



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

One Page Project Summary

The MulkearLIFE project (www.mulkearlifeproject.com) is a new €1.75 million European Commission funded LIFE Nature project working on the restoration of the Lower Shannon Special Area of Conservation (Mulkear River catchment) for Atlantic Salmon, Sea Lamprey and European Otter. The Shannon Regional Fisheries Board is the coordinating project partner together with the OPW and Limerick County Council. Additional funding support comes from NPWS and Tipperary County Councils. Other supporters include Coillte, ESB, Department of Agriculture, Teagasc, IFA and ICMSA. MulkearLIFE is one of the first and most important integrated catchment management projects in Ireland and is a flagship EC LIFE Nature project – one of only two such projects awarded funding in Ireland in recent years. The Mulkear, together with its principal tributaries (Dead, Bilboa and Newport rivers), drains a catchment area of approximately 650 km² spanning counties Limerick and Tipperary. The Mulkear River is one of the top five salmon rivers in Ireland when its relative size is considered, producing a significant annual salmon run. It also holds substantial populations of Sea Lamprey and Otter are known to be widespread, however, recent evidence suggests numbers are in decline. The main project objective is to restore, through in-stream rehabilitation works, degraded habitats along stretches of the Mulkear River and its principal tributaries. This work, while beneficial to many species, is targeted at Sea Lamprey, Atlantic Salmon and the European Otter.

Key Project Actions:

- Enhancing the populations of Atlantic salmon and Sea lamprey through in-stream rehabilitation work.
- Removing obstacles to the annual adult sea lamprey river upstream migration for spawning and recruitment.
- Monitoring this via radio-tracking of sea lamprey to determine habitat use and how obstacles are approached.
- Improving breeding, resting habitat and food supply for European otters.
- Stopping and reversing the damage caused by invasive exotics (Giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed).
- Addressing local water quality concerns by working with farmers and farming representative bodies (IFA / ICMSA) on alternative solutions to cattle drinks.
- Promoting the MulkearLIFE’s work through a range of events at a local and wider community level including illustrated talks, workshops, primary and post primary school visits, presentations and school field trips.

Expected Results:

- Enhancement of the populations of Atlantic Salmon, Sea Lamprey and Otters in the Mulkear Catchment.
- Greater awareness and understanding of issues affecting the SAC and how to manage the catchment
- Development of practical, costed and transferable management prescriptions for habitat rehabilitation for Atlantic Salmon, Sea Lamprey and European Otters for other Natura 2000 sites.

Project Budget:	Total budget is €1,740,818 - 50% funded by the EU LIFE Programme
Project Partners:	Shannon Regional Fisheries Board (Coordinating Beneficiary), OPW & Limerick County Council
Project Supporters:	NPWS (Co-financier), North & South Tipperary County Councils (Co-financiers), IFA, ICMSA, Coillte, ESB and Shannon, Mulkear & District Anglers Associations (Project Supporters)
Project Team:	Project Manager; Mr. Ruairí Ó Conchúir, Project Officer; Mr. Glen Wightman
Project Timeframe:	To 1 st January 2014
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