



I.R.D. Duhallow Ltd.



# IRD Duhallow LIFE Newsletter

*Project Update (Autumn 2013)*



Like many people in Duhallow the LIFE project has been taking advantage of the fine weather concentrating on a range of on the ground activities. These aim to protect threatened European species; European Otter, Kingfisher, Atlantic salmon and Freshwater Pearl Mussel within the upper reaches of the River Blackwater (A Special Area of Conservation under the EU Habitats Directive).

Here are some examples of some of the actions successfully completed over the last few months.

**Nature detectives** National School students have been very busy recording nature in their neighbourhood. Following a class room visit by the LIFE team, the students took to the wild, recording a range of wildlife species from ladybirds to oak trees. Some of the commoner species recorded include birds like robins, wrens, blackbirds, flowers such as Foxglove, Herb-Robert and Gorse, bugs and creepy crawlies including the Garden snail, the 7 spot Ladybird and the Common woodlouse, mammals such as Red squirrels, Hares and Foxes; trees including Willow, Ash and Sycamore. More rare species were also recorded including Hen harrier and otters, illustrating just how diverse and unique the wildlife in Duhallow is. Transition year students assisted with the entry of the information to the internet which can be viewed at the project website [maps.duhallowlife.com](http://maps.duhallowlife.com). So children check it out and see what your data looks like on our wildlife map of Duhallow.



**Silt trap to reduce siltation of the river bed** Land drainage can be a major source of silt into rivers and poses a serious threat to the survival of Freshwater Pearl Mussel. Levels of silt in the River Allow are not compatible with the Freshwater Pearl Mussel long term survival. The project designed a novel silt trapping device suitable for land drains and test results on water samples showed that it was very successful in reducing sediment into the river. We encourage landowners wishing to carry out drainage maintenance on their land to contact the project for advice on how to reduce the impact of silt from maintained drains.



**Fencing** Research by the project has found that cattle are able to graze up to 1.2m under single strand electric fencing wire and so we are recommending that farmers move their fence line further out, to allow vegetation growth needed to strengthen river banks. In addition the project has developed a flood friendly fencing technique which should help preserve fences during large scale flood events. You can



contact the project at IRD Duhallow for more advice on fencing along river banks.



**Local people donate native trees** Tree planting is an important aspect of the LIFE project and IRD Duhallow has decided to follow best scientific practice and only plant trees of local native varieties. These trees are better adapted to the local climate and conditions and more suited to the bees and other bugs that depend on them. We are delighted that a number of people have donated native tree saplings to the project and to date we have collected over 700 trees, ranging from willow, alder, ash and oak.



**Fairness in farming** The LIFE project fully supports IRD Duhallow's efforts to work towards fairness in farming and long term sustainability of rural communities. Lessons learnt from the project will help to inform what works and doesn't work for farmers and wildlife. This is particularly important as new EU Directives mean that Ireland needs to develop measures to protect important wildlife communities and their habitats. The LIFE project is a suitable vehicle to study the practicalities of these on a large scale. IRD Duhallow and the project are taking a keen interest in the current CAP reforms and are actively promoting the development of

no nonsense agri-environmental measures for Duhallow.

**Become involved** The LIFE project is always looking for volunteers and local information. Volunteers are particularly welcome to assist us with our monitoring, Himalayan balsam removal work and other activities. So if you feel you might be in a position to help please contact us at IRD Duhallow or through the project website [www.duhallowLIFE.com](http://www.duhallowLIFE.com).



[www.duhallowLIFE.com](http://www.duhallowLIFE.com); Tel: 029-60633