



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

Press Release

1st March 2013

MulkearLIFE visits New Fish Counter on the Maigue River

MulkearLIFE was delighted to join IFI colleagues from the Shannon River Basin District and GMIT student placement Ms. Vicki Davitt on a study trip today (Friday 1st March 2013) to visit the newly installed fish counter on the Maigue River upstream of Adare village.

The Maigue River, like the Mulkear River, forms part of the Lower Shannon Special Area of Conservation. The Irish meaning, for the Maigue ‘An Mháigh’ is the “river of the plain” explaining where it rises in North County Cork. It is joined by the small River Glen and the larger River Loobagh in south County Limerick. It then flows north through Bruree, after which it augmented by the River Morning Star. It flows through Croom and Adare before entering the Shannon Estuary just west of Limerick City at Ferry Bridge. Due to the strong tidal nature of the Shannon Estuary, the Maigue River is itself tidal up to main N21 Road Bridge at Adare.

There has been a degree of uncertainty regarding the extent of the salmon stocks in the Maigue River. Likewise there has been a degree of uncertainty regarding the numbers of fish migrating upstream to spawning grounds within the Maigue catchment. In order to establish the numbers of salmonoids, it was decided that the existing fish pass and counter would be decommissioned and a new more modern facility installed. In 2012, Inland Fisheries Ireland, in conjunction with the Office of Public Works removed the existing fish counter and weir on the Maigue and replaced it with a newly constructed fish counting crump weir upstream of Adare Manor.

In order to install the weir and carry out the work in safety, it was first necessary to have the river diverted in order that the construction work could take place. The counter itself is made of mass concrete and consists of 10 separate channels which span the entire width of the river. There is also provision for passage of lamprey and elvers on either side of the weir along either side of the river.

As the fish swim up the weir they cross over three metal electrode strips and a count occurs. Both an upstream, from base to middle electrode and downstream from top to middle electrode, and downstream count can be made. This will provide accurate counting data of adult salmon returning to the Maigue. The salmonoids will be counted and photographed once the electric fields generated at the electrodes are broken by a passing fish and this can be verified by cameras which have been placed at five locations along the weir. Salmon census data is very important in determining the numbers of fish moving upstream for spawning purposes. The data informs potential conservation measures which may be required to improve the overall conservation status and salmonoid habitats in the Maigue River.

MulkearLIFE congratulates its IFI colleagues and in particular Ms. Jane Gilleran for a wonderful study trip to a very important development on the Maigue River. MulkearLIFE is also grateful to Ms. Vicki Davitt for her assistance in writing this article.

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

