

1500 organizations around the world to celebrate World Fish Migration Day

Event highlights importance of open rivers and migratory fish

May 11, 2016

Washington DC (USA) - World Fish Migration Day (WFMD), held on May 21, 2016, will bring together more than 1,500 organizations, featuring more than 350 events worldwide. Organized by the World Fish Migration Foundation, this one-day global initiative calls attention to the needs of migratory fish to ensure that more natural river networks remain connected, and those already fragmented can be restored.



**WORLD FISH
MIGRATION DAY**

Migratory fish such as catfish, sturgeon, eel and salmon support the diets and livelihoods of millions of people worldwide. However, these fish face a number of threats. Physical barriers—including dams, weirs and sluices—are one of the most widespread challenges for these species. In addition to blocking migratory paths, these man-made structures disrupt the natural flow of rivers, which is critical fish spawning. Migratory species depend on open rivers and natural pulses of water to reproduce, feed and complete their life cycles. The main goal of WFMD is to improve the public's understanding of the importance of migratory fish, the need for healthy rivers, the communities that depend on both, and the options we have to minimize or avoid impacts. WFMD will be marked by events ranging from educational tours of river restoration projects to global inaugurations of "fishways" that help migratory species bypass water infrastructure. Family and educational events will also include celebrations at zoos and aquariums worldwide, drawing and coloring contests, and kayak tours.

Global celebrations will begin in New Zealand and, following the sun, finish on the west coast of North America. Many organizations will open their doors for the public on May 21, offering a view into special work and projects related to fish migration and river restoration. The international headquarters of the World Fish Migration Day will be hosted in Washington D.C. The European headquarter will be hosted at the famous 'Afsluitdijk' in the Netherlands. On this event the Dutch partners will open a new fishway at the entrance of the river Rhine and the latest news will be presented around the biggest tidal fishway project of the world, the 'Fish Migration River'.

Quotes from partners:

Zeb Hogan, biologist of the University of Nevada and host of National Geographic Wild, Monster Fish.

"Over 70% of Europe's Anadromous fish (migrate from the ocean to freshwater) are endangered, 95% of the world's migratory sawfish are gone, migratory eel populations are in decline, and more recently the migratory fish of major tropical rivers like the Amazon, Congo, and Mekong are under great threat from hydropower development. To put that threat in context, an estimated 40-70% of food fish in the Mekong are migratory and over 60 million people depend on the Mekong River for their livelihoods and food security. We want people to realize what's at stake, understand what we've lost, and work together to protect and restore populations of these amazing and life sustaining fish".

Marco Lambertini, Director General of WWF International:

"Fish migration is one of nature's wonders. Yet it happens below the surface. Long distant migrants like eels, sturgeons and salmons need both healthy rivers and seas but populations of migratory fish species are declining fast. Free-flowing rivers are key to their survival and under growing pressure as the world continues to develop hydropower and other infrastructures. It is more important than ever to conserve migratory fish on which ecosystems but also jobs and economies depend.

Giulio Boccaletti, Global Managing Director for Water, The Nature Conservancy

"Migratory fish support the livelihoods of people and communities around the world, but human activities impact them along their journey. Thankfully, through collaboration and the use of innovative solutions, we can balance the needs of people and nature. For example, we have seen river restoration projects open up hundreds of kilometers of habitat to sea-run fish while maintaining hydropower production levels. By protecting free-flowing rivers and our oceans, we are also protecting our future."

Dan Ashe, Director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

“The health of our rivers and watersheds is inextricably linked to the health and well-being of our communities and citizens. And in turn, a key indicator of stream health is its ability to support healthy populations of migratory fish and other aquatic species,” said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe. “By working to restore free-flowing streams, we can improve habitat for migratory fishes while providing recreational opportunities for people and reducing the dangers to communities from aging dams and other infrastructure.”

Notes to the Editors

Images are available in the World Fish Migration Day 2016 Dropbox for publicity. Please ensure all images are fully credited according to the photo title: [Dropbox link](#)

Highlighted projects

The following celebrations are part of World Fish Migration Day.

- [REMIBAR LIFE+](#) - Northern Sweden. Celebrating removal of over 300 barriers.
- Helsinginkoski project– Finland. Remove the dam project start in the city of Helsinki .
- [Penobscot River Restoration Project](#) - Maine, USA. Dam removal, before and after look at the river.
- [Flat Fish Migration](#) - USA. Fun social media campaign to share photos worldwide.
- Re-opening the mouth of river Rhine - The Netherlands. Several official events along the Dutch coast line hosted by WWF, Provinces of North Holland and Fryslan, Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment and others partners.
- Swimway of the World - South Africa. International launch of a new outreach poster on international Swimways, especially created for World Fish Migration Day, 2016.
- WWF Russia Amur branch along with their partners (schools, museums, nature parks, etc.) are displaying an astonishing variety of events in their region.

Links to information and social media

- World Fish Migration Day website <http://www.worldfishmigrationday.com>
- Video World Fish Migration Day <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRmOu07KKas>
- Facebook page World Fish Migration Day <https://www.facebook.com/WorldFishMigrationDay>
- Twitter World Fish Migration Day <https://twitter.com/fishmigration>

Contact information

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