



WORLD FISH MIGRATION DAY



©Jeremy Shelton

LOVE FLOWS

World Fish Migration Day 2020 evaluation report

www.worldfishmigrationday.com

January 2021

ORGANISED BY:



Introduction



Inspiring Connections from Near and Far during a Global Pandemic

World Fish Migration Day (WFMD) culminates every two years in a global celebration to create awareness about the importance of migratory fish and free-flowing rivers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's spring event was rescheduled and then went mostly virtual with events leading up to the finale on October 24th.





Benin ©CREDI ONG

The 2020 theme was Love Flows, celebrating love for our fish and rivers.

Notwithstanding the difficulties of the pandemic, World Fish Migration Day 2020 was an enormous success and achieved the largest mobilization and awareness reach of any of the prior three. A record number of 72 countries took part with 362 events organized by 1500+ organizations working together. The potential reach of these events exceeded all of the previous World Fish Migration Days, with well over 120 million people reached through

social media posts, events, creative contests, podcasts, news stories, radio shows, and more. Although physical, in-person connections were stymied, this allowed for even greater online connection and people from across the world were able to share experiences and celebrate with one another in Zoom conferences and webinars. The WFMD team hosted not one but two 24-hour webinars, each reaching and inspiring thousands of people.

Events around the world took on many forms this year. There were numerous engaging

webinars, art and singing workshops and contests, aquarium visits, fish releases, virtual tours, river cleanups, and more! Events engaged people of all ages, having a larger impact and reaching more people to connect on behalf of rivers for fish migration and their communities. We celebrated more than 2,000km of new river openings, and involved decision-makers throughout the globe in many of these celebrations.

[Visit the website](#)

Outreach and impact numbers



120 Million+

Engaged through Events, Media Outlets
and Social Platforms

362

Events

72

Countries

1,500+

Organizations involved

34,000

WFMD Event Attendees*

2,000+

Kilometres of Rivers Opened Up

*This number is based on survey responses and the number of event attendees is likely higher.

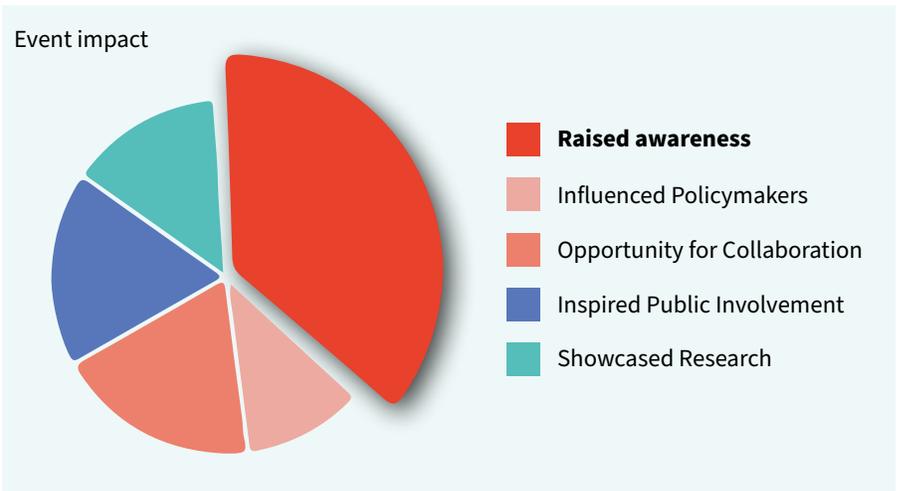
What Happened on WFMD

We raised awareness



USA ©Florida Defenders of the Environment

The greatest strength of World Fish Migration Day is networking to develop wider circles of advocates including school kids, experts on fish, dam removals, policy, and community organization. WFMD surveys showed 92% of the respondents said that the event helped raise local or national awareness— a crucial first step in restoring rivers and bringing back fish.



There were many great events raising awareness about fish; here are a few highlights!



©Peter Limbu

Tanzania

Local fishers, a drama group and school children had shore cleanups on Lake Tanganyika, made art and dance performances to raise awareness of the importance of Lake Tanganyika sardines and perch for food and livelihoods for this and future generations.



USA

In Alaska, USA, a movie screening raised awareness of Bristol Bay, the last wild salmon fishery and site of the recently defeated Pebble Mine.



©Jhonatan Quiñones

Colombia

Local Arauca organizations promoted the importance of migratory fish on a popular radio program.



©Toronto Zoo

Canada

At the Toronto Zoo, school children participated in fish finding and obstacle courses to teach them about the barriers to local fish migration.



Yuru and Ara Books

Launched for WFMD, this children's book helps to educate families about the importance of free-flowing rivers. The book follows the story of two macaws helping a dorado catfish find a mate. It is available for a free download in 14 languages!



“The more people we can make aware of the huge challenges faced by fish, in order to survive in the modern world, the more opportunities we have to give them a helping hand”

- WFMD Ambassador Jeremy Wade
Host of River Monsters & Mighty Rivers TV Series (Animal Planet/Discovery)

[View all events](#)



EuroFISHION

SONG CONTEST
WORLD FISH MIGRATION DAY 2020

We Showcased Creativity

A WFMD innovation for 2020 was the International EuroFashion Song Contest, an online event for contenders to submit original love songs and videos about fish and rivers! A celebration was held on World Fish Migration Day that announced the winners.

The contest was inspired by the Eurovision competition, and served to engage river advocates with bold new audiences. Seeing the creativity and passion for rivers with #LoveFlows inspires others to join in.

EuroFashion had 35 video entries from musicians in 13 countries.

From young to old, northern hemisphere to southern, participants brought diverse styles and concepts. Each entry raised awareness for fish and rivers whilst tugging at heartstrings and getting us up on our feet to dance.

The contest ended with a fantastic two-hour show featuring ten finalists and juried by our panel of judges from nine countries.

Eurofashion received high praise. It served as a tool to educate people of all ages, and from all around the world through music and creativity.

Congratulations to our winners:

1st place: Mazingira Yetu; 2nd Place: Swim on Up; 3rd Place: Save the Fish



Pictured above are our ten finalists.
Click on the image to listen to the song.

“The best global fish/river advocacy event EVER!”

- Laura Wildman, USA

[Listen to all songs](#)



Fish Migration Art Contest

The Fish Migration Award was created in a partnership between the WFMF and Wildlife Forever as part of their State Fish Art Contest. The award went to young artists celebrating migratory fish and the free-flowing rivers they rely on. 2,700+ students aged 5-18 from 32 countries entered the contest.

Jeremy Wade, WFMD Ambassador and host of Animal Planet's "River Monsters", helped with the international promotion of the contest and served as a judge.

The 2021 contest is already open for submissions, and we are excited to see more amazing artwork from children around the world. What a great way to celebrate migratory fish!



Congratulations to the 2020 Fish Migration Award Winners!

5-12 years old



Kelly Zhong



Deepshikha De



Eli Sherman

13-18 years old



Elizabeth Hwang



Janet Lou Guan



Dahyun Kang

“For some, Fish Art is their first lesson about fish, fishing, and conservation and is truly transformational..”

- Pat Conzemius, Wildlife Forever





Cambodia ©Chea Sella (click to play video)

Nearly 30% of events directly influenced and engaged policy makers. Policy is a major component in the movement to save fish and rivers.

What Happened on WFMD

We Influenced Policy Makers

Myanmar: The Regional Fisheries Minister gave a speech regarding WFMD and the importance of migratory fish to rural inland and coastal communities. Over 12,000 fish were released into their natural habitat as part of this event.

Netherlands: Board members of three governmental organizations were present during the Utrecht WFMD celebrations. They are now committed to working with event organizers to improve urban fish habitat.

Belgium: A webinar with a host of EU and Belgian policy and decision-makers created a forum to learn and converse with fish and river restoration experts.

North America: The Nature Conservancy, and local and federal government organizations created a 2-part webinar on North American river connectivity. Sessions were attended by at least 50 members of government.

Hydropower Manifesto EU: The World Wildlife Fund European Policy Office created a manifesto detailing the issues of hydropower and its effects on Europe's rivers. Demands include that the EU stop funding the construction of new hydropower dams, and instead dedicate its resources to the restoration of habitats and the expansion of other renewable energy. 150 organizations signed the manifesto in solidarity.

South Korea: After 10 years fighting to recover the 4 major rivers in South Korea, 182 organizations in South Korea received good news during WFMD. The government announced two full dam removals, two partial dam removals and continuous gates open in two other dams in the Geum and Yeongsan Rivers. In addition, the government allocated 13 billion won (close to 10 million euro) to demolish obsolete weirs.

EU Meeting on Biodiversity and Hydropower: On October 28th, the European Parliament Forum hosted a webinar on a new Biodiversity Strategy and action plan for European rivers, the implementation and enforcement of the Water Framework Directive, the impact of hydropower, and the need for dam removal. Speakers called for greater awareness from European decision makers and citizens about the dramatic decline (>76%) of migratory fish species, and urged action to restore and protect them.

Policy Improvements Since 2018: Past participants of WFMD were asked if new measures to protect migratory fish and rivers had been passed since they participated in WFMD 2018. 37% of past event organizers said that new measures were passed locally to protect fish and waterways. At least 19 countries enacted new laws since the last WFMD including dam removals, funding for fish passage, restrictions on illegal fishing, and more. The entire EU passed resolutions to open 25,000 km of rivers (part of the EU Biodiversity Strategy) by 2030.

Events and Other Highlights



Myanmar



Belgium



The Netherlands



China



USA



“When you connect people to rivers and illuminate what to care for, they become better care-takers and advocates making a better place for fish and people.”

- Joshua Royte
The Nature Conservancy, USA



France



Romania

[View all events](#)





Brazil ©Sara Cheida

Science is the backbone of the movement to save fish and rivers! This year, 36% of events showcased some form of river restoration research and solutions, often through webinars.

What Happened on WFMD

We Showcased Research that Provides Solutions

Africa: The WFMD African “hub” created an all-day online streaming event highlighting fish passage work by region across Africa.

[Read the Africa Report](#)

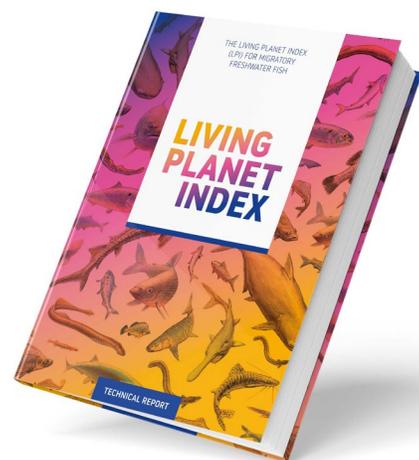
Peru: An online discussion spotlighted the migratory fish of the Amazon Basin. Researchers and fishers joined in the conversation, covering the conservation of migratory fish and fisheries management, and Ictio, an app to register fish observations in the Amazon.

Nigeria: An event helped highlight that in addition to dams and weirs causing declines in fish populations, Artisanal Fishers are on a path to have catches consisting of 50% fish and 50% plastic before 2025.

UK: The Celebration brought partnerships together to show off new fish passage projects at four weirs on the River Severn and two weirs on the River Teme. The ecological impacts of these projects were made available to the public through a video and a live tour of a fish pass.

Living Planet Index Report

The Living Planet Index (LPI) for Migratory Freshwater Fish was released on July 28, 2020, receiving worldwide media attention. This groundbreaking study was the first comprehensive global report on the status of migratory fish. It found an average 76% decrease in freshwater migratory fish populations worldwide. The LPI was covered by National Geographic and The Guardian as well as over a dozen publications around the globe. The LPI has served as a startling call to action and as a source of inspiration for awareness events like World Fish Migration Day.



[Download the LPI](#)





The celebration of dam removals and fish passages was a key part of this year's WFMD. Over the past half year, several removals were live-streamed, while others were celebrated as safe, in-person WFMD events. Between dam and weir removals and smaller-scale projects, we celebrated at least 2,054km of river openings on WFMD!

What Happened on WFMD

We Celebrated Dam Removals and River Openings



©Dam Removal Europe

Sweden

The Marieberg Power Plant was removed, improving biodiversity and surrounding ecology. The removal and on-site interviews were watched live by more than 500 people in 54 countries. It was a first-of-its-kind webinar, and served as a guiding example on the path to meet the EU goal of opening 25,000 river kilometers by 2030.



©WWF

Ukraine

Ukraine saw three dam removals: the Hostovets dam, and the Lostunets and Dobryn dams. The Lostunets dam was nearly 140 years old and obsolete. Thanks to WWF Ukraine and several other governmental and non-governmental agencies (as well as successful crowdfunding), the dams were taken down. The removal of the dams opened up close to 400km of river!



©Ribble Rivers Trust

UK

The widest weir removal in England was achieved on the River Ribble in 2020. Samesbury Weir was one of the largest remaining structures on the river and its removal is needed to reverse declining migratory fish populations.

The LIFE Dee River Project is a multi-million euro river restoration project by Natural Resources Wales. The project celebrated its first major milestone on WFMD by releasing a short film showcasing the weir removal work that was carried out on the Afon Tryweryn, a tributary of the River Dee. The film highlights the importance of barrier removal to migratory fish, and the wider benefits it brings to the environment.



Visit Dam Removal Europe website



Lithuania celebrated its first ever dam removal this WFMD with the removal of the Brazuole Dam. This is a huge step towards more removals in the future in Lithuania.





WFMD created opportunities for collaboration at half of the events. In addition, 45% of WFMD events inspired public action and helped to recruit volunteers, which is a 66% increase from 2018.

What Happened on WFMD

We Facilitated Collaboration and Public Involvement



©Gullherme Souza

Brazil

Seven organizations collaborated on the Piabanha Project, part of a National Action Plan to recover migratory and endangered fish species in the Paraiba do Sul River Basin.



©Naushad Ali

India

An organization that typically focuses on national issues was able to involve people in Bangladesh and Pakistan around shared issues of habitats and species losses.



©Anna Dewart

Germany

An article in the local newspaper encouraged several readers to start volunteering for local freshwater organizations.



©Jelizaveta Zarkova Meriforell

Estonia

A WFMD art contest spurred the collaboration of many schools and teachers with fisheries agencies and institutions.



©Sjaan Bowie

New Zealand

Indigenous, NGO and government organizers are working with local communities on waterway restoration and creative projects for broader engagement.



©JULIET KIGONGO

“We have created a Whatsapp group for the 20 pioneer participants to keep it burning. We are very passionate about this cause.”

- Juliet Nattabi Katabi, Uganda

[View all events](#)



Most Valued Player (MVP) Awards 2020

The Most Valued Player for Connections: Webinars!

Thanks to the unexpected importance of online events this year, attendees and organizers alike commented that it was actually easier to bring more people from more diverse backgrounds together with local experts, academics, government representatives, and organizations. Presenter emails were often readily available, and international webinars helped people connect across oceans and time zones. The email list of active participants exceeds 10,000.



The Most Valued Player for Volunteers and Public Involvement: Clean-Up Events!

Clean up events occurred on every continent this year (excluding Antarctica - maybe next time?). In Bulgaria, Turkey, Benin, Tanzania, and more, dozens of volunteers ventured into their local waterways to clean up garbage and help revive freshwater and coastal ecosystems.



“Our oldest volunteer was 81! We gathered 500 lb of rubbish in an hour.”

- Tanya Rucosky USA



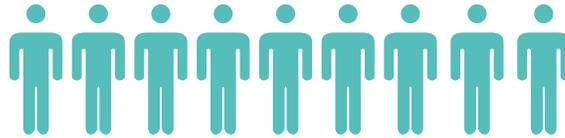
What Happened on WFMD

We Reached Audiences Far and Wide, More than Ever Before

Global Swimways Webinar Marathon:

The World Fish Migration Foundation hosted a 24-hour Webinar Marathon on 13 through 14 May. Coordinated and screened virtually due to the pandemic, there were 9 sessions, each focusing on a different region of the globe. From New Zealand to Hawaii, more than 50 leaders in the freshwater movement presented on the statuses and trends of their local swimways, and inspired action to an audience of 2,000 people.

Love Flows Marathon: On World Fish Migration Day, October 24th, WFMD organizers checked in live with events around the globe during seven sessions, following the sun from New Zealand to Hawaii. Over 350 enthusiastic participants joined the zoom call but several thousand viewed the webinars online.



120,000,000+

People Potentially Reached



1,500

Organizations

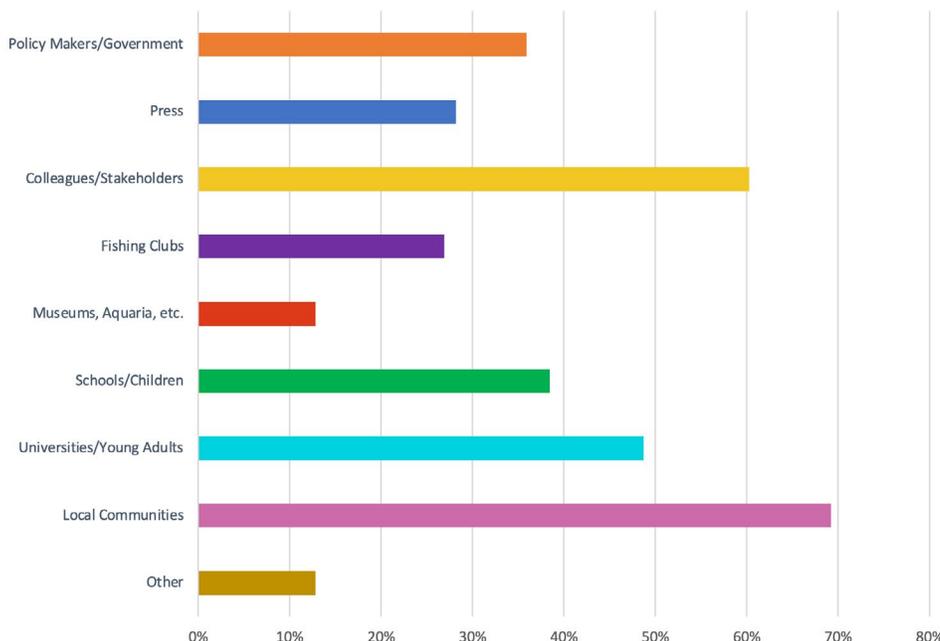


72

Countries

*9 more than in 2018

Who was Engaged through WFMD Activities?



What Happened on WFMD

We had fun!



New Zealand ©Hamilton Zoo



Algeria ©Salim Djerrah



Portugal ©ProTEJO



CzechRepublic ©Jiří Křesina



Kenya ©Ruth Kabera



Turkey ©Gökhan Tunçelli





The Happy Fish symbol was unveiled on World Fish Migration Day 2016 at that year's Headquarters in Washington DC, as a means to connect organizations protecting and improving migratory fish rivers. Happy Fish statues now exist on three continents, migrating to events and river restoration sites as an icon of free flowing rivers!

What Happened on WFMD

We Launched Two New Happy Fish!



©Marta Stefani

Brazil

WFMD participants since the beginning, Welber Senteio Smith and Marta Stefani specially manufactured a Happy Fish statue for World Fish Migration Day 2020! Marta says, "We intend to expand our projects to other rivers, and the Happy Fish will certainly be part of this journey."



©Christina Little

Canada

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada debuted the Canadian Happy Fish statue in an online event based in Winnipeg. The statue will soon travel around to various events and dam removal sites throughout Canada. The Department celebrated WFMD and the Happy Fish unveiling by hosting a virtual bicycling event called, 'Instead of Spinning Your Reels, Let's Spin Your Heels for World Fish Migration Day'. This event took stationary cyclists on a migratory journey through rivers and streams!



The Netherlands

The newly launched Blijje Vis (Dutch for Happy Fish) website gathers Fish Migration news in The Netherlands and provides educational materials for children.

[Visit the \(Dutch\)website](#)

World Fish Migration Day 2020 was our most successful yet. While live events suffered due to Covid-19, our statistics show a tidal wave of people making global connections virtually.

Conclusions

WFMD saw a record-breaking number of countries (72 - that's 9 new). The online reach of these events includes over 120 million people. Organizers rallied with online events, and the five-month delay from the original date allowed the world to improve at creating virtual events and engaging webinars. We were heartened by the creativity that went into new types of events, like EuroFishing and Fish Migration Art Award competitions, and also by the increase in participation by politicians and the media. In future years, we will tap into the needs of all stakeholders, maximizing engagement and excitement for WFMD. We will continue to strengthen connection for people and rivers through virtual and live events. This celebratory global movement is growing, creating healthier rivers full of fish and happier human communities that depend on and love them.

Ambitions

The next World Fish Migration Day is May 21st, 2022, the fifth anniversary of WFMD, which will provide the basis for an extra special celebration. In the intervening years, we plan to harness this newfound awareness to grow the network more broadly, enabling partners to convert excitement and knowledge into action. We hope to inspire more partners to celebrate dam removals, fishway inaugurations, river protection, and enabling policies and programs to do more. We will grow and engage our network to develop new plans to open and protect rivers worldwide. We will also continue to grow the creative contests such as Eurofishing and the Fish Migration Award, and increase participation to:

- **1,000 EVENTS**
- **80 COUNTRIES**
- **200 MILLION PEOPLE IN GLOBAL REACH**
- **100 RIVER OPENING EVENTS**
- **2,000 KM OF RIVER RESTORED/PROTECTED**
- **2ND LIVING PLANET INDEX FOR RIVERS**
- **1ST GLOBAL DAM REMOVAL STATUS REPORT**

Praise for World Fish Migration Day from our participants:

“Thank you for caring to find a way to celebrate in a pandemic year. WFMD was a bright spot for our community. Gratitude!”

-Tina Wood, USA

“The event is crucial for the world to recognize the importance of migratory fish species for the people, especially in developing countries.”

-Zau Lunn, Myanmar

“This is such a positive event which is rare in environmental topics these days. Thank you all so much for all you do to keep sharing the good news about fish conservation and free-flowing river restoration.”

- Rebecca Flitcroft, USA

“What a fantastic and inspiring day. big compliment to you all.”

- Jacques, The Netherlands

“This work has created a great platform – and GREAT FUTURE EXPECTATIONS that needs continuous momentum with more innovative designing moving forward to attract both our existing and new audiences (our clients)”

- Peter Limbu - Tanzania



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www.fishmigration.org

MADE POSSIBLE BY



We gratefully acknowledge all the photographers who gave us their permission to use their photographic materials.

Thank you to the Wonderful World Fish Migration Team made up of Staff,
Ambassadors and Volunteers from Around the World!

**Thank you to all for making
World Fish Migration Day 2020
the Best Celebration Yet.**

We'll See you on May 21st, 2022!



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