



***Muc Mhara* - Ireland's smallest whale**

2<sup>nd</sup> IWDG International Whale Conference

**19-21 September 2008**

Fitzpatrick Castle Hotel, Killiney, Co Dublin

The Irish Whale and Dolphin Group are pleased to announce their forthcoming conference on Ireland's smallest whale – *Muc Mhara* or the harbour porpoise. The harbour porpoise is the smallest of all Irish cetaceans and the most abundant and widespread. Harbour porpoise can be seen in all Irish coastal waters including off Howth and Bray Heads and Killiney Bay/Dun Laoghaire in Co Dublin. The harbour porpoise is recognised within Europe as being a species of major conservation concern and hence is included on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive, which requires member states to designate sites for its protection. Despite this, little is known about their ecology and due to their small size and elusive nature its' conservation importance is often overlooked.

The conference will present our current knowledge of this diminutive species in Irish Waters with invited guest speakers providing an international perspective on studies such as satellite tracking of harbour porpoise in Danish Waters, We will have the world's leading authority on harbour porpoise from the US talking about their ecology and protection and an update on how this species is faring in an EU context.

As anyone who attended the first IWDG large whale conference 'Míol Mór 2004' will remember this conference promises to be a thoroughly stimulating and enjoyable affair and we look forward to you joining us for a memorable weekend. We will be taking bookings from mid-March but you can register your interest in the conference by e-mailing us at [conference@iwdg.ie](mailto:conference@iwdg.ie)

For those interested in staying at the Fitzpatrick Castle Hotel please contact them directly to arrange a booking at 01 230 5556 or by e-mail [reservations@fitzpatricks.com](mailto:reservations@fitzpatricks.com) or on their website [www.fitzpatrickcastle.com](http://www.fitzpatrickcastle.com) and mention you're with the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group to get the weekend conference rate.

This conference will form part of Ireland's contribution to the UN/CMS Year of the Dolphin 2008.