

Recording in Co. Wexford (v.c. H12) in 2015

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2015 was very productive with much more recording done than previous years: 24,000 extra records collected than any other year, the most number of new species for the county in a year, 54, and the highest total of species recorded for a monad in a single visit, 270; this was at Blackwater (T1234) on 24 August. Of the 199 species not reported for the county since 2000, 22 were re-found. Some with surprisingly long gaps between sightings. Mary Foley's *Echinochloa crus-galli* (Cockspur) found as a weed in her greenhouse was last reported from the county in 1865.

The first new county record of the year was a non-native species *Myriophyllum aquaticum* (Parrot's-feather) from a pond at Clonsharragh (S739095), found by Paula O'Meara on 23 February. Paula went on to find a number of other new county records:

- *Nassella tenuissima* (Argentine Needle-grass) established on gravel at Curraghmore (S789127),
- *Hedera algeriensis* (Algerian Ivy) well established in the roadside hedges, Linziestown (T047090), specimens were sent to the BSBI Ivy referee Alison Rutherford, who confirmed the ID,
- *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* subsp. *okellyi* (Common Spotted-orchid) two on heath near power station, Great Island (S694145),
- *Jasione montana* var. *latifolia* few clumps flowering on sea-cliff, Arthurstown (S716103), this variety of
- Sheep's-bit has much larger flower heads,
- *Scrophularia nodosa* var. *babartii*, a yellow flowered form of Common Figwort was found in a damp roadside ditch at Coolaw (S921186), all other county records are of plants with red flowers,
- *Mentha x villosa* var. *alopecuroides* (Apple-mint) seen on a heap of rubble at Grange (S721134) is a tall int with broad round leaves,
- *Solidago canadensis* (Canadian Goldenrod) self-sown on a wall of the graveyard at Kilmokea (S687165), 5 clumps of *Ceratochloa carinata* (California Brome) on the road verge leading up to Stokestown Port (S706240) and in the port itself Paula had two fine plants of *Chenopodium glaucum* (Oak-leaved
- Goosefoot), a self-sown clump of *Geranium* 'Ann Folkard' (*G. procurrens* x *psilostemon*) on the side of a field at Kilmokea (S687165) was an unexpected find.

Paula's last new county record of the year was made on 29 October when *Rheum x rhabarbarum* (Rhubarb) was seen on rough ground at Monachee (S759133).

Paula also refound the first species of the year that was thought to be extinct in the county: *Clinopodium vulgare* (Wild Basil) on a road bank at Curraghmore (S788126) on 13 March, last reported here in 1889 by G.E.H. Barrett-Hamilton. The most recent record of Wild Basil for the county had been reported in 1943 from a road bank near Dunbrody Abbey.

Paula's other interesting records of the year include:

- a new hectad record for *Radiola linoides* (Allseed) on coastal heath, Broomhill (S747044),
- *Mercurialis annua* (Annual Mercury) on a heap of rubble at Campile (S724153),
- *Melilotus indicus* (Small Melilot) one on rough ground, Marshmeadows (S708260), 3rd county record,
- a single plant of *Misopates orontium* (Weasel's-snout) as a weed of an arable field at Dunganstown (S688222),
- *Lamium maculatum* (Spotted Dead-nettle) on a road verge at Knockroe (S788299), this is the 2nd county record and first since 1932.

On 25 May, I joined Ciarán Byrne and Paula O'Meara on a visit to Black Rock Mountain (S8654) to update the only extant site in the county for *Myrica gale* (Bog-myrtle). Here, we found several patches and added a new hectad record for *Ophioglossum vulgatum* (Adder's-tongue).

Mick O'Connor sent me a photo of a cream coloured Bush Vetch he found on a road bank at Mangan (S883425) on 31 May. I identified this as *Vicia sepium* var. *ochroleuca*, 2nd county record.

In early June, Dominic Berridge found a new site for *Salvia verbenaca* (Wild Clary) at Ballinesker (T117288) on the dunes. This population is 20km north of any extant site in the county.

Catherine O'Donovan did some recording at Whitewell (T0752), *Viola arvensis* (Field Pansy) was a new monad record.

The Wexford Naturalists' Field Club had a BioBlitz in the grounds of Newtownbarry House (S95), Bunclody on 13 June. 265 species of plants were recorded, the best find of the day was of a single *Neottia nidus-avis* (Bird's-nest Orchid) under a large Beech tree, this being the first county record since 1943. *Libertia formosa* (Chilean-iris) self-sown on the side of a wall by a pond was a new county record. Another meeting by the Field Club with leaders Jim Hurley and Roy Watson on 12 September at Tacumshin Lake (T0305) led to the discovery of a new county record, *Salicornia emerici* (Shiny Glasswort) on a small area of

saltmarsh. Searches elsewhere in the county has turned up Shiny Glasswort on many of the saltmarshes.

Lots of *Rumex pulcher* (Fiddle Dock) appeared in Frankie Tennant's garden at Ballykelly (T0515), around his bird table, it is assumed the seed came in with the wild bird seed! Frankie and Roy Watson turned up some good records from around the county: *Ranunculus auricomus* (Goldilocks Buttercup) at Borodale (S963366) is a new hectad record. Their *Linaria repens* (Pale Toadflax) along a forest road at Ballycrystal (S869512) is the 3rd record for the county. On the side of a forest road at Ballyconigar (T138344), they found a new site for *Filago minima* (Small Cudweed).

I had a day with Ciarán Byrne in the north of the county on 28 August, we visited the Rock of Toberanierin (T118545) to update a record of *Ceratocarpus claviculata* (Climbing Corydalis), and from some rough ground at Barnadown Lower (T146542) we had *Gnaphalium luteoalbum* (Jersey Cudweed) and *Cyperus eragrostis* (Pale Galingale), first records for the north of the county. A month later we had a day on the south coast, on the inland side of Ballyteige Burrows (S80 & S90) where we walked for 6km updating sites for *Sarcocornia perennis* (Perennial Glasswort), which we saw in 5 monads. The surprise of the day was finding a very large stand of *Salicornia pusilla* x *S. ramosissima* (Hybrid Glasswort), thousands of plants, forming a long pink strip at the top of the saltmarsh. *S. ramosissima* (Purple Glasswort) was common on the saltmarsh but it was more or less impossible to find any true *S. pusilla* (One-flowered Glasswort).

Úna FitzPatrick, Paula O'Meara and Zoë Devlin visited Kelly's Wood (S710255) on 2 September where they found *Persicaria campanulata* (Lesser Knotweed), a new hectad record.

A visit to look at bogs in the Ballycrystal area (S85) with Betsy Hickey and Mary Tubridy on 15 September was surprisingly productive, *Carex pulicaris* (Flea Sedge) was new for the hectad and *Eleocharis multicaulis* (Many-stalked Spike-rush) was the first hectad record since 1990.

I had a non-recording walk at Saint Kieran's (S8109) along the road at the back of Bannow Bay with Helena & Jim Crouch on 25 September, here we added *Juncus foliosus* (Leafy Rush) new to the hectad.

Mary Foley showed me some damp fields at Coolcotts (T0221) on 16 October where there is planning to build a large number of houses. The fields had a good population of *Achillea ptarmica* (Sneezewort), a rare and declining species in the county, and the only extant site for the hectad of *Anagallis tenella* (Bog Pimpernel). The bulldozers moved in a few days later and destroyed the Bog Pimpernel! Mary also showed me *Geranium* x *oxonianum* 'Thurstonianum' which appeared on a road bank near her home at Coolcotts (T0221), this *Geranium* has very narrow pink petals.

Sometimes it can be quite a challenge to name a non-native species found growing wild especially if you have no idea what it is. In one such case I posted on Twitter photos of a prostrate white flowered plant I had seen in a field on North Slob (T1024). Nobody was able to come up with a name of my mystery plant. I then tried iSpot, bingo! Somebody suggested *Limnanthes douglasii* subsp. *nivea*, I did more research on-line and agreed with their identification. What surprised me was that it hadn't crossed my mind it was a *Limnanthes*. I am very familiar with *Limnanthes douglasii* (Meadow-foam) which has white petals with a yellow base and is an erect plant commonly grown in gardens.

On the 26 February I had a good look around Rosslare Harbour (T1312) in search of *Galium murale* (Yellow Wall-bedstraw) which Paul Stanley & Keith Turner informed me they had found in June 2014. Actually I found this new non-native species for Ireland. The Wall-bedstraw is likely to have arrived via ferry traffic from Fishguard Ferry Port where it has been known since 2012.

I found a rather long list of new species for the county in 2015, here in the order they were found:

- *Callistemon viminalis* (Weeping Bottlebrush) which was naturalised over waste ground, Gorey (T1559), several of the bushes were over 1m tall. The parent bushes were in the grounds of the adjoining school, first record for Ireland;
- *Aucuba japonica* (Spotted-laurel) bush on bank of Urrin River, Mocurry Bridge (S864466),
- *Poa infirma* (Early Meadow-grass) on the side of the paths on the dunes, Rosslare Harbour (T1312);
- *Hemerocallis fulva* (Orange Day-lily) clump in roadside ditch, Kinnagh (S799126),
- *Allium neapolitanum* (Neapolitan Garlic) small clump on road bank, Coolroe (S787142),
- *Geranium macrorrhizum* (Rock Crane's-bill) clump on road verge, Clongeen (S834165),
- *Dactylorhiza purpurella* x *D. kerryensis* with both parents on lawn, Booley (S7506),
- *Hypericum xylosteifolium* (Turkish Tutsan) bush on edge of wood, Ballybought (S983089), first record for Ireland,
- *Sedum spectabile* (Butterfly Stonecrop) clump on bank on edge of wood, Ballybought (S984089),
- *Rosa multiflora* (Many-flowered Rose) large bush climbing over trees on margin of a wet wood, Ballyanne Old Bridge (S741304),
- *Tellima grandiflora* (Fringecups) patch in wood, Arnestown (S739250),
- *Arbutus unedo* (Strawberry-tree) one on edge of wood, Mullanour (S998188),
- *Weigela florida* (*Weigelia*) single large bush amongst brambles, Mullanour (S997189),

- *Dactylorhiza x latirella* (*D. incarnata* x *D. purpurella*) with both parents in dune slack, White Gap (T114273),
- *Carex x fulva* (*C. hostiana* x *C. demissa*) several clumps in bog, Loggan Lower (T078696),
- *Cotoneaster splendens* (Showy Cotoneaster) two bushes self-sown on dune, Raven Point (T109229), det.
- J. Fryer, BSBI referee for *Cotoneaster*, the first record for Ireland,
- *Centaurea jacea* (Brown Knapweed) rough pasture, Churchtown (X734986), likely to have been introduced with a wild flower mix, growing with an abundance of *Centaurea nigra* var. *radiata*,
- *Phygelius capensis* (Cape Figwort) patch amongst scrub in field, Knockbrack (T096662),
- *Dittrichia viscosa* (Woody Fleabane) three on rough ground by lorry park, Rosslare Harbour (T131116),
- *Euphorbia characias* (Mediterranean Spurge) six on rough ground by lorry park, Rosslare Harbour (T131117),
- *Lonicera pileata* (Box-leaved Honeysuckle) two bushes self-sown on bridge, Blackwater (T123340),
- *Frangula alnus* (Alder Buckthorn) three bushes on bank of sunken lane, Blackwater (T129339), likely to be a garden escape here, rather than a native,
- *Carex x pseudoaxillaris* (*C. otrubae* x *C. remota*) clump on rough ground with both parents,
- *Scaughmolin* (T004175),
- *Helianthus x laetiflorus* (*H. rigidus* x *H. tuberosus*) waste ground, Fisherstown (S683184),
- *Cotoneaster x watereri* (Waterer's Cotoneaster) large bush amongst brambles, Fisherstown (S685181),
- *Buddleja x weyeriana* (*B. davidii* x *B. globosa*) large bush on rough ground, Ballygerry (T126122),
- *Diplotaxis tenuifolia* (Perennial Wall-rocket) one on wall top, Lough (S893082),
- *Salicornia pusilla* x *S. ramosissima* (Hybrid Glasswort) top of saltmarsh, Lough (S897081), the first record for this hybrid in Ireland,
- *Alchemilla xanthochlora* (Intermediate Lady's-mantle) lots along road verge, Ballymaclare (S735216),
- confirmed by M. Bradshaw,
- *Cirsium x celakovskianum* (*C. arvense* x *C. palustre*) bank of drain, Newtown (S973058),
- *Cotoneaster lacteus* (Late Cotoneaster) several on wall top, Wexford Town (T048213),
- *Aster x versicolor* (Late Michaelmas Daisy) clump on road verge, Saint Kieran's Quay (S811094),
- *Guizotia abyssinica* (Niger) two on edge of field, Coolrainey (T108272),

- *Erica vagans* (Cornish Heath) clump on sandy waste ground, Ballyboggan (T022225),
- *Papaver atlanticum* (Atlas Poppy) one on waste ground, Ballynagee (T032201), 2nd record for Ireland.

I had sent Chris Metherell some *Euphrasia* specimens I had collected in July 2014 from Baginbun Head (S8003), on short sea-cliff top vegetation. He named them as *Euphrasia tetraquetra* x *E. confusa*, this is a new hybrid for Ireland.

Paula O'Meara made a start on recording the Stoneworts as there are very few post 2000 records for the county. Claudia Ferguson-Smyth kindly agreed to look at specimens, being very encouraging and helpful. 2 new hectad records were made for *Chara vulgaris* (Common Stonewort), and another was the first hectad record since 1991. I also decided I better take an interest in trying to identify the Stoneworts, something I had never done before! My first specimen I sent to Claudia has got me hooked on Stoneworts as it turned out to be *Chara connivens* (Convergent Stonewort), a species that had not been reported from the county since 1906. Even though there are a couple records from elsewhere in Ireland from the 1960s there are no specimen to support these, they have not been accepted. Rev. E.S. Marshall first found *C. connivens* new for Ireland in 1896 on North Slob (T02), and it was last reported there by G.C. Druce in 1906. My record is from a disused quarry at Ballyconnick (S9413), where it is the dominant aquatic of the pools. Claudia asked Nick Stewart for his opinion and he agreed with the identification.