



Free Flow – Protect and Restore our Rivers for better Fish Migration

Thursday, 28 May 2026 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. CEST, 9.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. Pacific time.

Online seminar by **Living Rivers Foundation** as part of the **Rivers for Climate Coalition** and the Water Working Group of the **German Forum on Environment and Development** celebrating **World Fish Migration Day 2026**

Rivers are the lifelines of our planet. With their floodplains, they provide diverse natural habitats for migratory fish, small animals and many semi-aquatic species as well as drinking water resources and room for recreational activities. At the same time, they constitute crystallisation spaces for human use and settlement, are diked, channelled and dammed with transverse structures to enable agricultural irrigation, generate hydroelectric power, protect against flooding and allow for enhanced navigation.

While large dams generate significant amounts of electrical energy, they block fish migration routes, threaten the traditional ways of life of indigenous peoples and release large amounts of climate-damaging methane. Thousands of planned dam projects threaten the world's last naturally free-flowing rivers. While new dam projects are being pushed forward on the Balkans and many other places around the world, there are also efforts to restore particularly valuable salmon and trout rivers by dismantling dams. Awareness of the importance of rivers is growing in climate negotiations.

At our seminar, we will hear about plans to remove 4 dams at the Snake River allowing for better salmon runs and better access to vast spawning grounds. The Vjosa River in Albania has been declared the first River National Park. At the same time many pristine rivers are facing severe setbacks in the name of mainly small Hydropower developments. We take the Blue Heart of Europe Campaign on board to give us an insight.

The online seminar will be in English and include presentations, video clips and a river talk.

Kayeloni Scott, Executive Director, Columbia Snake River Campaign

Amelie Huber, Euronatur, Blue Heart of Europe – Balkan Rivers

Moderator: **Michael Bender**, Living Rivers Foundation

The Online Seminar will be conducted via Zoom. The link will be provided one day prior to the event. The seminar will be recorded. With your registration you agree to the recording and online publishing on the internet as well as the collection of your data for proceeding your participation.

Please register here: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/YZ8vfCHXR_Ota2YbQ2AvZg

For technical questions you might refer to: **Sara Phung**, phung@forumue.de

For remarks on the program you might contact: **Michael Bender**, wasser@grueneliga.de



The **Columbia Snake River Campaign** (CSRC) is a coalition of people, businesses, and organizations, guided by local Tribes, calling for our elected leaders to stop salmon extinction by removing four dams on the lower Snake River, replacing their services, and investing in Northwest communities. Our work supports the broader recovery of imperiled Columbia River Basin salmon and steelhead through implementation of the [Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative](#). Our coalition partners consist of the Nez Perce Tribe and [fourteen regional and national non-profit organizations](#).



To combat the threat of hydropower, NGOs EuroNatur and Riverwatch launched the **Save the Blue Heart of Europe** a campaign for the Balkan Rivers in cooperation with local partners. The campaign began with two pioneering studies assessing the state of Balkan rivers and their unique biodiversity. Since then, the campaign has expanded its efforts, significantly enhancing the understanding of these ecosystems. Through ongoing research, fieldwork, and collaborations with local communities and scientists, we have deepened our knowledge of the region's ecological value.

<https://balkanrivers.net/en>



World Fish Migration Day is a global awareness campaign celebrated every two years to highlight the connections that migratory fishes have with human and non-human species, lands, and waters. This day is marked by celebrations, events, and action

campaigns organized by people around the world to connect fish, rivers, and people. Between 2014 and 2024 World Fish Migration Foundation was the main organizer of World Fish Migration Day. From 2025 onwards VENAE from the Netherlands is taking this forward, with founder Herman Wanningen as the main organizer.

This World Fish Migration Day, know, imagine, and act for migratory fishes and free flowing rivers. Know fish connections with lands and waters and how they flourish when rivers flow more freely. Imagine and explore life underwater and act as stewards for migratory fishes.

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