



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

Press Release

21st April 2014

Air Corps Helps MulkearLIFE Review Instream Work

The current period of fine settled weather has seen water levels drop in rivers right throughout the Mulkear catchment. It has consequently been a great time for MulkearLIFE and our colleagues in Inland Fisheries Ireland, Limerick County Council and the OPW to start preparatory work for this years river restoration work. As part of the planning for this, MulkearLIFE was delighted to have an opportunity once again to utilise the support of the Irish Air Corp to get an aerial perspective of the instream works undertaken to date.



Irish Air Corps – AgustaWestland 139 (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchúir)

The helicopter flight, in a Agusta-Westland 139 helicopter, was supplied courtesy of the skilled pilots of the Irish Air Corp who use such flights as training exercises. It was arranged by Dr. Martin O' Grady (Inland Fisheries Ireland) to review a large number of rivers including the Mulkear. Of particular interest to MulkearLIFE was an opportunity to undertake an assessment of instream measures especially the rubble mats installed on the Mulkear River since 2011.



Rubble mat above Brittas Br. on the Mulkear River (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchúir)

MulkearLIFE's Project Manager, Mr. Ruairí Ó Conchúir was therefore delighted to have Dr. O' Grady on hand for the spectacular birds eye view of the catchment. Inland Fisheries Ireland, through Dr. O' Grady, have received on-going support from the Irish Air Corp for a great many years to take aerial photographs of inland, estuarine and sea shore locations of fishery interest. These images can be used for a wide range of purposes from planning survey work, estimating the degree, location and extent of problem areas, sourcing access points and assessing the impact of erosion, landslides to pinpointing pollution sources. What might take several days or indeed weeks of walkover survey work can be literally done in hours.

MulkearLIFE is extremely grateful to the Air Corp and Dr. O' Grady for facilitating the inclusion of the Mulkear River in their April 2014 flight schedule. The flight allowed Mr. Ó Conchúir and Dr. O' Grady to review the instream works undertaken by our project partners, Limerick County Council and the OPW.

Unlike previously, when the helicopter flight was used to track tagged sea lamprey which the project was unable to locate using standard tracking methodology, this flight was focused solely on the river restoration work conducted to date.



Ballyclogh Weir from the air before partial removal (Image: Martin O' Grady)



Ballyclogh Weir from the air – April 2014 (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchúir)



Aerial view of Annacotty village and weir – April 2014 (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchúir)

Flying in such fine weather also provides one with an extremely interesting perspective on the Irish landscape and an opportunity to view features one seldom sees. The following images show the beauty and character of the Irish landscape from the air.



MulkearLIFE would like sincerely thank the Irish Air Corp for their support. The aerial survey work and the digital images and knowledge gained from the flight are important in helping MulkearLIFE achieve its conservation objectives.



Aer Corps crew, Ciaran Smith, Martin O Grady (IFI), Sean Clancy & Michael Noonan

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

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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