



“Restoration of the Lower Shannon SAC (Mulkear River) for Sea Lamprey, Atlantic Salmon and the European Otter”

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## Press Release

1<sup>st</sup> February 2014

### The Lower Shannon River Floods Limerick

A combination of unfortunate factors resulted in the Lower Shannon River bursting its banks in various parts of Limerick city today (1st February 2014). The predicated gale force winds, coupled with a very high Spring tide and a River Shannon, swelled with flood waters from the Mulkear catchment and elsewhere in the Shannon system, all combined to make it a ‘perfect storm’ but regrettably it has had devastating consequences in local communities throughout Limerick city.



**The Lower Shannon From Thomond Bridge, 1 Feb 2014 (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchúir)**

Flooding occurred at various places in the city. Despite the placement of sandbags, significant flooding was recorded throughout the area above Thomond Bridge in the King’s Island and St Mary’s Park area. Amongst the worst hit residential areas were St Ita’s St., Oliver Plunket St., Island View Terrace. All these areas and other surrounding areas were extremely badly flooded and homes and lives were destroyed.



**Sandbags on quay wall above Thomond Bridge, 1 Feb 2014 (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchúir)**



**Flooding Oliver Plunkett St., 1 Feb 2014 (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchúir)**

Other residential areas were also very badly affected in what many have claimed to be the worst flooding on the Lower Shannon in living memory. The high tide which hit just after 07.00hrs on Saturday morning was the highest on record.

A similar but far less devastating story was recorded on the Condell Rd. Having breached the bank defences, large volumes of water crossed the road and moved into the wetlands area of Westfield Park. Flooding also occurred below Shannon Bridge on O'Callaghan Strand.



**The impact of flooding on the Condell Rd. (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchúir)**

The offices of MulkearLIFE / Inland Fisheries Ireland on the Dock Road were unaffected by the elevated water levels in the Shannon but other businesses on the Dock Road were less fortunate.



**Flooding on the Dock Rd., 1 Feb 2014 (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchúir)**

Significant flooding occurred around Irish Wire Products and Casey's filling Station on the Dock Road and at least one car was partially submerged in the floodwaters.

This level of flooding is uncommon in Limerick city, despite its proximity to the River Shannon. It is clear that the combination of elevated water levels, strong winds and a surging high tide all contributed to the flooding. It left in its wake a trail of destruction of people's homes and property.

It is a disaster for many local residents, their houses are ruined and it is unlikely that the flood waters will retreat for at least another 24 hrs.



**Family rescue, horse and cart, 1 Feb 2014 (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchúir)**

One of the few positives to emerge from the flooding was a fantastic combined community and agency effort to get people out of their flooded houses and to deal with emergencies.

The real spirit of Limerick shone today and get credit is due to the emergency services, Limerick Fire Service, Civil Defence and the voluntary search and rescue services, Limerick Marine Search and Rescue and ordinary people, be they boatmen or horsemen.



**A real sense of community to help families, 1 Feb 2014 (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchúir)**

The next high tide is this evening and further flooding on the Lower Shannon SAC is expected. Not a great start on this the first day of February -St. Brigit's Day – 'the first Day of Spring'.



**Limerick's Marine Search and Rescue, 1 Feb 2014 (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchúir)**

#### **Notes for Editors**

1. High Resolution Digital Images are available to accompany this Press Release.
2. Interviews can be arranged with the Project Manager by using the contact details below.
3. MulkearLIFE is a new €1.75 million European Commission funded LIFE Nature project working on the restoration of the Lower Shannon Special Area of Conservation (with a focus on the Mulkear River catchment) for Atlantic Salmon, Sea Lamprey and European Otter. Further details may be viewed on the project website [www.mulkearlifeproject.com](http://www.mulkearlifeproject.com)
4. Inland Fisheries Ireland (Limerick) is lead partner together with the OPW and Limerick County Council. Additional funding support comes from National Parks and Wildlife Service. Other supporters include Teagasc, IFA, ICMSA, and local angling groups.
5. The project is one of the first and most important integrated catchment management projects in Ireland. It is a flagship EU LIFE Nature project –covering some 650 sq km which contain a variety of habitats and protected species. Much of the area is designated as a Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) under the EU Habitats Directive and forms part of the Natura 2000 Network.

#### **Issued by:**

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