

The Stepenitz will be the “river landscape of the year for 2024/25”

The Stepenitz (Elbe) river arises in the Prignitz region in north-western Brandenburg and flows into the Elbe river at Wittenberge after about 84 kilometres. It is one of the few remaining naturally occurring river courses in Brandenburg. The Stepenitz river is designated as an interregionally significant waterway for long-distance migratory fish species. Numerous transverse obstructions, especially in the tributaries, still stand in the way of this goal. In addition to hosting all three (sea, river and brook) lamprey species, the Stepenitz is home to a self-sustaining population of brown trout.

A program for the reintroduction of sea trout and Atlantic salmon has been running since 01. April 1999.

The joint press release from the German Anglers Association e.V. (DAFV) and NaturFreunde Deutschlands e.V. can be found on the website:



Impression of the upper reaches of the Stepenitz.

Source: Fario e.V.

<https://dafv.de/themen/gewaesser-und-naturschutz/die-stepenitz-elbe-wird-flusslandschaft-der-jahre-2024-25>

Geesthacht: Southern fish ladder brought back into operation

The Geesthacht weir is part of the Geesthacht system in Schleswig-Holstein, the only weir system on the Elbe within Germany. After four years of planning and construction, the southern fish ladder at the Geesthacht weir was once again made operational on 13. December 2023. Since then, migratory fish such as salmon, sea trout and eels have been able to climb up and down the south side of the weir again. The fish ladder was taken out of operation by the Elbe River Navigation Authority (WSA Elbe) in 2019 due to the acute risk of collapse. According to NABU, the opportunity to implement further improvements to the facility was not used. Only water allocation facilities and a planned structural breakthrough at pillar height will be added.

Further information at:

<https://www.wsa-elbe.wsv.de> > Presse

EKOenergy supports river restoration projects in Germany

The Finnish Association of Nature Conservation is collecting compensation funds under its EKOenergy eco-label for use in supporting two to three new river restoration projects in Germany, Norway and Sweden with up to €30,000 each. Applications should contain a maximum of three pages and be written in English. Environmental associations are eligible to apply.

Further information on how to apply:

<https://www.ekoenergy.org/de/environmental-fund-second-call-2023/>

Direct contact with fund coordinator Laura Blomberg: laura.blomberg@sll.fi.

Floodplain restoration: Standardised evaluation of success

A publication that has appeared in the BfN publications presents a new standardized procedure with which the success of renaturation measures for flora and fauna on banks and in floodplains can be comprehensibly assessed:

A research team led by the University of Duisburg-Essen has developed this easy-to-use, standardized procedure for assessing the biocenosis success of restoration measures on water bodies and in floodplains. It examines whether typical plant species, birds, amphibians, ground beetles as well as mussels and snails are present in the renatured water and floodplain sections and whether these species have benefited from the renaturation. At the same time, it checks whether typical habitats such as gravel banks, floodplain waters and riparian forest have been restored. This uniform approach should enable more direct comparisons of success monitoring in the future.

<https://www.bfn.de/pressemitteilungen/auenrenaturierungen-erfolge-standardisiert-bewerten>

In order to further test and develop the process, as well as to make it accessible to the largest possible group of users, the researchers, led by the University of Duisburg-Essen, are conducting a

test from 2023 to 2027 and are developing an online tool for data entry. Interested institutions are welcome to take part in this test and, for example, provide monitoring data from renaturation projects.

Berlin Senate presents Water Master Plan

Climatic and social changes pose major challenges to Berlin's water cycle. The **Water Master Plan** is intended as a medium- and long-term strategy for the future of Berlin's water management with a time horizon of 2050. The plan was presented to the interested professional public on 11. December 2023.

In the subsequent panel discussion, Michael Bender (GRÜNE LIGA) emphasized the need to align the Master Plan more closely with the impact on aquatic biodiversity made by the ongoing water shortage situation, including the many small bodies of water that have already disappeared due to water shortage. The Berlin Water Network offers dialogues on water body protection and implements concrete improvement measures. However, the Master Plan's approach of shifting the problems through the use of long-distance water supply, water transfer and increased drinking water treatment are viewed critically. The lignite (brown coal) mining companies must bear greater responsibility as regards the Lausitz water balance, and the "polluter pays" principle (producer responsibility) should play a greater role overall. The Blue Community Berlin sees clear potential for water preservation through the use of grey water.

The statement of the Berlin Nature Conservation NGO umbrella organisation (BLN) on the Water Master Plan is available here:

<https://wassernetz-berlin.de/2023/12/20/stellungnahme-der-naturschutzverbaende-durch-die-blm-zum-1-bericht-des-masterplan-wasser-berlin/>



Photo competition for World Water Day 2024

Onewater, in partnership with UNESCO and the German city of Burghausen, is launching a photography competition on the theme of "Water, Peace and Prosperity" to mark the next World Water Day on 22. March 2024. The top three winners will receive prizes and will exhibit their works alongside the other 15 winners. The exhibition will take place on 22. March 2024 at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

The deadline for participation is 14. January 2024, and the winners will be announced a few days later.

<https://site.picter.com/onewater-blue-2023>

Save the date

Thursday, 25. January 2024 Rathaus Berlin-Lichtenberg Möllendorffstr. 6, 2nd story	Five years of Blue Community Berlin! An exhibition about our water: A vital resource and a human right. www.bluecommunityberlin.de
Tuesday, 6. February 2024 Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Berlin Schumannstr. 8 10:00-14:00 14:00-18:00 (Online option)	Ways Out of the Plastic Crisis EXIT PLASTIC. Approaches to solutions and decisions. Round table for NGOs Civil Society Meeting Public conference Panel discussion and interactive formats Registration: www.exit-plastik.de/konferenz-2024
Thursday, 14. March 2024 Worldwide and in Bayreuth	International Day of Action for Rivers and Against Dams (World Dam Day / International Day for Free Flowing Rivers) https://worldday.de/international-day-of-action-against-dams-weltstaudamntag
Thursday, 14. March 2024 Franz und Gloria Cinema Bar, Bayreuth Hindenburgstr. 2	Main FlussFilmFest Shorts Opening to mark March Water Month in the Bayreuth region. www.mainflussfilmfest.de

Friday, 15. March 2024 Neue Filmbühne Cinema, Lichtenfels Bamberger Str. 3	Main FlussFilmFest Shorts Film evening with talks and discussion. www.mainflussfilmfest.de
Friday-Sunday, 15.-17. March 2024 Fri. 18:00 - Sun. 13:00 Jugendherberge Bonn Haager Weg 42	Educational Methods: The Human Right to Water Simulated water march game, access vs. availability, structural differences, political frameworks. Educational methods transfer. FIAN weekend seminar. Participation is free of charge. Barbara Lehmann-Detscher: b.lehmann-detscher@fian.de Marian Henn: m.henn@fian.de Registration: https://www.fian.de/seminar-bildungsmethoden_wasser
Sunday, 17. March 2024 Lichtspielkino Cinema Cafe, Bamberg u. Königstraße 34	Main FlussFilmFest Shorts Matinee showing with talks and discussion. www.mainflussfilmfest.de
Friday, 22. March 2024 Worldwide	World Water Day: Leveraging Water for Peace https://www.unwater.org/our-work/world-water-day
Monday-Wednesday, 15.-17. April 2024 Oosterpoort, Groningen, Netherlands	Free Flow 2024 International Conference on protecting and restoring free-flowing rivers in Europe. Organised by World Fish Migration Foundation and the Institute for Fisheries Management. https://freeflowconference.eu
Sunday, 28. April 2024 11:00 - 19:00 Berlin Brandenburger Tor and Straße des 17. Juni	29th Environmental Festival of the GRÜNE LIGA Berlin Stage program in front of the Brandenburg Gate, diverse and inspiring participatory activities, experiences for young and old as well as delicious organically grown street food. Main topic: forest. https://www.umweltfestival.de
Saturday-Friday, 18.-24. May 2024 Bali, Indonesia	Water for Shared Prosperity 10th World Water Forum https://worldwaterforum.org
Monday-Wednesday, 10.-12. June 2024 Hotel Park Plaza, Trier Nikolaus-Koch-Platz 1 www.parkplaza-trier.de	Water Management Law Public services: Economic framework, water supply and waste water law. Water resources law: Basic and special areas. €850 including lunch, wine tasting and snacks. Registration by 10. April 2024 at: www.wasserrecht.uni-trier.de
Monday, 17. June 2024 Bonn	World Day Against Desertification and Drought The day is a global call to do more to combat land degradation, desertification and drought. https://www.unccd.int/de/news-stories/press-releases/germany-host-2024-desertification-and-drought-day-bonn
Monday-Tuesday, 7.-8. October 2024 Friedrichshafen	Our Waters – Fit for the Future? 4 th Vital Waters Conference in Baden-Württemberg. www.vitale-gewaesser-bw.de

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