

Danube Lifelines

DANUBElifelines – Safeguarding Migratory Fish and their Habitats in the Danube River Basin and Beyond

Restoring Europe's Lifeline

DANUBElifelines paves the way towards the recovery of migratory fish and their habitats in the Danube River Basin. Through basin-wide activities, 8 demonstration sites, and a broad network of partners spanning from Germany's Black Forest to Romania's Danube Delta, we reconnect rivers, restore biodiversity, and promote scalable solutions for freshwater conservation across Europe.

The Challenge We Face

Migratory fish populations declined by 81% on average since 1970. Dammed rivers and degraded habitats prevent fish from reaching their spawning grounds, disrupting ecosystems that had been thriving for millennia. DANUBElifelines works to change that—for fish, for rivers, and for the millions of people who depend on healthy freshwater systems.

8 Demonstration Sites Across the Basin

The 8 DANUBElifelines demosites are real-life examples of river stretches where restoration is needed. These real-world case studies help us learn what works best—so we can share these lessons across the region and beyond.



1 Inn

Restoring fish migration and habitat connectivity along the Inn River through a holistic approach. The site develops practical guidance for large alpine river restoration and long-term planning.



River Inn, length of approx. 200 km in Germany, with a particular focus on its confluence with the Danube.



Danube salmon, European grayling, Cyprinids



2 Pielach

Testing Nature-based Solutions in one of Austria's last Danube salmon habitats. The project monitors restoration measures and evaluates ecological, hydrological, and flood protection benefits.



Pielach River (right-side Danube tributary)

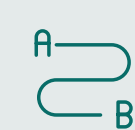


Danube salmon, European grayling



3 Danube I

Combining fishways, tributary reconnections, and habitat improvements along the Austrian Danube. The site evaluates restoration impacts in a highly regulated river system.



165 km of the Austrian Danube from downstream of Melk to the Slovak border



Sterlet, Danube salmon, Barbel, Nase,



4 Sava

Supporting Danube salmon conservation and habitat restoration in the Sava River Basin. The project contributes to Slovenia's national conservation strategy through science and stakeholder collaboration.



Cluster of rivers in the Sava River Basin



Danube salmon, European grayling, Cyprinids



5 Rába

Reconnecting an isolated oxbow with the main river to improve fish habitats and hydrological dynamics. Strong cooperation with fishing groups and water authorities supports restoration efforts.



Rába - Oxbow of the Rába River, 1.5 km in length



Barbel, Nase, Zingel, Cyprinids



6 Danube II

Developing a science-based restoration plan for Danube side arms in Hungary. The project identifies key migration corridors and improves habitat connectivity for migratory fish.



Hungarian Danube from Gönyű to Budapest (1 790 rkm – 1 650 rkm)

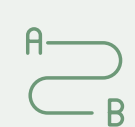


Sterlet, Cyprinids, Zingel, Danube streber



7 Ipoly

Using the Ipoly River as a model for ecological restoration through barrier removal and reconnection of wetlands and oxbows. The focus is on restoring natural river dynamics with Nature-based Solutions.



Ipoly River - a transboundary river between Slovakia and Hungary



Cyprinids, Percids



8 Danube III

Protecting threatened migratory fish species, including sturgeons and Pontic shad, through cross-border cooperation. The site strengthens habitat protection, law enforcement, and sustainable fisheries management.



Common Danube section (RO/BG), including the Danube Delta



Pontic shad and 4 sturgeon species

