



Agenda item 6.2
For information

Council

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World Fish Migration Day - strategic partnerships and the role of governments

(Kerry Brink, World Fish Migration Foundation, The Netherlands)

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Around the world, researchers, managers and governments have been working for many years to improve the situation for migratory fish such as salmon, by developing fishways, removing dams, rehabilitating rivers and exploring other solutions. Associated policies and legislation have also been implemented in many countries. Not only are there several major global and UN policies of relevance to fish migration, there are also countries with strong legislation for the protection of riverine fisheries and maintaining healthy ecosystems. However, the continued deterioration of fish populations demonstrates the need for enhanced communication, cooperation, knowledge exchange and awareness. Below, we will explore the power of World Fish Migration Day and how local action can have a global impact and help to ultimately reach millions of people around the world (Table 1).

Table 1. World Fish Migration Day achievements and targets (WFMD2016 Report)

	Results		Targets	
	2014	2016	2018	2020
Events	273	450	1.000	1.500
Organizations	1.200	2.000	3.000	4.000
Countries	53	63	75	100
Visitors	50.000	82.000	200.000	300.000
Citizens	2 mln	70 mln	100 mln	200 mln
Official celebrations				
Dam removal/fishways	30	15	75	100

World Fish Migration Day

WFMD is a biennial one day event that aims to gain global attention for the needs of migratory fish. Through local participation and support, the aim is to bring a greater understanding of issues regarding migratory fish to the general public, policy makers and policy influencers. It is a global initiative with local activities organized to directly engage these audiences.

Partnerships with local organizations are critical to the success of WFMD. The idea is to connect and collaborate with NGO’s, policy makers, educational institutions, water authorities, government agencies, decision-makers, fisheries agencies and others who work on the theme of fish migration and to use this relationship to raise awareness and create commitment around the world. By supporting local events on a global scale, the WFMD collaboration helps local organisations connect with those who are sometimes unengaged and helps make it possible for people who dedicate their lives to migratory fish to tell their story

to the world. In addition to this, WFMD creates a feeling of hope and a sense of achievement as it gives local organizations a voice. Currently the WFMD has a network of over 2,000 organizations working toward promoting communication and awareness around the theme of fish migration. This global initiative is centrally coordinated from the Netherlands by the World Fish Migration Foundation, with critical support from Partners (WWF, FFSG, TNC, LinkedIn Consult, and Dutch Water Authorities), Sponsors (ranging from Institutions, Governments, local authorities, and research institutions) and, not least, our supporters (helping with communication and outreach).

In 2014, the first ever WFMD was held. On this day, well over 1,000 different organisations contributed to WFMD2014, through support and/or participation, in over 50 countries worldwide at more than 270 events. On May 21st 2016, thousands of organizations from around the world celebrated the 2nd WFMD around the theme “connecting fish, rivers and people”. At 450 locations organizers hosted various local events to create awareness about migratory fish and to call attention to their struggles and needs (Figure 1). Celebrations officially started after the global kick-off event in Washington DC. This opening was followed by a wave of activity and excitement around the world. Throughout the day feedback on ways WFMD was being celebrated were received ranging from tweets to video launches, from school tours to delegate conferences. Overall it was an amazing success, with thousands of people talking about fish migration. It is estimated that approximately **70 million people** around the world were reached through the events, media and social media.

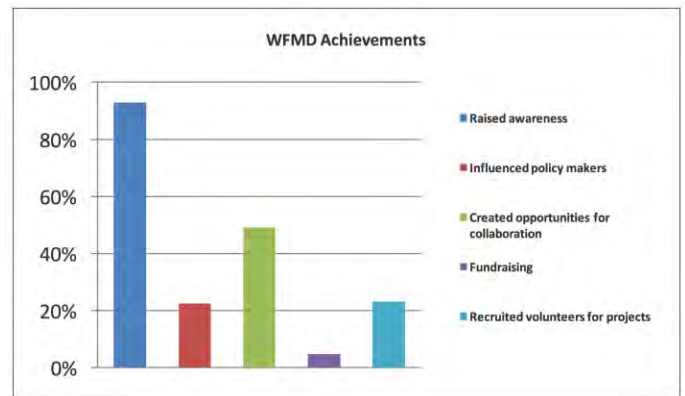
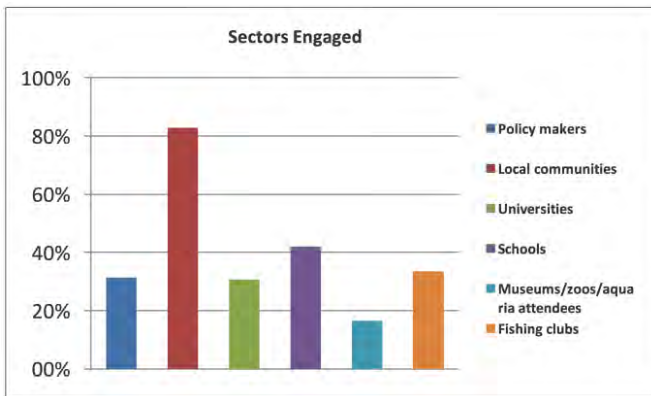


Figure 1. World Fish Migration Day 2016 event statistics and map of events. Also visit www.worldfishmigrationday.com for the inspiring WFMD film or follow these links for more information: [WFMD](#) and [Feedback](#)

Local action

Many activities have resulted from WFMD at regional, European and international levels. The majority of the events in 2016 were in Europe (228) and the USA (103), but there were also events from other countries including Mongolia, The Gambia, Iceland, Ecuador and Papua New Guinea to name a few (Figure 2 shows some highlights). The goals for 2018 are to increase the impact and double the number of events to involve at least 75 countries around the globe.

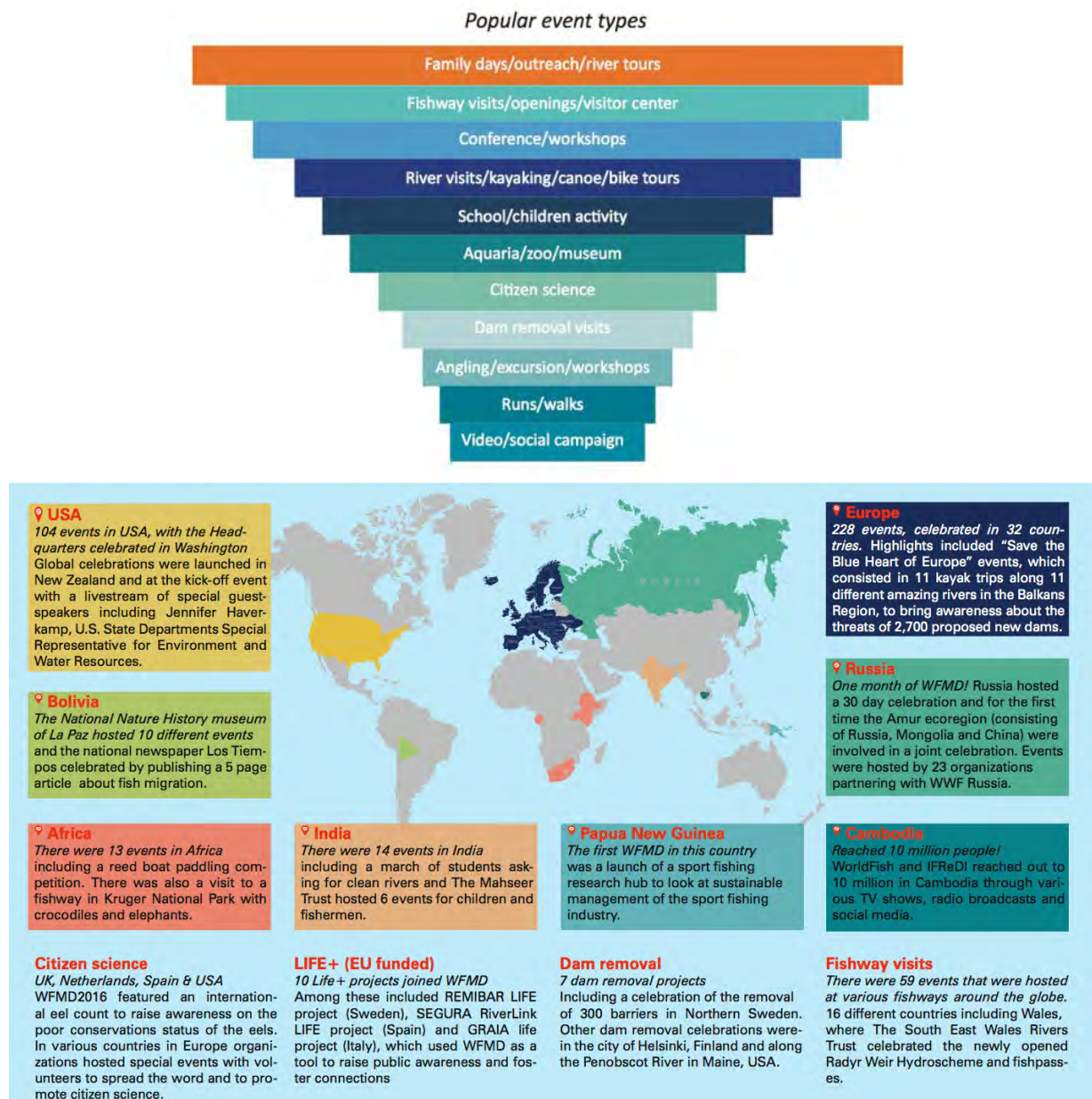


Figure 2. Highlights of events during WFMD 2016

There were numerous organisations who hosted events specifically aimed at raising awareness about salmon. This included at least 13 events in 2014 and 36 events in 2016, ranging from school visits in Russia, fishway openings in Finland, numerous conferences, a

documentary screening and fun activities for the public at various locations (Table 2). Some of the organisations involved included the North Atlantic Salmon Fund, Salmon and Trout Association, Wild Salmon Center, Der Atlantische Lachs E.V., European Parliament Recreational Fisheries & Aquatic Environment Forum, IUCN Salmon Specialist Group, Natural Resources Wales, Southeast-Finland ELY -Center and Natural Resources Institute Finland, Normandie Grands Migrateurs, WWF, The Nature Conservancy, amongst others. Partnerships were also common throughout WFMD events, where larger organisations worked together with local organisations and governments to create awareness. For example, WWF Russia united 20 government, scientific and public organizations under the Slogan “Save the rivers for fish and people”.

Table 2. Events during the WFMD2016 related to creating awareness on various species of salmon

Region	Events focused on Salmon	Sectors	Engagement
Europe	7 events in Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy	Schools, governments, non-profits, universities and institutes, Fisheries & Angling, Visitors centres	Scientists, governments, public, school children, students
Asia	1 event Japan	Non-profits	Schools
Russia	6 events	Non-profits	Schools and public
UK	5 events	Governments, non-profits, universities and institutes	Scientists, governments, public, school children, students
North America	16 events from USA and Canada	Schools, governments, non-profits, universities and institutes, Fisheries & Angling, Hatchery, Aquaria/Zoos/Museums	Scientists, governments, public, school children, students

More than just a day of celebration

Closer co-operation between government agencies, water authorities and public sector is essential if mutual interests and opportunities are to be identified and resources shared to address environmental needs (Royte, 2016). WFMD made it easier for organizations to connect with numerous high level delegates. Many events had special guests from ministers, mayors, representatives from state departments to tribal leaders. For instance Jennifer Haverkamp (U.S. State Department Special Representative for Environment and Water Resources), Mariannen Wenning, Director for Quality of Life, Water & Air at the European Commission (Europe), Hon Nick Smith, Minister for the Environment (New Zealand), Andres Metsoja, Estonian Parliament member (Estonia) and many more were involved. All of these delegates and many others agreed that this topic needs more attention. The power of these positive responses is far reaching on a long-term scale. Key representatives who realize the importance of fish migration play an essential role in starting crucial conversations amongst a broader audience. Although the implications of this are not always immediately evident after WFMD, it is certain that more attention will be given to fish migration in the future by these delegates. There were additional events that invited delegates to discuss ways to remove dams, install fish passages, and restore rivers. A notable example was the event in Estonia, where politicians and researchers came together to discuss the Sindi Dam and its removal in 2018. WFMD plays an important role in putting the projects on the world map.

Feedback showed that many organizations used WFMD to showcase their projects and fish migration activities. For instance 10 European Commission (EC) LIFE projects joined the

WFMD2016. Many of them showed the benefits of WFMD and how they used this global awareness day as a tool to raise public awareness and foster stronger connections between projects and people. This is one of the key strengths of WFMD. WFMD is inclusive and gives local organizations and authorities a voice. There were many special moments where event hosts were able to proudly share their achievements. For example, the Cape Elizabeth Land Trust in the USA shared results of their alewife monitoring project with the public. Kruger National Park showed what they were doing at fishways in this famous South African nature reserve, ITAIPU explained their program to release millions of migratory fish back into Brazilian rivers, research centres such as Sofia University's Department of "General and Applied Hydrobiology" in Bulgaria opened their doors to the public, North Coast Local Land Services from Australia hosted a field day showcasing improvements made to fish passage and river rehabilitation achievements and this is just to name a few.

WFMD2018

The WFMD is important for bringing people together who are working on fish migration from all around the world. One focus area for future WFMDs is to facilitate better and more connections and collaborations among participants.

On April 21st 2018, the third WFMD will be celebrated. Six continents will each have their own continental headquarters, which will function as hubs to coordinate activities on their respective continents. As an additional means of growing support, one volunteer from each continent will contribute to the recruitment of new participants for WFMD2018, during the year from April 2017 to April 2018. With their help, we will increase our potential to raise awareness and reach thousands of potential participants.

Part of the WFMD is to connect other initiatives on the topic of fish migration. An example is the ©Happy Fish initiative, which is a symbol for people, organizations and projects that aim to recreate free migration for fish populations. The Happy Fish was launched during WFMD2016 and since then has been travelling from project to project and joining celebrations across the USA since the 21st of May 2016. It is currently migrating toward the west coast, visiting fish passage celebrations, restoration events and conferences. In 2018, Happy Fish will continue its route on different continents, educating citizens about the importance of free fish migration and it will be the central theme of WFMD2018.

Similarly, the International Year of the Salmon (IYS) represents an excellent opportunity for a partnership with WFMD to collaborate with others working on salmon around the world. The common goal of stimulating public awareness and outreach initiatives on salmon is a perfect platform to connect and pool resources. During the special session for planning the IYS, it is hoped that activities and experiences can be shared to develop and stimulate activities that will benefit WFMD and NASCO and ultimately work together to improve communication on salmon conservation and restoration.

References

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