

CONNECTING FISH, RIVERS AND PEOPLE



WORLD FISH
MIGRATION DAY

24th MAY
2014

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PRESS RELEASE

CRY FOR HELP FOR MIGRATORY FISH FROM NEW ZEALAND TO HAWAII

The Netherlands, May 24, 2014

On May 24th 2014, local community events will be taking place at 250 locations worldwide to celebrate the first World Fish Migration Day. WWF (NL), The Nature Conservancy (USA), the IUCN SSC/Wetlands International Freshwater Fish Specialist Group and Wanningen Water Consult with LINKit consult have come together to promote greater awareness of the global importance of freshwater migratory fish and free flowing rivers.

With the help of over 150 organisations, celebrations and events have been organised for World Fish Migration Day. Events commence in New Zealand and, following the sun, finish as it sets in Hawaii. This international day will bring global attention to the need to ensure that natural river networks remain connected and, where they are fragmented, to ensure that they are restored wherever possible, in order to achieve healthy fish populations and productive rivers. The common theme running throughout the events is **CONNECTING FISH, RIVERS AND PEOPLE.**

Migratory fish species support food supply and livelihoods for millions of people, but are now more than ever under great threat. The main causes of this are man-made obstacles. Dams, weirs and sluices built for water management, hydropower, irrigation and land drainage disrupt the natural flow of rivers and can prevent fish migration. Many fish need to migrate to reproduce, feed and complete their life cycles. Migratory species make up a crucial link in the food chain and play an important ecological role in productive river systems. Giant catfish, sturgeon, eel and salmon are just some of the famous migratory species under human pressure.

Many exciting events have been planned, as **Herman Wanningen, the Coordinator of World Fish Migration Day**, explains, *"Event organizers around the world are hosting inspiring activities, including the celebration of the removal of a dam in Japan, a fish way tour in the Kruger National Park and the inauguration of over 20 new fish passage facilities around the globe."*

"World Fish Migration Day is a terrific way to draw attention, not only to the significant challenges that fish face in reaching their habitats, but also to the many successes we've had in restoring their journeys," said by **Giulio Boccaletti, the Managing Director of Global Freshwater for The Nature Conservancy**. Mr Boccaletti went on to say that *"The day and its events throughout the world also point to the many ways that the needs of people and communities are tied to the success of migrating fish. By safeguarding the life cycles of fish, we're also empowering people and their communities."*

"Migratory fish like salmon, sturgeon, giant catfish, as well as millions of people worldwide, depend on ecologically important rivers such as the Danube, Yangtze and Mekong. Unfortunately these essential lifelines are severely under threat from dams, over-fishing and pollution. Wouldn't it be wonderful if WFMD became as popular as EarthHour; ushering in a wave of worldwide events focussing attention on the importance of free-flowing rivers."

Johan van de Gronden, CEO WWF Netherlands - World Wide Fund for Nature

"Most heart attacks are the result of a blockage of arteries; blocking or disrupting river flows have the same effect on the planet as they do in the human body, unless we are becoming much more proactive in addressing the alarming incremental pace of river flow disruption, we are likely to give the planet a heart attack with seriously crippling and devastating consequences to all life on earth!"

Dr. Richard Sneider, Global Chair, IUCN FFSG

NOTES TO THE EDITORS

Images are available on request for publicity. Please ensure all images are fully credited.

THE WFMD PARTNERSHIP

The Nature Conservancy is a leading conservation organization working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people.

www.nature.org

WWF Netherlands

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with over 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the Earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

www.wnf.nl

IUCN SSC/Wetland International, Freshwater Fish Specialist Group is a global network of freshwater fish experts with a shared mission of achieving conservation and sustainable use of freshwater fishes and their habitats.

www.iucnffsg.org

Wanningen Water Consult works at the interface of water management, ecology and communication. WWC gives advice on international fish passage projects, stimulates knowledge exchange among specialists and initiates communication activities.

www.wanningenwaterconsult.nl/en

LINKit consult provides specialist advice to solve issues on land and water management. LINKit Consult brings people, ideas and resources together to help realize ambitions. It's inspiration is on improvement of the quality of water, nature and landscape.

www.linkitconsult.nl/eng

Water authority Amstel, Gooi en Vecht is one of the largest water boards in The Netherlands. The management area includes the city of Amsterdam. During the WFMD Amstel, Gooi en Vecht hosts an international meeting where the objectives and results of the WFMD will be illustrated and discussed.

www.agv.nl

CONTACT INFORMATION

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