



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

Press Release

3rd March 2014

Springing Into March

Despite the very wet and unsettled weather, the signs of Spring are visible throughout the Mulkear catchment. Overall it has been an extremely mild winter with only very limited periods of prolonged cold.



Springing into March – Common Frog (Image: Joan O’ Neill)

While the land is still super-saturated grass growth has continued almost without interruption and now plant growth is taking life. Signs of new life abound. Trees along rivers in catchment are budding new shoots and many are in the early stages of leaf.



Buds of life and regrowth – Lower Mulkear (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchúir)

As we enter the first week of March 2014, the Lower Shannon is experiencing a massive spring tide and the Mulkear catchment is experiencing some welcome sunshine. Spring is an extremely busy time for a great many throughout the Mulkear catchment. Farmers involved with MulkearLIFE are busy calving, while others in the upper catchment are busy lambing. Given the level of rainfall over the eight weeks, many cattle are still indoors as the land is simply too wet to take them. It is hoped with a good dry spell cattle will be out of their winter housing within a matter of weeks.



Spring lamping keeping farm families busy (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchuir)

Birds and wildlife are busy with young. Birds are busy searching for mates, food and nest materials. Along rivers and riverbanks dippers, grey wagtails and kingfishers are equally busy.

Unfortunately, the mild weather has also greatly assisted the early emergence of non-native invasive plant species.



The mild weather has assisted in the early growth of Giant Hogweed (Image: RÓC)

It is expected that work on non-native invasives will recommence within the next two weeks. This will be spearheaded by Limerick County Council and the Office of Works.

In the coming months, normal or near normal spring and summer rainfall levels, and corresponding normal or near normal waters levels in the Mulkear River and tributaries will be key to MulkearLIFE achieving its objectives this year, the final year of operation of the project.



Deer at dawn (Image: Clodagh Blake)

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.mulkearlife.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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