



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

Press Release

9th May 2014

MulkearLIFE presents its work at international lamprey conference

MulkearLIFE was delighted to have the opportunity this week to present its work on sea lamprey to an international lamprey conference. The event which was hosted by the Institute of Fisheries Management, took place in the National Science Learning Centre at the University of York. It was attended by over 80 people, including leading researchers and lamprey experts from 17 different countries. It included individuals from North America, Scandinavia and the Iberian peninsula. Ireland was represented with colleagues from Inland Fisheries Ireland and the Loughs Agency.



Kjell Sjoberg of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

A great many interesting presentations were given, including one by Dr. Kjell Sjoberg of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences who gave a fascinating presentation on river lamprey fishing practices in the Baltic Sea area. This included an insight into traditional fishing practices in the region and the equipment used in different Baltic counties.

Margaret Docker, University of Manitoba, presented on environmental DNA work and lamprey distribution sampling. The eDNA work was very similar to work on the Mulkear River conducted last year by researchers from UCD. Dr. James King, Inland Fisheries Ireland, outlined the approach developed in Ireland between the Office of Public Works and Inland Fisheries Ireland to

ensure best practice is adhered to in maintenance and management of OPW drainage works. The talk, entitled 'Channel cleaning and juvenile lamprey: impacts, recovery opportunity?' outlined the 10 point best practice protocol which the OPW now follows and gave case studies from throughout Ireland.



Martyn Lucas, presented on the use of river lamprey for angling bait

Dr. Martyn Lucas, Durham University, gave an overview of the exploitation of European river lamprey for angling bait in England and Europe. The presentation including some interesting historical images of traditional fishing practices.

Dr. Sean Rooney, IFI, outlined the various manmade barriers which sea lamprey face on their return migration in various Irish river systems.

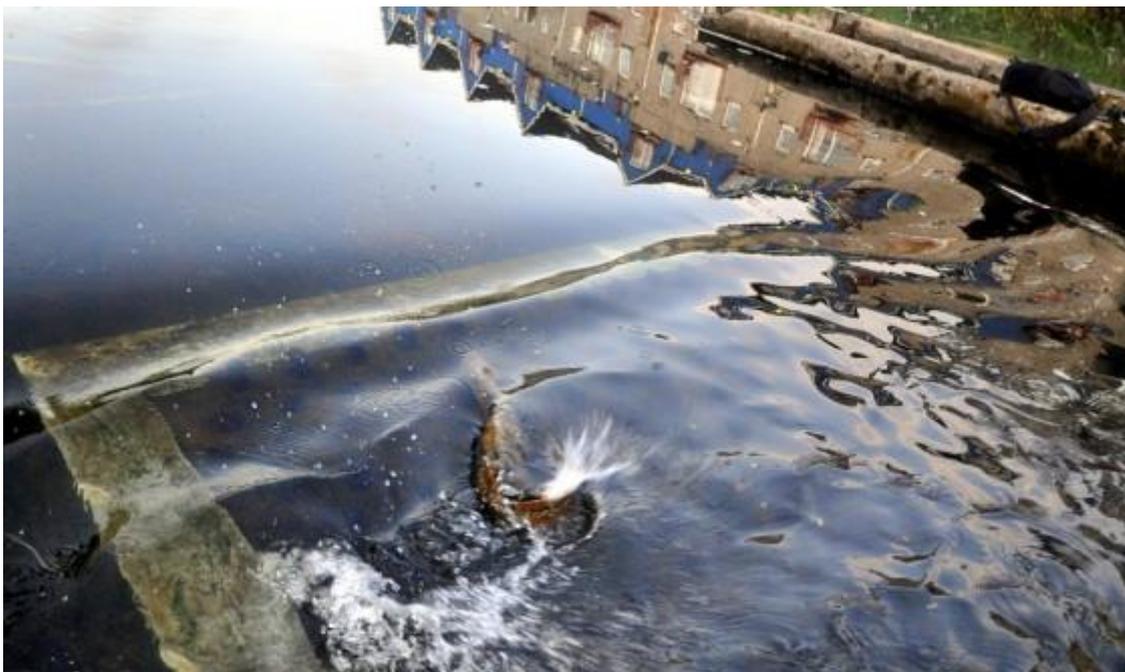


Sean Rooney outlined the various man-made barriers which sea lamprey face

MulkearLIFE's project manager, Ruairí Ó Conchúir, gave a detailed presentation on the project's work on sea lamprey over the past four years. The presentation outlined the key elements of the project's work since 2010, including the project's initial tagging and tracking work. The main focus of the presentation was however MulkearLIFE's work to ease the passage of sea lamprey with the installation of the two sea lamprey passes (sea lamprey peg tiles) at Annacotty.



The process followed to design, manufacture and install this was outlined, as was the early morning (from 04:00 to 08:00 hrs) and night-time (from 21:00 to 01:00) monitoring work. The monitoring results over three years (2011, 2012 and 2013) of sea lamprey ascending Annacotty Weir, using the lamprey pegs specifically designed and installed by MulkearLIFE in 2011, was presented to the international conference.



The project's work at Ballyclogh, where the weir was partially removed, was also presented. The partial removal of Ballyclogh weir in 2013 has provided permanent passage for sea lamprey and Atlantic Salmon and reduced the risk of unauthorised fishing activity below Ballyclogh weir. It was

noted that this work has opened up an additional 180km of habitat for sea lamprey and created almost 1km of prime habitat directly upstream. In addition, immediately upstream of Ballyclogh, excellent pool and riffle habitat has opened up for almost 1km. Finally, the presentation gave an overview of MulkearLIFE's sea lamprey spawning surveys throughout the catchment.

Yesterday (Thursday 8th May 2014), delegates were taken to visit various sites during the fieldtrip element of the conference. This included extremely interesting sites on the River Derwent.



The fish-pass on Buttercrambe weir on the River Derwent

MulkearLIFE would like to sincerely thank the Institute of Fisheries Management for affording the project the opportunity to present its work to such a distinguished international audience in such a well organised and focused conference.



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:

Ruairí Ó Conchúir, Project Manager – MulkearLIFE

Inland Fisheries Ireland (Limerick Office)

Ashbourne Business Park, Dock Road, Limerick

Tel: 061 300 238 / Fax: 061 300 308 / Mob: 087 062 5582

E-mail: info@mulkearlifeproject.com

Web: www.mulkearlifeproject.com / www.inlandfisheries.ie