



# Aran Islands Biodiversity



The Aran Islands are amazing for flowers and other biodiversity!!



## What are Pollinators?

Where you have loads of plants, you also get loads of insects, butterflies and moths. Insects like bees, bumble bees, butterflies and moths are really important for us. They are called Pollinators because they transport pollen from plant to plant. Pollinators are in trouble throughout the whole world. Birds such as the blue tit feed off insects as well as seeds and nuts. So the more different types of insects that you have, the more bird species you have.

### PLANTS

**Fun Fact #1:** Over half the total number of plants that occur on the island of Ireland occur on the Aran Islands!

This is incredible considering many of the habitats (the places where plants and animals live, like woodlands, bogs, rivers) that occur on the mainland do not occur on the islands.



### MOTHS

**Fun fact #2:** Some moths come out during the day and can be confused as butterflies, but only butterflies have antennae with little ball at the end and look like a club, whereas Moths can have antennae that look like sticks, feathers or other shapes.



### NETTLES



**Fun Fact #5:** Nettles are very important to many butterflies, and other insects such as ladybirds. They also provide a seedy food source for birds in Autumn.

### DANDELIONS

**Fun Fact #6:** The word Dandelion comes from the French 'Dent de Lion' or Lion's teeth. The dandelion flower is made up of 100's of tiny flowers.



### COMMON PLANTS

**Fun Fact #7:** Some common plants are really important for pollinators because they flower early or late in the year and provide nectar for the insects to eat when nothing else is in flower, e.g Dandelions and Ivy.

### FOOD PLANTS



**Fun Fact #3:** The plants which moths and butterflies rely on are called **food plants**. Usually each species of butterfly has their own food plant.

### ARAN BEE



**Fun fact #8:** The islands have their very own bumble bee 'The Aran Bumble Bee' that only occurs on the islands.

### BUTTERFLIES

**Fun Fact #4:** The Small Blue butterfly is quite a rare butterfly in Ireland but is quite common in Aran. Kidney vetch the food plant of the Small Blue butterfly occurs throughout the grasslands of the islands.



### Farming for Nature:

Farmers on the islands farm very carefully so that the special habitats are being protected, and are farming for biodiversity as well as farming for fine cattle.

