



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

Press Release

3rd January 2011

Crowds Witness Dramatic Salmon Run

Crowds gathered on the 31st December 2010 and 1st & 2nd January 2011 at Annacotty weir on the Mulkear River to witness the wonderful sight of large numbers of Atlantic Salmon running the weir. Both young and old were on hand to see the very significant numbers of salmon running the weir. Levels of up to 120 fish per hour were recorded attempting to jump the weir and move back upstream from the Lower Shannon and begin spawning throughout the Mulkear Catchment.

The staff of Inland Fisheries Ireland / MulkearLIFE were on hand to discuss this annual phenomenon and to discuss the importance of the returning salmon within the overall lifecycle of the fish. Many watched in wonder and marvelled at the sheer determination of the salmon to get above the weir at Annacotty. Older people present expressed their sheer delight to see such large numbers of salmon returning into the system.

MulkearLIFE staff outlined the work of the project to restore habitat for Atlantic Salmon throughout the Mulkear catchment. The project's Environmental Education Project in local schools was also discussed with the children and parents present. The younger participants displayed an excellent knowledge of the life cycle of the Atlantic Salmon and of general biodiversity on the Mulkear.

While very few present witnessed fish getting above the weir, those present were reassured that the salmon did indeed get above the weir via the fish pass, which had been cleaned repeatedly by Inland Fisheries Ireland staff and MulkearLIFE staff over the Christmas and New Year period, and that significant numbers would indeed make it above Annacotty. Future modifications to Annacotty weir are proposed under the work programme of MulkearLIFE and this work will likely take place in the Spring.

It had been noted that large numbers had moved back into the system in late November and early December 2010 but the fish running during the first few days of 2011 were taking advantage of changes in river water levels following the significant thaw which set in after Christmas. The MulkearLIFE project is delighted with the number of salmon returning to the catchment. The return of such large numbers bodes well for the habitat restoration work undertaken by the project and its partners (Limerick County Council and the Office of Public Works) in 2010. This work will continue over the next number of years.

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. 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.

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