



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

---

## Press Release

24<sup>th</sup> September 2012

### Successful Conservation Volunteer outing on the Bilboa

In glorious Autumnal sunshine members of the Mulkear Conservation Volunteers took to the Bilboa River on Saturday morning last, 22nd September, to embark on another practical conservation outing. The outing, one of several planned to this important High Nature Value (HNV) site, was focused on riparian management in the area upstream from Bilboa Bridge and included preparation work for riparian fencing, preparation work for the installing of bird boxes for dipper, path clearance work and a general clean-up of the site. The work site was upstream from the wonderful work completed by the local community at Bilboa Bridge earlier this year, which included the creation of a beautiful wildflower seed bank.

The main focus of Saturday's practical conservation outing was on the removal of several non-native invasive plant species in the riparian zone. The main problem invasive on site is Pheasant Berry ( *Leycesteria Formosa* ) which is also known as Himalayan Honeysuckle or Elisha Tears. This emerging non-native invasive plant species, which was hardly visible during the MCV outing to remove Himalayan Balsam in June 2011, has taken over large areas of the site. It forms extremely dense thickets and like other invasive plants outcompetes native Irish riparian plants.

The Mulkear Conservation Volunteers experimented with various removal methods. This included cutting the stem of the plants, which grow in canes, as close to the crown as possible. The hollow stems, which can be cut with ease, are then painted immediately with herbicide. The Mulkear Conservation Volunteers worked in teams of two, one cutting and one painting.

Given the nature of growth of the Pheasant Berry it was critical that the teams prevented the spread of berries (seed) and applied the herbicide within 15 seconds after cutting the stem of the plant. Given the extent of the infestation members of the Mulkear Conservation Volunteers together with project staff also dug out entire plants.

The outing also focused on opening and widening of existing pathways which had closed on due to scrub encroachment and the removal of Himalayan Balsam in isolated areas. The outing also included a discussion on the status of the habitat on dipper breeding on site and on the installation of dipper bird boxes. Wildlife noted on site included a shrew, various bird species including a wonderful display by a kestrel or was it a sparrowhawk!!!

A Big Thank You to all Mulkear Conservation Volunteers Members who gave of their time to support another highly successful practical conservation outing.

The next planned outing of the Mulkear Conservation Volunteers is on Saturday 20th October 2012 and full details will be posted in prior to the event. The full schedule of this year's programme of outings is available on this website under the 'Reports and Resources' section. The Mulkear Conservation Volunteers work to help protect, manage and enhance the Natural Heritage of the Mulkear Catchment through volunteer participation in practical conservation projects. All events are free of charge. Membership of the MCV is open to all and becoming a member is free of charge.

## 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](http://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:**

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

