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**Introduction**

The secretariat devoted this month with taking measurements and preparations for the seminar in July in Bucharest. This will take place on the 7th and the 8th of July.

We hope that you all will enjoy reading this renewed newsletter,

Kind regards,  
Secretariat ECRR

**Agenda**

**ECRR Seminar: 'National River Restoration Centers/ Networks'**  
Seminar 7th and 8th of July 2010  
Bucharest (Romania)  
[More information >](#)

**Course Announcement: Modeling habitat for fish and invertebrates with MesoHABSIM**  
28th September - 01 October, 2010  
Warsaw (Poland)  
[More information >](#)

**Deltas in Times of Climate Change Conference**  
27 September - 01 October 2010  
Rotterdam (the Netherlands)  
[More information >](#)

**Water and Flood Modelling Practices and Solutions**  
European Conference  
28th and 29th September 2010  
Crown Plaza, Reading (UK)  
[More information >](#)

**River Restoration: Fluvial-Geomorphic and Ecological Processes**  
5-day shortcourse, 7-11 June 2010  
Lyon/Provence (France)  
[More information >](#)

**7th Ser Avignon Conference: Ecological Restoration**  
5-day scientific conference 23-27 August  
Avignon, France (Submit before 15th of July!)  
[More information >](#)



## Living North Sea Project

### Living North Sea: Free fish migration from sea to source

This new collaboration between European partners from the North Sea Region aims to solve problems related to fish migration. Diadromous fish populations in the North Sea Region have seen major declines and it is very important that there is an optimal “river – delta – sea” connectivity for fish to fulfill their life cycle. If not, many threatened fish species could see further declines or even become locally extinct. The partnership focuses on the development of knowledge on transnational fish populations, innovation of fish passages and involvement of others in a varied partnership with players from several sectors and administrative levels. Living North Sea is part funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the North Sea Region Interreg Programme.



Pumping station “Noordpolderzijk” in the North of the Netherlands will be equipped with a fish pass during the Living North Sea project. Diadromic fish like three spined stickleback, smelt and eel will have the possibility again to swim between the sea and fresh water in the polder (photography: Groene Zoden Fotografie)

Fish migration has independently been a major agenda item of North Sea countries for many years. This has been brought to a head by the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive for Good Ecological Status in rivers and transitional waters. The project was born out of the realization that policy and management actions for fish in any one area of the North Sea region may have consequences for other areas, and that managers may be looking after common resources shared by many countries. The key to successfully managing fish migration therefore lies in a transnational approach. For example: commercial fisherman in Denmark and Flanders has caught tagged sea trout from the River Tweed in the UK, a recreational fishery worth €22M. At this time the migratory routes of key important species are not mapped, or the regions of the North Sea that share the management of important fish populations known. An exchange of transnational knowledge and monitoring between the North Sea countries is of vital importance and may even lead to more efficient delivery of measures. The project is collaboration between 15 partners from seven countries in the North Sea region. The partnership is a mix of Government agencies, NGO's, Universities and Research Institutes. The Project is lead by a UK NGO, the Association of Rivers Trusts.

### Highlights

The Living North Sea project has the goal to promote free fish migration from sea to source to keep our waters alive. It addresses three essential aspects for the management of migratory fish: migration routes, threats such as man-made barriers, and influencing future policy on a regional, national and international level.



◀ Many fish are killed when trying to pass a pumping station (photography: Jeroen van Herk)

Glaseel is released at an event of the Living North Sea project in Ghent, Belgium with the promise the fish passages will be installed when the eel is grown and want to return to the sea ▶ (photography: Jeroen van Herk)

The work on migratory routes will focus on sea trout, eel and salmon, but will be applicable to many other species. The partnership will carry out analysis and visualize migratory routes, populations and consequences of management actions. For this, new communication and mapping tools for working and sharing data between partners are being explored.

The second part is innovation of fish passages. In the North Sea Region, some deltas and estuaries are closed to fish and many more have barriers such as dams and sluices throughout their system. This means that many fish species like eel, salmon and sea trout cannot reach their breeding grounds. The partnership focuses on the development of better and innovative passages and implements this in demonstration projects.

Last but not least, the dissemination of these findings to policy makers, local decision makers and the public. The Living North Sea Project puts a lot of effort into promotion and publicity because the effect of barriers on fish populations is often not considered when dealing with flooding, drainage, or renewable power generation. Yet healthy fisheries are critical to sustainable development and good ecological status. Intensive communication actions intended to influence regional, national and European policies will be carried out. Creating new partnerships, sharing knowledge and involvement are key elements in the project. More will be found at the project website [www.livingnorthsea.eu](http://www.livingnorthsea.eu)

### Future

The Living North Sea Project will be running between 2009 and 2012. Over the next few years, the Living North Sea project will produce results that prove the importance of this partnership. It will set new standards for river – delta – sea connectivity and result in a lasting change to water management and fishery policies.





## II CIREF Seminar on River Restoration

The Iberian Centre for River Restoration (CIREF) organised last 1st and 2nd of June, in its headquarters of the University of Zaragoza, the II Seminar on River Restoration with an important attendance and participation success. About 150 experts on river management discussed and shared different experiences, strategies and techniques used for the recovery of the fluvial ecosystems in the Iberian Peninsula.



Field visit to the Natural Reserve of los Galachos. Photo: Edurne Martínez

Conservation and restoration of fluvial ecosystems is, without any doubt, one of today's big environmental challenges the Iberian Peninsula faces. Temporary and permanent watercourses in the Iberian Peninsula are, in more or less extent, far from their optimum ecological status. At least a third of these ecosystems are much degraded in both, their structure or water quality and 60% of wetlands and thousands of kilometres of floodplains that would help preventing damages caused by floods have been occupied by constructions or agricultural lands.

Today's water management model that puts "in the market" most of the natural river flow, causes desiccation of rivers and generates serious damages to fluvial ecosystems. Massive occupation of floodplains by agricultural land and urbanism, pollution, over exploitation of water for irrigation and lack of environmental sensitivity in the society contribute to worsen this situation.

In this context, convinced that spreading knowledge is one of the ways to change the actual trends, CIREF organized the II Seminar on River Restoration in its headquarters of the Department of Geography of the University of Zaragoza, with the aim of sharing the experiences of river restoration carried out in the Iberian Peninsula in the last months.

During the first day, river restoration experiences carried out in Aragón, Andalucía, Basque Country, Asturias, Castilla-León, Portugal and France were presented. Other interesting communications about habitat modeling, erosion control, problems for fish migrations in gauging stations, application of an index to evaluate the river forest conservation status and its development with LIDAR technology were also presented. The technical debates were followed by an interesting field visit the following day to the Natural Reserve of Ebro River Galachos (oxbow in Spanish) where conservation and restoration actions carried out were explained, generating interesting discussions among the participants. The journey ended up with a refreshing descent of the Ebro River in kayaks, visiting river forests and different actions carried out in the river during the construction of the Water Expo in 2008.



The María Moliner assembly room in University of Zaragoza hosted the II CIREF Seminar on River Restoration. Photo: Celia Salinas and Aldo Arranz



### CENTRO IBÉRICO DE RESTAURACIÓN FLUVIAL

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## Revitalisation of Swiss waters: changed decrees in public hearing

A part of the Ministry of Environment has started public hearing on May 26<sup>th</sup> 2010 concerning the new decrees that have been developed since December 2009. End of 2009 the Parliament decided that rivers and lake shore must become more natural. The flow in rivers where energy is generated should get a more natural flow pattern. The parliament decision can be seen as a milestone for Swiss Waters. At present, about 40% of the waters in the middle land are canalized, in populated areas it is even 80%. More than 90% of the utilised waters are used for energy production. The downstream parts of those waters with energy stations have a large water level variation. The Swiss Parliament has given 2 main directions in water management:

- Support and promotion of revitalisation as well securing and extensive management of waters
- reduction of the negative effects of water level variations downstream of energy stations, reactivation of sediment transport and restoration of waters for migrating fish.

Source > BAFU

Translated by: Ute Menke



## Community of Practice: 'Re-meander'

**In 2007 the CoP has been formed as a joint initiative.**

**The reason for this initiative was the fact that in the Netherlands meandering streams have been constructed or in preparation, while reconstructed streams did not meet the expectations. Therefore we needed knowledge, and we knew that this knowledge could not be founded in literature, but that we could learn a lot from each other. This was the reason for an initiative such as the CoP Re-meander.**

We started with organising meetings, you can define 'we' as the members. From these members a group of 6 people do form the task group. They coordinate; trying to make sure that someone does take the initiative for organising events and make an inventory of the need for knowledge. This concept of give and take seems to work well in practice; giving of own experiences, skills and knowledge and 'taking' advantage from others' their knowledge and experiences. Also there are plenty of organisations that do want to be the host for the CoP meetings and field trips. Furthermore, there are enough participants that do want to discuss their projects with one another and think how to solve problems of themselves and those of others.

What seems to be the case in every meeting is the fact that also failures are being shared with one another. That is a big contrast when comparing with other formal types of communication (articles and such) where they create a distinct profile for oneself. This is not the case for the CoP Re-meander, since the practitioners of the CoP Re-meander face the same problems, and the members of the CoP re-meander do know that the theory is not always in line with the reality.

The reality shows that some things may go wrong, but that not all mistakes are a problem to the nature. Some mistakes can contribute to a positive side effect. For example a living river with dynamic inclines where primary colonizers and Sand Martins can settle. Therefore the field trips are crucial to come in touch with the practice and the work of practitioners, to see and experience the good practices and the bad practices (of which some contribute to positive side effects...)

Point of interest of the CoP is to document the gained knowledge. Therefore DLG gave Alterra the assignment to conduct a handbook named: 'Safely Re-meander' (Dutch title: 'Veilig Hermeanderen').

Safely is in this case interpreted as 'achieving the supposed objectives', and 'prevent accidents'. Alterra researcher-Patrick Boogaart- uses the CoP meetings to assess his ideas and concepts for in the handbook, and to control these and to gain knowledge of course.

He does this to make sure that the handbook comes forth from a need- the need to learn and to gain knowledge-

*Author: Christina Oosterhoff, original full article in Dutch available at: [www.dlgwater.nl](http://www.dlgwater.nl)*

*Translator: F.M. Maharroof'*