



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

Press Release

21st May 2010

Sea Lamprey - A Great Day Tagging

MulkearLIFE reached a significant milestone over the last number of days with the tagging of some 50 Sea Lamprey on Friday last 21 May 2010. A day to remember as MulkearLIFE tagged its first Sea Lamprey. This work was conducted with the support of the staff of the Central Fisheries Board – Dr. Sean Rooney and Dr. Jimmy King and the Project Team are deeply appreciative of their support.

Earlier in the week MulkearLIFE’s Project Officer Mr. Glen Wightman had noted the possible presence of Sea Lamprey immediately below Annacotty weir on the Mulkear with the discovery of a half eaten adult Sea Lamprey. Water temperatures had risen steadily all week and by Friday (21 May 2010) were 16.3 degree Celsius. It is likely that these temperatures is together with an exceptional dry spell of weather were possible triggers for the upstream migration of the Sea Lamprey. On inspection of the site on Friday morning very large numbers were found.

MulkearLIFE had planned to tag some 20 Sea Lamprey and had done so by lunchtime. Size and weights varied with the longest coming in at just less than a meter, at 915cm weighting some 1.48kg. The shortest sea lamprey measured some 675cm and weighted in at 790g. The Central Fisheries staff proceeded to tag an additional 30 sea lamprey bringing the overall total to approximately 50. All of the Sea Lamprey tagged for the MulkearLIFE were release below the weir at Annacotty and all of the Central Fisheries Board tagged fish were release above the weir. The race is now on to see what barriers (if any) prevent the Sea Lamprey from migrating up stream both with the main Mulkear channel and into the main tributaries namely the Bilboa, Newport and Dead rivers. Through radio tracking MulkearLIFE will be carefully monitoring the hopeful upstream migration and progress of the tagged Sea Lamprey over the next number of months. Updates will be posted on this website

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. Shannon Regional Fisheries Board 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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