



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

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## Press Release

21<sup>st</sup> August 2013

### Heritage Days Are Happy Days

Heritage Days Are Happy Days. This was certainly the case as MulkearLIFE kicked-off its involvement with National Heritage Week 2013 in great style yesterday. The outing at Annacotty on the Mulkear River was held in warm sunshine and attracted many local wildlife enthusiasts and eager young research scientists. The event entitled Exploring Biodiversity on the Mulkear River at Annacotty included discussions on local biodiversity, the importance of riparian habitats and the dangers posed by non-native invasive plant species.

The work undertaken to date by MulkearLIFE, it's Project Partners and the Mulkear Conservation Volunteers on address the problem of invasive plant species was highlighted with before and after pictures showing the scale of the problem of Himalayan Balsam at Annacotty. The need for effective site-specific management plans for non-native invasive plant species, like Himalayan Balsam was reviewed as was the ability of the plant to reproduce.

The event also included young scientists undertaking practical research work on water quality and aquatic macro-invertebrates or 'bugs' as they are known in their world! Several kick-samples were taken by the children to identify what 'bugs' live in the water.

The event also examined the rich biodiversity around Annacotty weir where the life cycle of various fish species was discussed. The impact that barriers, like Annacotty weir, have on sea lamprey and other migrating species was discussed. Their migration and upstream passage in the Mulkear River was outlined as was the work which MulkearLIFE has undertaken over the past four years to improve passage. The extraordinary life cycle of the Atlantic Salmon was also discussed. This included viewing a Salmon fry, which one of the junior scientists had caught (and released).

The event concluded with prize giving for children who correctly identified various species of birds, fish and mammals on the LIFE Mural in Annacotty. A great day of learning and sharing – ensuring once again this year that 'Heritage Days Are Happy Days'.

The second event being hosted by MulkearLIFE as part of Heritage Week 2013 takes place this Saturday (24th August 2013). It is a field trip entitled 'The Magical Mulkear: A Field Trip Of Discovery'. This free event, for which pre-booking is required, promises to be a very enjoyable day and will involve a bus excursion to visit a range of exciting sites throughout the catchment. The field trip will focus on the rich biodiversity of the Mulkear catchment (from source to mouth) and some walking will take place to access sites. The event is suitable for children and adults alike but only a very few places are left and pre-booking is required (Tel. 061 300 238 or e-mail [info@mulkearlife.com](mailto:info@mulkearlife.com))\*. The bus will depart the Mill Bar Car Park, Annacotty @ 10.00hrs returning between 14.00 and 15.00hrs. For full details of these events and all other events taking place throughout Ireland as part of Heritage Week 2013 please see the Heritage Week website: [Heritage Week 2013](#)

## 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:**

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@mulkearlife.com](mailto:info@mulkearlife.com)  
Web: [www.mulkearlife.com](http://www.mulkearlife.com) / [www.inlandfisheries.ie](http://www.inlandfisheries.ie)

