



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

Press Release

9th January 2012

What's Another Year - 2012

The New Year is upon us. 2012 has a nice ring to it. It will be a year of celebration for the LIFE programme across Europe – more of which will be posted later.

As we look back on the last month of 2011 and compare it with a year earlier the contrast could not be more dramatic.

December 2011 was a month of wind and rain and unseasonably mild days and nights. Throughout much of the Lower Shannon SAC rainfall was above average, with an above normal number of wetdays (days with 1mm or more) recorded. Rivers were in flood for much of the month. When water levels fell it was only a matter of days before they quickly rose again.

The mean temperatures for December were above average or average for the time of year. Mean maximum temperatures for the month were above normal throughout the Lower Shannon SAC, with maximum temperatures recorded on the 25th and 26th December 2011. Unfortunately, this mild weather was associated with wind and misty rain.

Minimum air temperatures were warmer than normal almost everywhere, leading to a below average number of air frosts recorded. On the Winter solstice (21st /22nd December) the midday temperature difference between December 2010 and December 2011 was a staggering 18 degrees Celsius – hard to believe for Ireland.

Sunshine was very much at a premium throughout December. Sunshine was below average nearly everywhere with one met station recording its dullest December in almost 50 years and other stations reporting their dullest December for between six and 20 years. This was also in very stark contrast to December 2010 – with sunny days but bitterly cold days for most on the month.

What impact this mild weather will have on salmon spawning, much of which we believe may have already taken place, on otters and the rate of re-growth of invasives we await to see. Good salmon runs have been reported in several areas but the water levels on the Mulkear system have only begun to fall this week. It is possible that the continual state of flood throughout much the Mulkear Catchment may impact negatively on the success of salmon spawning where such spawning has taken place in flood conditions.

As we face into 2012 the wheel of LIFE and nature keeps turning.

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.mulkearlif.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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