



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

Press Release

11th November 2011

Lampreys- Sea, River and Brook

MulkearLIFE was delighted to be in a position to attend an important illustrated talk last night hosted by National Parks & Wildlife Service, Killarney National Park, at the Plaza Hotel Killarney. Dr. Sean Rooney of Inland Fisheries Ireland, the coordinating beneficiary of the MulkearLIFE project, delivered a high quality presentation about Ireland's three species of lampreys to a massive crowd. The talk focused on the biology, ecology, life history and conservation of the Irish lampreys (sea lamprey, river lamprey & brook lamprey).

Dr. Rooney spent a considerable amount of time during his talk discussing lamprey conservation. MulkearLIFE was delighted when he highlighted the work of MulkearLIFE in assisting migrating sea lamprey over barriers like Annacotty weir. He illustrated the innovative lamprey passes installed by MulkearLIFE on weirs in the lower Mulkear River and how they facilitate lamprey passage. The passes allow sea lamprey to access the entire Mulkear catchment. The lamprey pass consists of interlocking sheets of plastic attached to a stainless steel sub-frame. The entire structure is secured onto the face of the weir with bolts. The plastic sheets or substrata contain large numbers of knobs that reduce the velocity of the water as it flows over the face of the weir. The sea lamprey are therefore attracted to an easier route up the weir where the water velocity is considerably lower and the pegs help the fish gain traction as they move there way slowly up the face of the weir. The MulkearLIFE team is grateful for the publicity of our work and for the assistance of Dr. Rooney in our lamprey tagging and passage monitoring studies.

The event gave MulkearLIFE an opportunity to network with project co-financers (National Parks and Wildlife Service), project supporters and friends. It was great to see so many people interested in Ireland's most prehistoric fishes, the lampreys. A lively discussion followed the talk with all participants coming away more knowledgeable about these fascinating creatures. It was a great night out for all concerned and job well done by Dr. Rooney.

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:

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