

Providing the ecological passability in federal waterways



The large rivers that serve as navigable waterways are the main pathways for migrating fish species between their habitats in the seas or the lower courses of the rivers, where the animals have their feeding grounds, and the habitats in the headwaters and tributaries that serve as spawning grounds.

These rivers are often regulated by locks to improve their navigability. This, however, hinders the migration of fish and other organisms and the transport of sediment.

In Germany, the Federal Waterways and Shipping Administration (WSV) has the obligation to preserve and restore the ecological passability at all 260 locks operated under its responsibility.

The unhindered upstream and downstream migration is an essential precondition for the good status of the fish fauna in the rivers and their tributaries as demanded by the European Water Framework Directive (WFD). Fish passes are the preferred option for providing the ecological passability. They may be designed as natural bypasses or as technical structures.