



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

Press Release

1st May 2012

White-tailed Sea Eagles Nest on the Shannon

MulkearLIFE offers its congratulations to Dr. Allan Mee, Project Manager of the Irish White-tailed Sea Eagle Reintroduction Programme on the fantastic news that a pair of White-tailed Sea Eagles has been confirmed breeding close to Mountshannon, Co. Clare. This is the first documented nesting attempt for the species in Ireland in over 100 years and may well be the first time White-tailed Sea Eagles have nested on this part of the Shannon in upwards of 200 years.

Those who attended the wonderful talk given by Dr. Mee as part of the MulkearLIFE’s series of illustrated talks in February of this year will recall that the possibility of this pair nesting on the Clare side of Lough Derg was mentioned as a real possibility by Dr. Mee at the time. This was also outlined during the wonderful Mulkear Conservation Volunteer outing to view the birds late last year.

Nest building began in recent weeks with the birds spending much time in and around the nest site before laying eggs. The breeding pair, a four-year-old male and three year old female collected on the island of Frøya off the west coast of Norway, settled in the Mounshannon area in early 2011. The breeding pair was released in Killarney National Park as part of the White-tailed Eagle reintroduction programme developed and funded by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in partnership with Golden Eagle trust. Although some pairs have established themselves in Co. Kerry in 2012, the nesting attempt in Co. Clare is the first known nesting since the reintroduction programme began.

The news was warmly greeted by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Jimmy Deenihan T.D. who stated, “I am delighted with this news after years of hard work by many on this project. We are working hard in my Department to protect and enhance our natural heritage and this development is a great boost. Already the White-tailed eagles are a wonderful asset to tourism around Killarney and wider afield in Kerry, and their spread will benefit business as well as giving joy to anglers and naturalists around the Shannon”.

Dr. Mee noted, “This is a truly momentous event for Clare and Ireland. It seems a long time since we collected these birds as chicks from nests in the wild in Norway and to see them now nesting in the wild themselves in Ireland is the day we have all been waiting for. To see eagles back in Irish skies and now breeding in the wild after so long is wonderful”.

Dr. Mee also appealed to the public to give the birds space. He noted that the trust has applied for an exclusion zone through the NPWS to ensure that the birds are not disturbed. He stated public viewing of the island would be facilitated at Mountshannon pier.

MulkearLIFE wishes the Golden Eagle Trust every best wish in its work over the next number of months. The project looks forward to a future visit by the Mulkear Conservation Volunteers to Mountshannon and supporting the Golden Eagle Trust in what every way possible. This news will no doubt be a major talking point at next week’s LIFE seminar ‘Celebrating 20 Years of the LIFE Programme in Ireland’ where Lorcan O’ Toole of the Golden Eagle Trust will give a presentation and will no doubt discuss this wonderful ‘good news’ story.

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.

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