



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

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## Press Release

31<sup>st</sup> January 2011

### Series of Illustrated Talks - February 2011

MulkearLIFE today announces details of another block of free Illustrated Talks. These talks form part of the four year Environmental Education Programme of MulkearLIFE working with schools and the local community within the Mulkear catchment in counties Limerick and Tipperary. The February 2011 series of talks will focus on the extraordinarily rich natural heritage of the Mulkear Catchment and the Lower Shannon Special Area of Conservation. The series will take place over four Mondays in February and will include leading experts sharing their knowledge of biodiversity, the Shannon dolphins, water quality and invertebrates and the conservation work of MulkearLIFE. The venue for all talks is the Community Centre, Newport, Co. Tipperary, which is a 15-minute drive from Limerick City Centre. Talks will commence at 8.00pm and there is free admission to all talks.

The first talk will take place on Monday 7th February. The guest speaker will be Mr. Ruairí Ó Conchúir and his talk is entitled “Biodiversity in the Mulkear Catchment: A Resource For All”. Mr. Ó Conchúir is the Manager of the MulkearLIFE project and his talk will focus on the extraordinarily rich biodiversity found within the Mulkear Catchment and the work of MulkearLIFE and the Mulkear Conservation Volunteers to safeguard this biodiversity. His talk will also focus on the interrelationship between the ecosystem service providers that surround us and the sustainability of human activity. His talk should be of particular interest to anyone with a general interest in biodiversity.

Dr. Simon Berrow will guest speak on Monday 14th February and his illustrated talk is called “Shannon’s Dolphins - What Lies Beneath the Estuary”. Dr. Berrow is a Lecturer in the GMIT teaching on the Applied Freshwater and Marine Biology Degree course. He is also Project Manager of the Shannon Dolphin and Wildlife Foundation and has been deeply involved with the Irish Whale & Dolphin Group (IWDG) for many years. His talk will focus on the importance of protecting the Lower Shannon and Shannon Estuary as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) to ensure the long-term sustainability of fish stocks and the resident pod of Bottlenose Dolphin. He will outline research work on the interrelationship between the Shannon dolphins and their food web. His talk should be of particular interest to local anglers and anyone with an interest in the Shannon estuary and wildlife and his illustrated talk is guaranteed to be insightful and memorable.

“Invertebrates What They Tell Us About Water Quality” is the title of the third talk on Monday 21st February with Ms. Jane Gilleran as guest speaker. Ms. Gilleran is employed by Inland Fisheries Ireland as a Fisheries Officer and is based in Limerick. Invertebrates are one of the key water quality indicators in Ireland’s fresh water rivers. Ms. Gilleran will illustrate the variety and extent of fresh water invertebrates and where they fit into the rich biodiversity found within the Shannon River Basin district. She will also outline the work of the protection staff of Inland Fisheries Ireland to ensure good water quality. Her talk should be of particular interest to local anglers, farmers and anyone with an interest in fresh water ecology and biodiversity.

The series of illustrated talks will conclude on Monday 28th February with a talk by Mr. Glen Wightman entitled “Rivers For LIFE – The First Year of Work of MulkearLIFE”. Mr. Wightman is Project Officer with MulkearLIFE. His talk will focus on the work undertaken in the first year of operation of the EC-funded LIFE Nature project with a particular focus on work to enhance habitats for Salmon and Sea Lamprey but will also examine the instream works

on the Mulkear and Newport rivers and the control and removal of non-native invasive weeds. Mr. Wightman's illustrated talk will also focus on the work of MulkearLIFE to build a partnership-based approach within the catchment. His talk should be of interest to all and especially to local anglers and anyone with an interest in Mulkear River and its tributaries.

Admission to all talks is free of charge and all are welcome. Further information regarding any of the talks may be obtained from the project website: [www.mulkearlifeproject.com](http://www.mulkearlifeproject.com) or [info@mulkearlifeproject.com](mailto:info@mulkearlifeproject.com) or from MulkearLIFE, Inland Fisheries Ireland (Limerick) on telephone number 061 300 238 / 087 062 5582.

#### 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:**

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