



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

Press Release

11th July 2011

MulkearLIFE Takes To The Skies

MulkearLIFE was delighted to have an opportunity to utilise an Air Corp helicopter to get an aerial perspective of the Mulkear Catchment this past week. The flight was supplied courtesy of the skilled pilots of the Irish Air Corp (3rd Operations Wing). MulkearLIFE’s Project Officer, Mr. Glen Wightman was accompanied by Dr. Martin O’ Grady (Inland Fisheries Ireland) on the spectacular birds eye view of the catchment from an Air Corp Eurocopter 135.

Inland Fisheries has been receiving support from the Air Corp for a number of years and Dr. O’ Grady has utilised their support to take aerial photographs of inland, estuarine and sea shore locations of fishery interest. These images can be used for a wide range of purposes from planning survey work, estimating the degree, location and extent of problem areas, sourcing access points and assessing the impact of landslides to pinpointing pollution sources. What might take several days or indeed weeks of walkover survey work can be literally done in hours.

The MulkearLIFE project is therefore extremely grateful to the Air Corp and Dr. Martin O’ Grady for facilitating the inclusion of the Mulkear Catchment in the flight schedule. The flight allowed Mr. Wightman to review the extent of the problem of invasive species in the catchment and the tremendous working being undertaken by our project partners, Limerick County Council and OPW in addressing this problem. Given the water levels in the rivers throughout the catchment were abnormally high, the fly over also alerted MulkearLIFE to areas where significant erosion of river banks was occurring.

Most importantly, the flight was used to track tagged sea lamprey that the project had not been able to locate using standard tracking methodology.

MulkearLIFE would like to take this opportunity to thank the dedicated men and women of the Irish Air Corp for their support which is greatly appreciated. The aerial images and knowledge gained from the flight will be instrumental in achieving the conservation objectives of the MulkearLIFE project.

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

