Press Release

14th January 2013

Details of 4 Free Illustrated Talks - starting Tuesday, 5th February, 2013

MulkearLIFE / Inland Fisheries Ireland are delighted to announce details of an exciting block of free illustrated talks taking place in February 2013. The talks form part of MulkearLIFE's Environmental Education Programme, an outreach programme in local schools and the local community in the Mulkear catchment. The talks will focus on the extraordinarily rich natural heritage of Ireland and in particular the Lower Shannon Special Area of Conservation.

They will take place over four Tuesday evenings and will include leading experts sharing their knowledge on farming and conservation and biodiversity management. The series will include the fascinating story of Atlantic Salmon in the River Shannon, including new information never before known on their genetic makeup. It will include the scary story of what is emerging in terms invasive non-native animals and plants, which are arriving into Ireland. It will also include a story looking to the future, of building partnerships for sustainable fisheries. The series of talk's promises to be varied and exciting, with a great line-up of speakers. The venue for all talks is the Inland Fisheries Ireland office, Ashbourne Business Park, Dock Road, Limerick. There is plenty of free parking at the front of the building at night. Talks will commence at 8.00pm sharp and there is free admission to all talks.

The first talk will take place on Tuesday 5th February. The guest speaker will be Mr. Ruairí Ó Conchúir and his talk is entitled "Conservation Farming & Biodiversity in the Upper Mulkear Catchment". Mr. Ó Conchúir is the manager of the EC funded LIFE+ project – MulkearLIFE. He has worked in land care management, rural development, farming for conservation and fisheries restoration work for over 20 years, including 10 years in Southern Africa. His talk will focus on the work of MulkearLIFE with farmers over the past three years with a particular emphasis on MulkearLIFE's partnership work with farmers to improve local habitats. His talk will also attempt to map out where upland farming in Ireland is heading and review work in other uplands parts of Ireland, and outline the likely implications are for upland communities, related farming and habitats post 2014. His talk should be of particular interest to anyone with a general interest in farming, the Irish uplands and the future of EU agri-environmental supports post 2014.

Dr. Phil McGinnity will guest speak on Tuesday 12th February and his illustrated talk is entitled "The Atlantic Salmon of the River Shannon – An Historic and Genetic Overview". Dr McGinnity is Beaufort Principal Investigator with UCC's Aquaculture & Fisheries Development Centre. His principal interests lie in the use of molecular biological techniques to resolve fundamental questions in fish ecology and evolutionary biology, specifically those processes that have a bearing on local adaptation (domestication selection, introgression of cultured and wild fish, disease, climate change, fishing). Other areas of interest include landscape genetics and fish stock assessment. Dr. McGinnity has over 23 years of experience in fisheries science and management of which over 18 been in research field. His talk will outline new and extremely exciting research on the genetic make-up of various salmon types found in the Shannon. He will also examine the history of salmon fisheries on the Shannon. His talk should be of particular interest to anglers far and wide and anyone with a general interest in Irish biodiversity.

The third talk will take place on Tuesday 19th February. Ms. Colette O' Flynn will be the guest speaker and her illustrated talk is entitled "Invasive Species In Ireland – Trends Emerging In Terms of Introductions". Ms. O' Flynn is a Research Officer with the National Biodiversity Data Centre in Waterford. She manages the National Invasive

Species Database for Ireland, which tracks non-native invasive animals and plants in Ireland. She is involved with many European and international invasive species information networks and has been involved with invasive species policy development for the European Commission. She previously worked in various areas in biodiversity education and awareness. Her talk should be of interest to a wide variety of people, especially anglers and those with an interest in Irish wildlife and general biodiversity.

The series of illustrated talks will conclude on Tuesday, 26th February with a talk by Mr. Eamon Cusack. His talk is entitled "Building Partnerships for Sustainable Fisheries on the Lower Shannon". Mr. Cusack is extremely well known in the fisheries world with over 35 years experience in inland fisheries management. As the former CEO of the Shannon Regional Fisheries Board, Mr. Cusack encountered many of the challenges facing fisheries management. He has hands-on experience of policy development, strategic management, change management, enforcement, development and rehabilitation. He was a Ministerial appointee to the Central Fisheries Board (2000 to 2010) where he had oversight and input to national fisheries policy. Since leaving the service in 2010, he has been actively involved in stakeholder engagement and management, fisheries development and protection. His talk will focus on Mr. Cusack's recent work to bring together anglers and the ESB to provide to build effective and durable partnerships for sustainable fisheries. His talk should be of particular interest to local anglers and anyone with a general interest in conservation management and planning.

Admission to all talks is free of charge and all are welcome. Further information regarding any of the talks may be obtained from the project info@mulkearlife.com or from MulkearLIFE, Inland Fisheries Ireland (Limerick) on telephone number 061 300 238 / 087 062 5582

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.mulkearlife.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 Teagacs, 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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