

# Galway Green Leaf Biodiversity Trail



## Small Wood Reserve (YELLOW Route)

**Description:** Forest walk through mixed broadleaf woodland, encompassing BirdWatch Ireland's Small Wood Reserve with a purpose-built viewing point overlooking Rusheen Bay, and Barna Stream which flows into Rusheen Bay in a small inlet surrounded by woodland.



This route runs from the car park at Rusheen Bay Windsurfing School to the Small Wood reserve, and the bird hide which offers excellent views over Rusheen Bay, to



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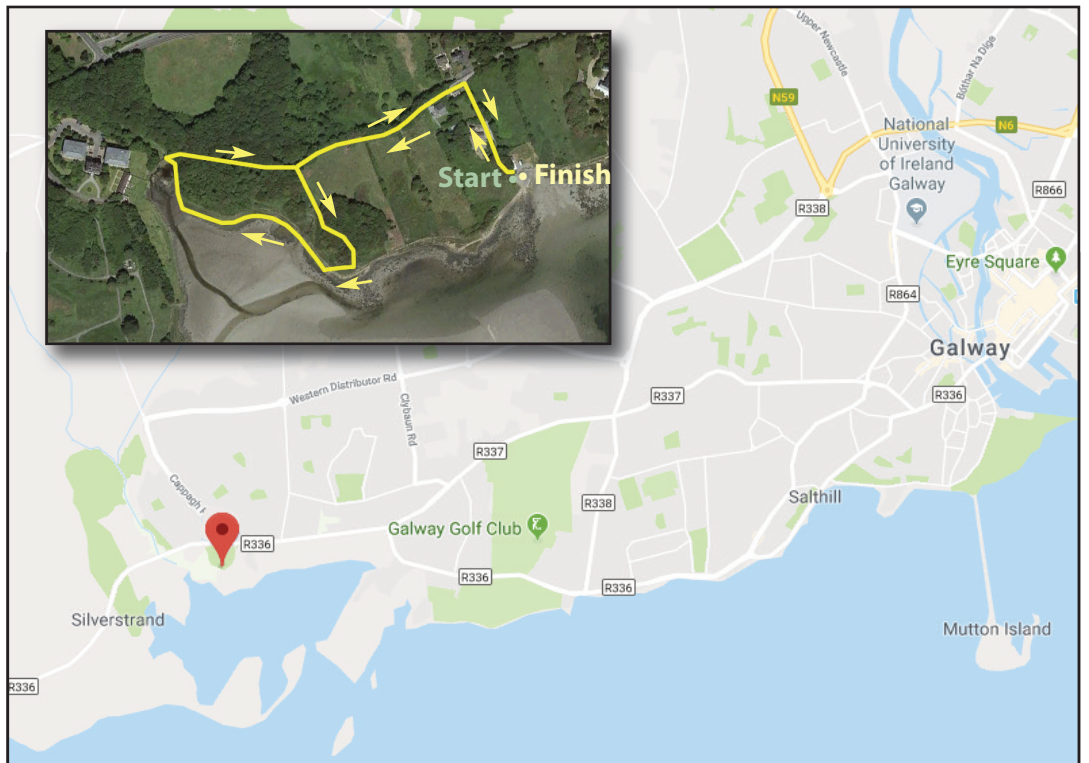
### Route distance

1 – 1.5km

### Route difficulty

Easy

**Route info** This route is not paved, includes uneven ground and trails that can be mucky following wet conditions.



Access: Small area for parking at Rusheen Bay Windsurfing School (53.25845, -9.11959).  
Free parking, spaces limited, 24 hours.

Closest bus route (412 or 414 bus)  
See **HERE**.  
No bike facilities.



the mouth of the river and back along a woodland track to the windsurfing school. A range of birds, fungi and insects can be seen in the woodland, along the trails, surrounding fields and hedgerows.

The pond at the Small Wood Reserve attracts dragonflies and damselflies in summer. Large flocks of wildfowl and waders can be observed in the bay from the bird hide, particularly in autumn and winter, including Curlew, Redshank, Greenshank, Bar-tailed Godwit, Dunlin, Teal and Wigeon and birds such as Kingfisher and Little Egret can be seen feeding where the stream flows into the mouth of Rusheen Bay.



**Start and Finish** Start and finish at Rusheen Bay Windsurfing School

**What to bring** Boots/wellies, warm clothes, rain gear.

**What to look for** The woodland trails run through mixed broadleaf woodland surrounded by fields interspersed with native species hedgerows, which provide habitat for a range of common farmland and woodland birds including Treecreeper, Long-tailed Tit, Blackbird, Robin, Wren, Song Thrush and Jay.



Due to the diversity of habitats, the dawn chorus here is impressive in April and May. The Small Wood Reserve, which is a patch of woodland which was donated to BirdWatch Ireland by the O'Malley family in 2002, includes a commemorative plaque and stone wall hide overlooking Rusheen Bay.

From the hide a wide variety of water birds can be observed, particularly in autumn and winter such as Redshank and Greenshank wading in the shallow waters and Grey Heron fishing. Conservation Volunteers Galway introduced a small pond at the entrance to the wood, which has attracted frogs, dragonflies and damselflies including the Beautiful Demoiselle, and has also been mysteriously populated by Stickleback. Brown Hairstreak butterfly can also be seen here in summer.



Barna Stream runs from Barna Woods under the main road and flows into Rusheen Bay at a small inlet. This stream supports migratory fish such as Salmon, Sea Trout and Brown Trout. At this inlet where the stream empties into the bay, you can observe Kingfisher feeding in autumn and winter when the tide is high, patiently perched on top of fences which provide suitable views to scan for small fish in the water below, and also Little Egret feeding in the shallows.