



Abstract

LIFE MIGRATOEBRE: Migratory Fish Recovery and Improved Management in the Final Stretch of the Ebre River (Catalonia, NE Iberian Peninsula) [†]

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Abstract: The aim of this project is to promote the recovery of ecological connectivity within 10–20 years in the lower Ebre River and Delta, and a healthy and sustainable population of diadromous fish, including European sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*), European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), twaite shad (*Alosa fallax*) and sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*), among other aquatic native species. It is focused on long-term sustainable investments, adapting all present river obstacles to allow fish migration, increasing the river spawning habitat availability and the distribution and growth areas of migrating fish. The main activities of the LIFE MIGRATOEBRE Project (LIFE13 NAT/ES/000237) are: (1) Build a fish ramp at Xerta's weir (located at 58 km from the Mediterranean sea; in 2023), and a fish ramp at Ascó's weir (located at 104 km from the sea; built in 2017), and monitor them regularly. (2) Apply ship locks fish-friendly improved management at Xerta's weir (located at 56 km from the sea), and monitor it regularly. (3) Undertake a pilot project of European sturgeon restocking through an experimental release in the lower Ebre (in 2023). (4) Develop a communication campaign and a community involvement plan for students, the general public, farmers, fishermen, anglers, electric companies, tourism stakeholders and regional and local authorities. This included the production of a great temporary exhibition and a network of volunteers. The potential spawning and feeding areas for European sturgeon, twaite shad and sea lamprey were identified and cartographed. Extensive monitoring of the target fish population of the lower Ebre river was carried out (2000 fish were marked with PIT tags). Between 2017 and 2020, 150 fish (*Chelon labrosus*, *Mugil cephalus*, *Alosa fallax* and *Anguilla anguilla*) were monitored by acoustic telemetry (using 47 Vemco receivers located along the river and at in the lagoons of the Ebre delta). Obtained results indicate that the Ebre is optimal for the recovery of the target species of this project, but at the same time it would be very important to carry out a control of invasive species. This LIFE project started on 1 July 2014 and, after several extensions, it will finish on 30 June 2024. More information can be found at: www.migratoebre.eu.

Keywords: LIFE projects; fish migration; rivers; ultrasonic telemetry



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