

# Ireland's Inland Waterways

Rivers are an important feature in our landscape. From earliest times, people have made their homes near rivers, where they could get fresh water, food and easy access to transportation. Over time, large settlements grew up and a majority of major cities in the world today are located near rivers. Most of the big cities and towns in Ireland are situated on the banks of rivers – Dublin, for example is built on the River Liffey, while Limerick is built on the River Shannon.

Rivers drain the land and benefit agriculture. Much of the fish we eat comes from the sea, but fresh water fish such as pike and perch are found in rivers, lakes and canals. In the past, Ireland's inland waterways were used to transport goods. Today they are used for a wide

variety of recreational activities such as sailing, kayaking, cruising, angling and water sports. Many tourists visit Ireland each year to spend time enjoying the benefits our waterways have to offer.

## Activity

1. List two reasons why people settle near rivers.
2. How are rivers beneficial to agriculture?
3. The water in the sea is salty. What kind of water is found in rivers?
4. Use an atlas or the internet to find the names of the rivers or canals that are beside the following cities and towns:
  - Limerick
  - Mullingar
  - Carlow
  - Tullamore
  - Enniskillen
  - Coleraine
5. Rivers are powerful sources of energy and in some cases this power has been harnessed to generate electricity. An example of this in Ireland is at Ardnacrusha Power Station on the River Shannon and Ballyshannon Power Station on the River Erne. With a partner, or in small groups, use your school library, an

encyclopaedia or the internet to find out more about how electricity is generated at Ardnacrusha or Ballyshannon using the power of water. Share your findings with the class.

6. Use a blank sheet to draw or paint an image of people enjoying the benefits the inland waterways of Ireland have to offer.



Waterway users enjoying our waterways