



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

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## Press Release

18<sup>th</sup> June 2012

### As The Rain Keeps Falling Down - Rivers Remain High

Following a relatively dry month of May, weather conditions broke on the 1st June 2012 and the Mulkear catchment has experienced a very unsettled period with heavy and persistent rain and showers for over two and half weeks. As a result the Mulkear River and its tributaries, including the Bilboa, Dead and Newport Rivers, have witnessed some very dramatic summer flood events since early June.

Significant floods were recorded on the 1st to 3rd, 8th to 11th and on the 16th June. The flood conditions have not only been confined to the Lower Mulkear catchment. Many of the rivers and streams in the upper catchment have also experienced significant flood events.

The real visible impact of the continued exceptionally high levels of rainfall has however been in the lower Mulkear, where the 650 square kilometre catchment is focused before it flows into the Shannon River. The increase in water levels has impacted negatively on the work of MulkearLIFE and its project partners, Limerick County Council and the Office of Public Works.

Otter survey work has been cancelled, repair work at Ballyclough weir has been lost, and scheduled catchment wide electrofishing is on pause. The potential for additional disruption in early July 2012, when the project will recommence its instream works, is a real cause of concern to the project team at the moment. Farmers and landowners have also faced great difficulties in getting silage cut and in certain parts of the catchment in having to deal with flood events on their land. The flood events on the Dead River have placed additional pressures on previous breaches and have placed landowners and project partners under extra work pressure.

The unsettled conditions are set to continue this week and next. On a positive note, significant numbers of fish have been seen passing upstream over the past number of weeks.

#### 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](http://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 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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