www.ispynature.com

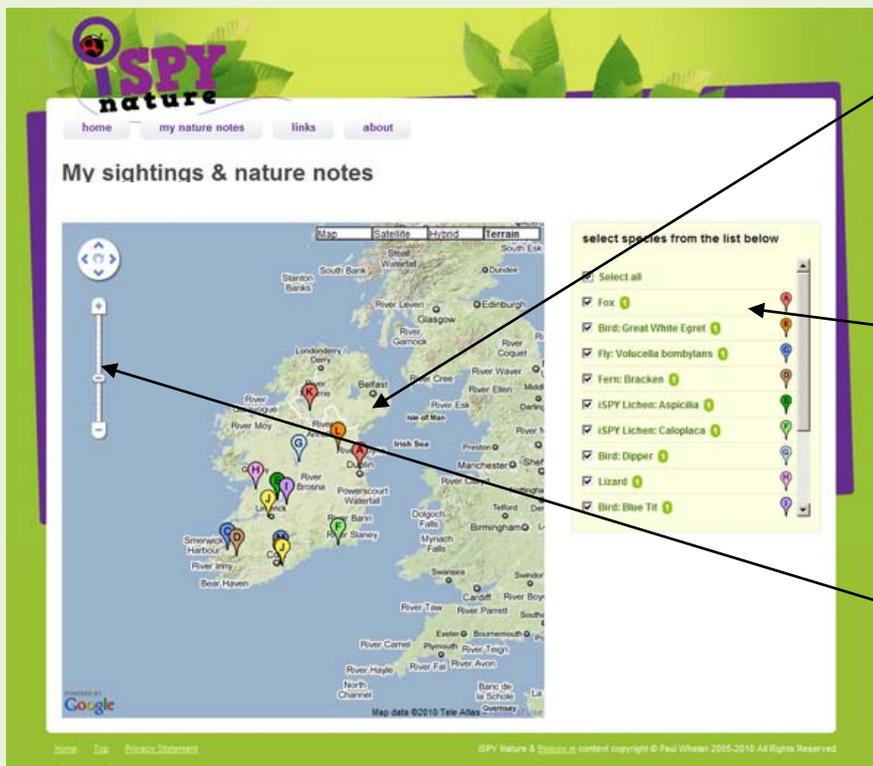# Teachers guide to iSPYnature.com

What is iSPYnature?

iSPYnature is a biodiversity awareness web site for young people and is particularly suitable for use in Primary schools.

How does it increase a user's biodiversity awareness?

The web site takes a different approach to other online biodiversity resources by involving the user in actively keeping an online record of plants and animals in their own area (perhaps of the school grounds or their garden/farm at home).

How does iSPYnature.com work?

The web site encourages pupils to place sightings of plants or animals on a map and write in some nature notes with the sighting. Using an email address they can return to look at the map and nature notes as their sightings increase. Here is a typical online Map and Nature notes page of a pupil (or class).

Map with sightings marked by the pupil or teacher

List of plants or animals placed on the map

Use to zoom in or out on the map

The nature notes can be called up for any species on the map - these notes are the pupil's own.

Map

Pupil's sightings

Pupil's nature notes for the fox he/ she saw.

Is it too complicated for primary schools?

The interface is a simplified version of www.biology.ie tailored specifically for young people. It is intuitive and the steps to input a sighting are clear and easy to understand.

It can be used by the teacher to represent the class sightings after a day or a week of nature studies.

The web site in more detail

The following screen shots will guide you through the main features of the web site. You can decide whether it is suitable for individual pupils or for use as a class project.

The Home page:

Sound file

Go to your map and nature notes

'What is this?' - click on picture to open the Flickr iSPY page for details.

Scroll through the last few sightings

The most recent sighting from a user of iSPY

Preset species lists

Search here for a species if you don't want to use the preset species lists

Using preset species lists

These can help you focus on a particular aspect of Ireland's biodiversity.

Here are the steps in using the Butterfly preset.

Imagine you have seen a Peacock Butterfly.

1. Pick on the Butterfly banner

2. The project page will open. This page can be studied at any time by the pupils. At the top right are two large green buttons. One allows you to place a butterfly (in this case) on the map and write in the nature notes. The lower green button allows you to look back at species already placed on the map.

3. Pick on the button 'Put it on the map'. The following page opens:

Steps will turn green as you complete them

Type the species here if the list is too long

The '?' means there is no picture of the species on the web site. If you want to send one just email it for consideration

4. Find the Peacock butterfly and immediately step 2 - location - will appear. It's a list of counties.

5. Select the county you want (I have selected Co. Donegal) and step 3 (the map) is displayed. If you are not familiar with using these maps you should play around with it for a while (you won't damage

it). For example, you can pan around or zoom in and out. Do this until you find the location of the area the butterfly was seen.

Here I have zoomed in on Killybegs and changed the map to **Hybrid** view.
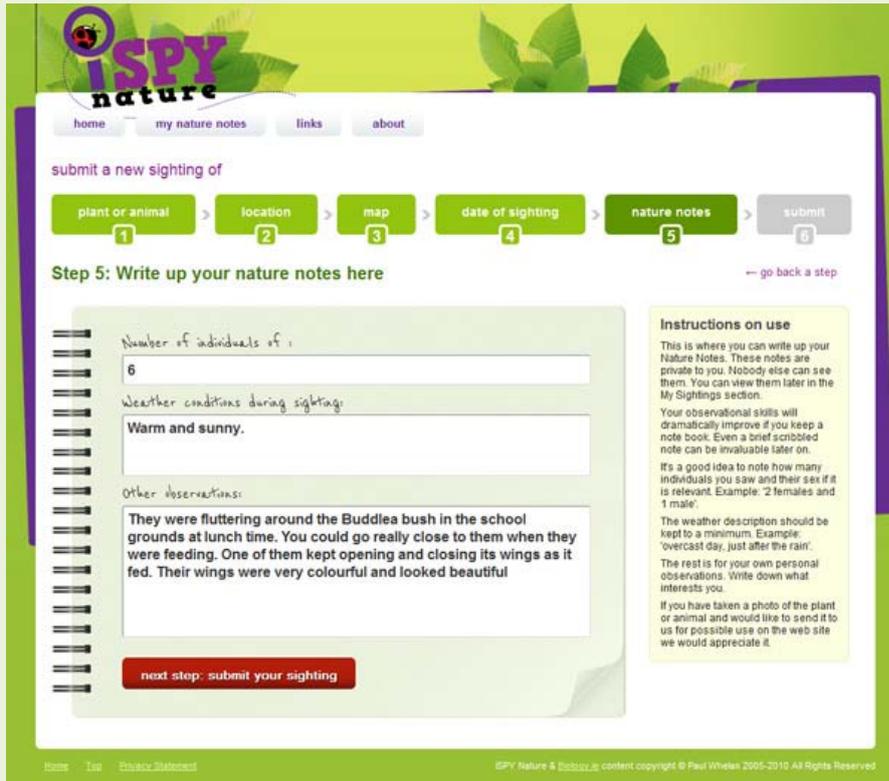

Step 3 - the map

I selected the Hybrid view

I then zoomed in and panned over Killybegs

Now pick a point on the map to show where the butterfly was seen. It you select the wrong place just click again until you are happy with it. A small flag will appear at the point. You are now ready to move on to step 4 so click on the red button 'next step: date'

6. Select the date.

7. The nature notes page appears with a simple simulation of a spiral bound note book. Type in the notes here something similar to the screen below:
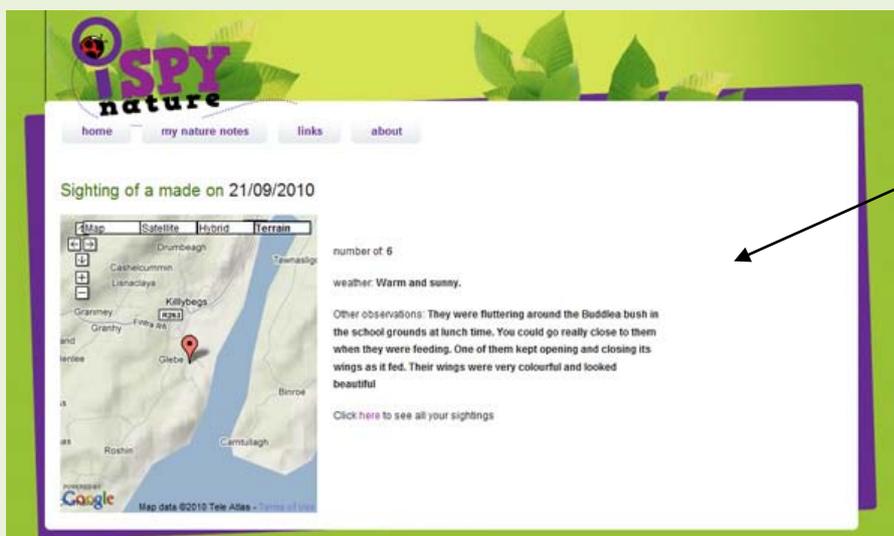
These nature notes will be saved with the Peacock butterfly. Click on the red button 'next step: submit your sighting'.

8. Step 6 appears. You must enter the email address here that you wish to use to look back at all your sightings and nature notes. You can also put in the school name - or pupil's name.

7. Click to proceed. The last page appears with 'click to see Summary of this Sighting' in green. Click on that to see a summary or just click on the home tab to go back to the home page.

Here is the summary of this sighting:
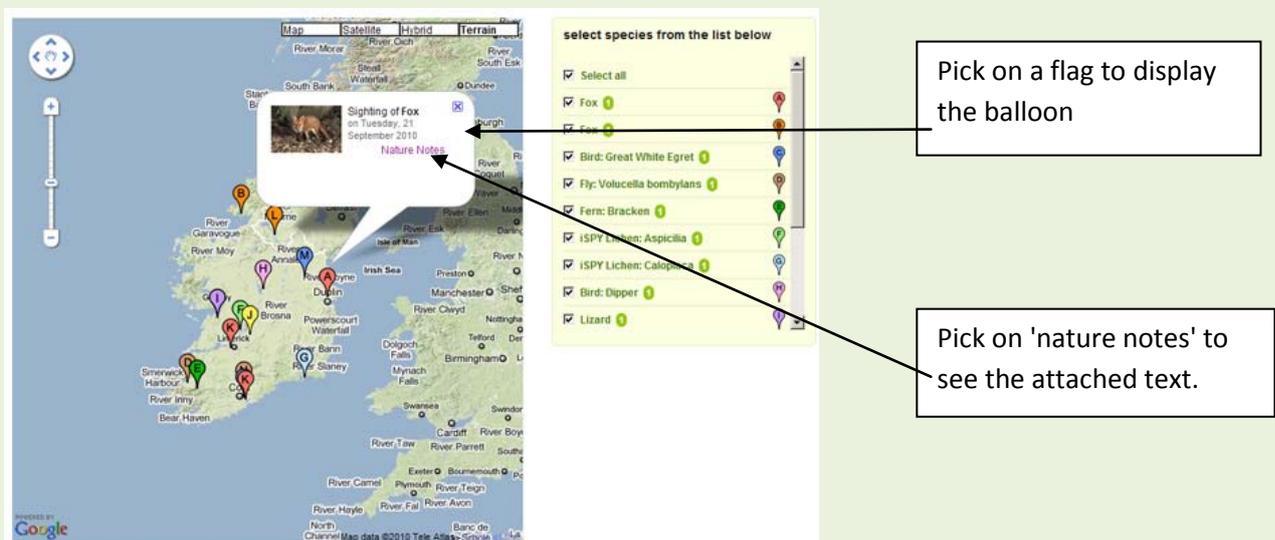

Summary of your sighting

Looking back at a user's (pupil's or class) map and nature notes is very easy.

1. Click on 'my nature notes' tab on the home page.

2. Type in the email address used

3. The user's map will display with the species listed on the right side. The number after a species name is the number of sightings for that species that are on the map.

4. Place a tick in 'Select all' to show all the species on the map. If all your species were in one small area you will need to zoom in to see them in detail. Each species is assigned a different coloured flag and letter so you can distinguish them. The same flags and codes are used in the species list on the right of the page.

Number of sightings

How to access the nature notes

1. Pick on a flag for a species - the bubble will appear - and pick on nature notes.

Pick on a flag to display the balloon

Pick on 'nature notes' to see the attached text.

The nature notes appear

Click on the X to close the nature notes

A note on iSPY Lichens @ School

A special preset list is the **iSPY Lichens @ School**. This was developed to promote an interest in Ireland's lichen flora. Ireland has a richer biodiversity of lichen than green plants, yet it is a group that has been largely ignored.

In an effort to foster an interest in the group some lichens have been selected for iSPYnature.com. A separate guide to these lichens is available on the website.

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