



---

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

---

## Press Release

30<sup>th</sup> July 2014

### Impact of Flash Floods On Upper Mulkear Catchment

The extremely warm and humid weather of the last two weeks has included intense localised periods of thunder and lightning. The full power of such thunder and lightning was unleashed last Thursday evening and Friday morning when severe flash floods were recorded in various parts of the Upper Mulkear Catchment covering counties Limerick and Tipperary.



Amongst the worst hit areas was the village of Doon. The picturesque east Limerick village was hit badly by a thunder and lightning storm on Thursday of last week (24 July 2014) which resulted in a torrential downpour. While lasting a mere two hours it caused severe damage to parts of the village and the surrounding hinterland. Several roads in the area were closed – some of which remain closed. Particularly badly hit were the houses within the Glasha Talann retirement settlement and the nearby local cemetery. Clean-up work has continued all week to help ensure all is put right.

Aside from the damage to people's homes and business, the real damage was done by swollen rivers and streams with unbelievable damage to roads, bridges, culverts and land adjoining rivers.



Particularly badly hit were tributaries of the Bilboa and Gortnageragh rivers. While the thunder and lightning activity was very localised, these rivers and smaller tributaries, which were barely flowing in the days before the flash floods, were fed from the considerable catchment of the Slievefelim, Knockastanna, Mother and Gortnageragh mountains.



The rivers and streams in the Upper Mulkear Catchment are important nursery and spawning grounds for MulkearLIFE's target species and especially Atlantic Salmon and trout. The extent of the damage caused is still being actively assessed but it is clear that thousands of tonnes of material has been eroded into the Mulkear system.





While this is a natural river process, there is the potential that such suspended solids, which have discoloured the Mulkear River for the past five days, could negatively impact on recent sea lamprey spawning activity.

Potentially more serious is the impact of the flash floods on fish passage at bridges and culverts. Several bridges have been made impassable. Coupled with this, the erosion of river beds, where river beds have been lowered considerably, have created barriers to migration at scouring points under bridges and culverts.

It is likely that over the next number of days further suspended solids and others material will be brought down into the rivers with the predicted heavy rain. This will cause further discolouration of the Mulkear River and its tributaries as silt, clay, sand and gravel are washed into stream and rivers.



MulkearLIFE / IFI will continue to work with project partners and colleagues over the coming days and weeks to address the vast impact of these falsh floods on the Upper Mulkear Catchment.



All Images Ruairí Ó Conchúir (MulkearLIFE / IFI)

#### 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.mulkearlif.com](http://www.mulkearlif.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@mulkearlif.com](mailto:info@mulkearlif.com)

Web: [www.mulkearlif.com](http://www.mulkearlif.com) / [www.inlandfisheries.ie](http://www.inlandfisheries.ie)