

Galway Green Leaf Biodiversity Trail



Galway City Canal Network, Nimmo's Pier & Mutton Island (PURPLE Route)

Description: This route follows the intricate system of canals, chutes and mill runs which spread like arteries throughout the oldest parts of Galway city.

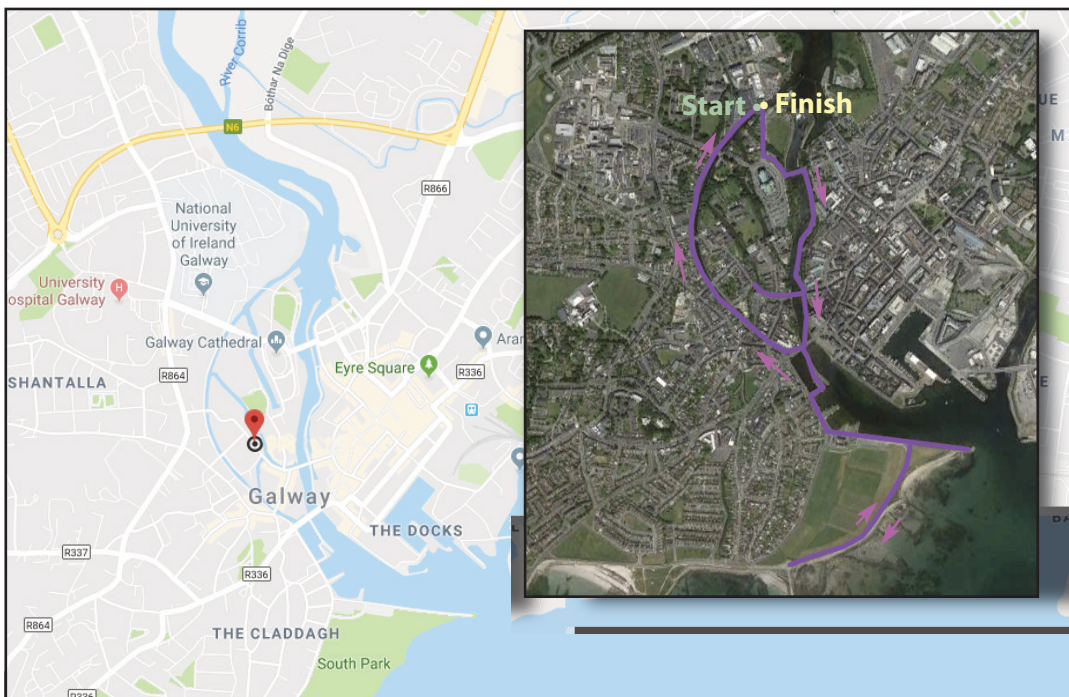
These waterways were feats of engineering in the 1800's and were integral to the functioning of the city, linking Lough Corrib to Galway Bay for transport of goods and powering up to 30 mills which serviced industries from breweries, distilleries,



Route distance 5.9km

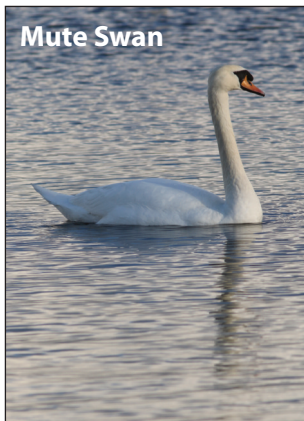
Route difficulty Easy

Route info This route is mostly paved, on even ground and is easily accessible.



Access: Car park on NUIG grounds (53.277827, -9.060390), or on street parking on University Road (53.276511, -9.061513). Pay and Display required.

Bike stands available in NUIG.
Information on parking in Galway City **HERE**
Information on bus routes **HERE**



paper, wood and flour mills, allowing Galway to flourish and grow into the city that it has become. Although the canals no longer serve their original purpose, they have become a haven for wildlife and now form an elaborate network of sheltered corridors which provide refuge and allow a diverse array of wildlife to live and move in and around the heart of the city, often unnoticed.

This route will take you past some of the most iconic and historic features of Galway City, while affording intimate views of the wildlife which lives right in the heart of the city.

The route takes you from the bustling city out to the much quieter Nimmo's Pier and Mutton Island protruding out into Galway Bay, giving an appreciation for the location of the city nestled on the banks of the river Corrib and right at the edge of the Atlantic.



This route can be accessed at many points and completed in sections or can be walked in its entirety. The start and finish point for this route is Eglinton Canal beside NUIG, where it then follows the canal network through the city until meeting the main river at Wolfe Tone Bridge and then entering the Claddagh, out to the end of Nimmo's Pier, onto Mutton Island and then back along this same route to return to Wolfe Tone Bridge and along the river walk to O'Briens Bridge, past the Bridge Mills, with a short detour to Mill Street and back towards Newtownsmith and the Salmon Weir Bridge to the Eglinton Canal via Fisheries Field and the footbridge to access the start and finish point at NUIG.



Start and Finish Start and finish at the Eglinton Canal at NUIG (53.27695, -9.05923), or start at any other point on this route. The route can be walked in sections or as a single route according to your preference.

What to bring Boots, warm clothes, rain gear.

What to look for The route affords opportunities to encounter a wide array of wildlife right in the heart of the city, including intimate views of some of the most iconic of Galway's natural residents such as the nesting swans, as well as some of the lesser known wildlife which have made the city their home including the charismatic Otters. There is a stunning diversity of wildlife living and moving in and around the city, many of which are so accustomed to the sights and sounds of the city that it is easy to get an insight into their otherwise secretive lives.



The canal network and its many off-shoots, channels and mill runs provide feeding and nesting sites for many birds including mute swan and you can follow their trials and tribulations as they attempt to raise their cygnets in the summer. Moorhen,



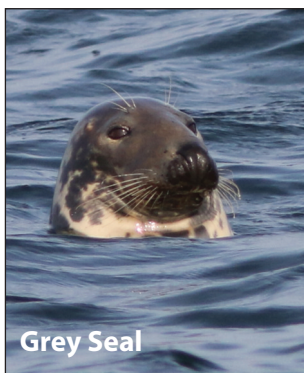
Sand Martin



Kingfisher



Common Tern



Grey Seal



Grey Heron

Mallard, Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail and Dipper nest in various sections of the canal, and Kingfisher can be observed along Eglington Canal near NUIG.

Herring Gulls nest on roof tops in view of the canal and are a constant and characteristic vocal presence in the summer, while migrants including Sand Martin and Swallow hunt for insects just above the surface of the river and canals in summer. Grey Herons have favourite fishing spots at the water's edge and are a familiar sight. You can sit and watch them patiently stand, statue-like waiting for an unsuspecting fish to swim into their striking range.

Several bat species also hunt for insects over and around the canal network after dusk in spring and summer, and the calm sections are good for dragonflies and damselflies.

Otters, considered to be elusive animals live right in the heart of the city and move throughout the canal network each night, under the roads, restaurants and apartments, with favourite banks for marking their territories or hauling up a fish or eel to eat in plain view of passers-by.

As the route enters the Claddagh and out to Nimmo's Pier the birdlife changes to marine birds such as Great Northern Diver, Red-breasted Merganser, Common and Sandwich Terns diving expertly for their catch and you might also spot Grey Seal and Bottlenose Dolphin, as well as Otters.

The river is truly the life blood of the city in terms of wildlife, and one of the reasons the city sprung up along the banks of the River Corrib is due to its importance for Salmon and Eel. For countless generations the Corrib has seen the migration of Salmon and Eel through these waters, the very first maps of Galway City even depict people gathered on the banks of the river using tridents to catch the passing Salmon. Now you can watch seals, Cormorants and Otters all navigate the flow on the hunt for Salmon and Eel.

Walking past the Cathedral and back to NUIG reveals once again the wildlife which seeks refuge in the sheltered sections of the canal and the hope for a final glimpse of the Kingfisher darting along the Eglington canal.