largest
grey seals are
to be found
living in Canadian
waters!

FACT

The Sunfish is the heaviest known bony fish in the world. It has an average adult weight of 1000kg. They are a relative of the pufferfish, and are usually hunted by sea lions, orcas (killer whales) and sharks.

FACT

The Scientific name for the Sunfish is *Mola mola*, which means millstone- the fish got this name because it is round, heavy and has rough surface, just like a millstone. In some parts of the world it's called a Mola fish.

How do you think the sunfish moves?
(Circle your answer)

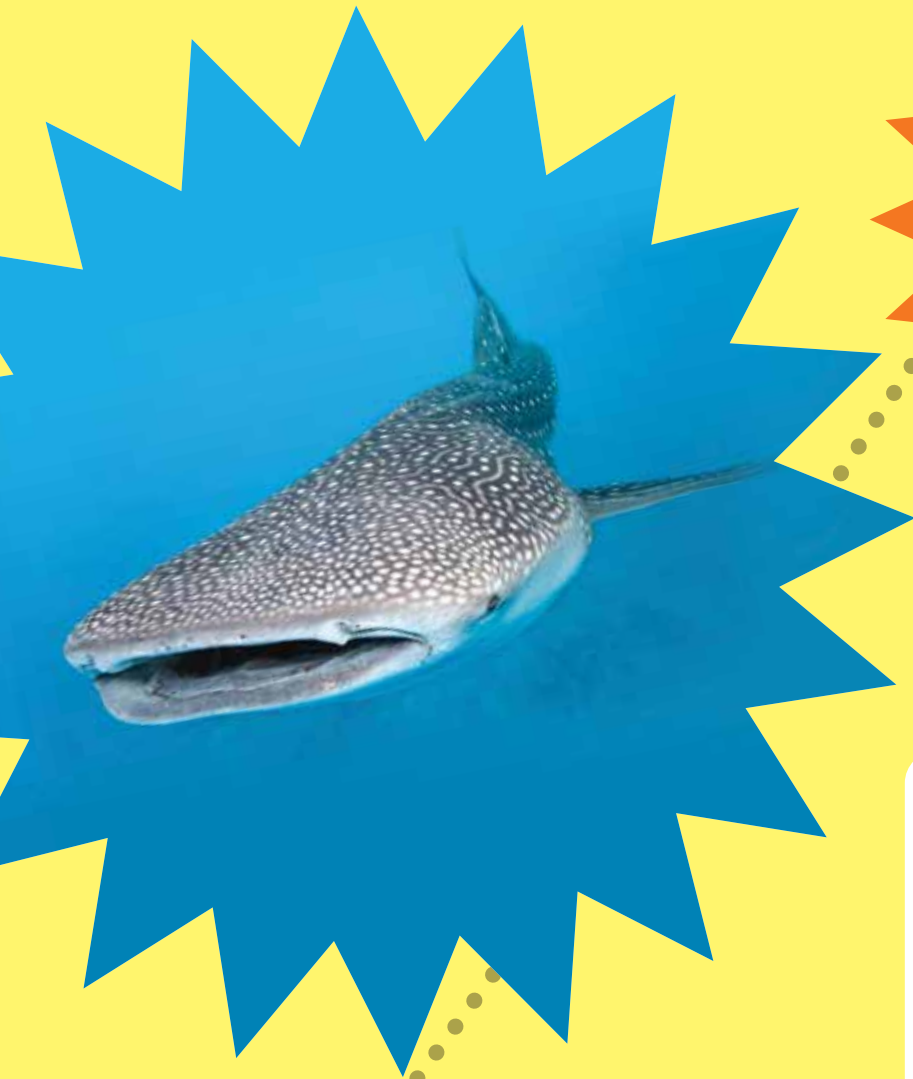
BY BLOWING BUBBLES

BY SPITTING OUT WATER

BY USING IT'S SMALL SIDE FINS

2

CROSS THE ROOM AND MOVE FURTHER DOWN UNTIL YOU FIND THE SHARKS, RAYS AND SKATES



The rays are a relative of the shark family. There are many rays in Irish waters, including the Thornback Ray, Blonde Ray, Sting Ray, Cuckoo Ray, Undulate Ray, Homelyn Ray, Painted Ray, Electric Ray, Common Skate and White Skate.

FACT

There are 35 different species of shark in Irish waters, the biggest being the basking shark - so called as it likes to swim near the surface to catch some sunshine. Have a look at ours hanging from the ceiling! The largest fish in the world is called the whale shark which prefers even warmer waters - temperatures between 21-30°C (Take a look at the photo above).

There are 14 species of shark on display- can you finish the names of the six largest below?
TIP: Not all the sharks are hanging out together!

BA_ _ _ _G SHARK

HRE _ER SHARK

P_ _B_ _G_E SHARK

S_ _G_ _ _ED SHARK

T_ _E

LE_ _S_ _LE GULPER SHARK

3

**MOVE FURTHER ALONG THE CASES
UNTIL YOU FIND THE SEA SHELLS**

FACT

4

**Find the different sea shell
below and finish the drawing!**

Sea shells are homes to shell fish molluscs- members of the same family as slugs and snails. Have you ever found shells like these on the beach?



KEYHOLE LIMPET



COMMON MUSSEL



SCALLOP



DOG WHELK

**NOW MOVE ALONG TO
THE BACK OF THE ROOM
AND FIND THE CRABS**



FACT

All crabs belong to the crustacean family- this large group includes crabs, lobsters, crayfish, shrimp, krill and barnacles. Most live in water- in the sea, rock pools, streams, rivers and ponds. Some however live on land, like the wood louse.

You'll notice some of the crabs here are very big, but don't worry- these are found in the deep sea- you won't see them walking along the beach!

Crustaceans that live in the deep sea tend to grow much bigger than those in shallow waters- this is known as "deep sea gigantism". Another example would be the giant squid- they grow 30 times bigger than shallow water squid! Scientists think the reason for this is that it's an adaptation to help the animal deal with the enormous water pressure at the bottom of the ocean.

**MOVE ALONG THE
CASE UNTIL YOU FIND
THE NORTHERN
STONE CRAB.**

Have a look at the Northern Stone Crab's front claws- one is bigger than the other- why do you think that is? (Circle your answer)

HE LOST IT AND IT'S GROWING BACK

IT WAS SAT ON BY ANOTHER CRAB

IT ALWAYS LOOKS LIKE THAT

5

TURN AROUND. MAKE YOUR WAY ALONG THE LEFT TO CONTINUE THE TRAIL - THE NEXT STOP IS THE JELLYFISH

When conditions are good (for example, when there are warm temperatures in the summer months and there is plenty of food) it is normal for jellyfish to grow fast and reach large numbers. Scientists think that we might be seeing more jellyfish than before because ocean conditions are changing due to climate change.

A large group of jellyfish has a special name - can you guess what it is?

A SQUISHY OF JELLYFISH

A GUMMY OF JELLYFISH

A SMACK OF JELLYFISH

6

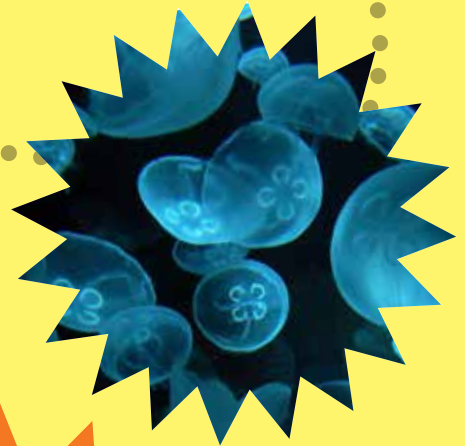
NOW GO INTO THE WONDER CABINET AND FIND THE LOGGERHEAD SEA TURTLE.

The Loggerhead sea turtle gets its name from their oversized head, which sort of looks like a big log. Within their heads are powerful jaws, which loggerheads use for crushing prey like shellfish and crabs. They also eat softer foods like jellyfish, fish, and seaweed.



The Moon (or common) jellyfish is named for its see-through, moon-like bell. Moon jellies are common in Irish waters and are often found washed up on shore. Jellyfish are 95% water and have no brain, blood or heart.

FACT



© Jennifer Stickney

FACT

They have a large, reddish-brown, hard shell (or 'carapace'), a pale yellow underbelly (or 'plastron') and four flippers with two (or sometimes three) claws on each.

7

Sea turtles have streamlined, heart-shaped shells, and flippers - can you think why that is?

"THEY CAN GIVE GOOD HIGH-FIVES"

"THEY CAN WAVE TO THE FISH"

"THEY CAN SWIM BETTER"

NOW GO TO THE CENTRE OF THE ROOM AND FIND THE LARGE CASE WITH THE HERRING GULLS. HINT - IT'S UNDERNEATH THE BASKING SHARK HANGING FROM THE CEILING

FACT

Did you know that this species is on the amber list of birds of conservation concern in Ireland? This is due to ongoing breeding and wintering population declines. Although numbers of roof-nesting gulls in cities appear to be increasing, the overall number of herring gulls is plummeting, making them an endangered species!

Herring gulls are large, noisy members of the gull family found throughout the year around our coasts and cities, and inland at rubbish tips, fields and lakes, especially during winter. Since the 1940s, some Herring gulls have used rooftops for nesting. Scientists think the gulls made this move to our neighbourhoods for food and safety, as they can easily scavenge the waste we leave behind as well as protect their nests from predators.

Adults have light grey backs, white under parts, and black wing tips with white 'mirrors' (white at the very tips surrounded by black). Their legs are pink, with webbed feet and they have heavy, slightly hooked bills marked with a red spot. Young birds are mottled brown - why do the young birds look like this?

8

THEY GOT DIRTY

THEY LIKE POLKA DOTS

IT HELPS THEM TO CAMOUFLAGE OR HIDE FROM PREDATORS



**NEARLY THERE!
TURN AROUND AND FIND THE SEABIRD CLIFF CASE (UNDER THE BASKING SHARK'S HEAD)**

The birds in this case are all members of the Auk family. They are all black and white in colour, including Razorbills, Guillemots, and Puffins. Can you spot all three of these species on the cliff?



FACT

These three birds are black on top and white underneath. This provides camouflage, with predators in the sky unable to observe the bird against the dark, watery background, and underwater attackers unable to see it blending in with the bright sky above the waves.

Take a closer look at the eggs of the razorbill on the bottom of the cliff. They are a bit different from your chicken egg - they have a pointy shape. Why do you think this is? (Circle your answer)

THEY JUST LIKE THIS SHAPE

A POINTY SHAPE STOPS THE EGG FROM ROLLING OFF THE CLIFF

A POINTY EGG IS HARD FOR PREDATORS TO EAT

9

NOW GO TO THE SMALLER CASE TO THE RIGHT OF THIS ONE AND FIND THE PUFFINS AND THEIR BURROW

Did you know that puffins dig burrows, just like rabbits? Puffins dig a Y-shaped burrow, build a nest inside, and lay their single egg underground to keep it safe!

Puffins can live a very long time, and often live for 20 years. The oldest ever recorded was 36 years old!

There's a special name for a puffin chick. Can you guess what it is?

MUFFIN

GOO-GAH

PUFFLING

10



For more information on exhibitions and education programmes, contact the Education & Outreach Department of the National Museum of Ireland:

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WELL DONE

**YOU HAVE FINISHED
OUR TRAIL SUMMER SUN**

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Answers: 1) He's camouflaged; 2) By using its small side fins; 3) Basking Shark, Thresher Shark, Porbeagle Shark, Six Gilled Shark, Topi Leafscale Gulpet Shark; 5) He lost it and it's growing back; 6) A smack of jellyfish; 7) They can swim better; 8) It helps them to camouflage or hide from predators; 9) A pointy egg stops them from rolling off the cliff; 10) Puffling