



International Coalition for the Comeback of the Rhine Salmon

www.salmoncomeback.org contact@salmoncomeback.org

Press release

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Clear the river for the salmon!

Environmental and fishing organisations have launched an international petition to the President of France

It's time that salmon should be able to swim all the way to Switzerland again – this is the demand of a large international coalition of environmental and fishing organisations from the Rhine states. Specifically, they want the Upper Rhine between Strasbourg and Basel to be made passable by migrating fish. "The Rhine has to be restored to what it once was: Europe's most important salmon river by far," emphasises Ruedi Bösiger, Project Manager at WWF Switzerland. Eight French hydroelectric dams belonging to the predominantly state-owned Electricité de France (EDF) are currently preventing the free passage of migratory fish.

Only two of them (Strasbourg and Gerstheim) have project plans for the construction of suitable fish ladders. However, the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine (IKSR) is calling for free passage from the Atlantic to Basel in both directions to be available by 2020. "If the French power station operators carry on at the same pace as now, we will not live to see the arrival of the first salmon, which is simply unacceptable," says Roberto Epple of the European Rivers Network.

That is why fishermen and environmentalists from Germany, the Netherlands, France and Switzerland have founded an international coalition with a campaign that is to run for a number of years. Following an initiative by WWF Switzerland, an international petition to the President of France was launched on the Day of the Fish (22 August). The petition will be handed over to the French Minister of the Environment in a campaign at the Conference of Rhine Ministers in Basel on 28 October. The petition can be signed at www.salmoncomeback.org or with the coalition partners.

In recent years, very many power stations in the Rhine and its tributaries have been converted, especially in Switzerland and Southern Germany; most of them are upriver from the major blocking EDF power stations. They wait in vain for the first salmon to appear. The last two examples of good passage are the newly-built German-Swiss large power plant Rheinfelden (additional costs more than € 8,000,000) and the conversion of the last major obstacle to migration in the Kinzig near Willstätt (Black Forest, additional costs € 2,000,000). In both cases, the new construction/conversion of the plants has facilitated a two- to three-fold increase in electricity production.

Contacts and petition text on page 2.



Petition to the President of France

Dear Mr President,

The Rhine's salmon population is attempting to re-conquer the Upper Rhine all the way to Basel, Switzerland and beyond. They are trying to return to their original spawning grounds on the Rhine and its tributaries in Switzerland, Alsace, and the German Black Forest. These waterways served as major salmon breeding areas for centuries, until hydroelectric dams blocked both upstream and downstream access.

In the last few years, many of the obstacles to salmon migration have become passable. Currently, only the eight French dams on the Upper Rhine in Alsace present a barrier to salmon migration.□ Therefore, we the undersigned urge the French government to take action to restore salmon migration to the Franco-German part of the Rhine River by 2020.

France and Electricité de France bear great responsibility for the welfare of salmon, particularly on the Rhine. Act now to restore the free movement of salmon on the Rhine River!

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Les membres de la coalition :

CH : WWF Schweiz, Aqua Viva/ Rheinaubund, Schweizerischer Fischereiverband, ARGE Renaturierung Hochrhein,
SGS Schweiz. Greina Stiftung

D : Deutscher Naturschutzring ,BUND, Landesfischereiverband Baden Württemberg ;
Regiowasser ; BBU AK Wasser, Lachsverein e.V.

FR : WWF France, Alsace Nature, Rivières Sauvages, SOS Loire Vivante, AIDSA

NL : WWF NL, Sportsvisserij Nederland ; Natuurmonumenten ; Staatsbosbeheer ;
Platform Biodiversiteit, Ecosystemen& Economie

INTERNATIONAL : ERN European Rivers Network, NASF, AIDSA, European Angler Alliance