



BioFresh – Is biodiversity being left behind?

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The continued degradation of freshwater ecosystems and the loss of their biodiversity represent a growing need for more effective policy frameworks for nature conservation.

Davis et al, 2013



What does BioFresh do?

BioFresh improves the capacity to manage and protect freshwater biodiversity, thereby maintaining the services provided by aquatic ecosystems, but also making it possible to establish effective regional plans for conservation.



You can contribute – get in touch!

There are numerous ways to contribute to the BioFresh network of global freshwater biodiversity and to join in taking freshwater biodiversity science, conservation and management to a new level.

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BioFresh viewpoint

- Freshwater ecosystems host an **unparalleled diversity of species**, but are amongst the most threatened in Europe.
- In Europe, these ecosystems provide important **cultural services** such as recreation, angling or bird watching which sustain millions of jobs and contribute to the European economy. **Regulatory services** include buffering against floods and erosion, maintaining water quality as well as carbon storage and nutrient cycling. Examples of **provisioning services** include transporting waste and goods, non-consumptive use for energy generation, and abstraction for agricultural, domestic and industrial use.
- Although European citizens do not accept the continuous loss of biodiversity and several policies aim to protect and enhance freshwater biodiversity and ecosystems (e.g. the **Habitats and Water Framework Directives** and the **EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020**), limitations imposed by the financial crisis and **short-term perspectives hinder effective decision-making**.
- The nearsighted, often localized economic values offered by exploiting provisioning services (e.g. hydropower) tend to **overshadow the long-term benefits** of the less studied and largely underestimated cultural and regulatory services (e.g. carbon storage).
- A **holistic approach** including biodiversity-conscious priority setting and the inclusion of long-term consequences in decision-making is imperative to **ensuring the future health** of freshwater ecosystems and conservation of the species contained within.

Davis, M; Anzaldua, G; Lago, M; Cid Puey, N; Born, W; Scholz, M; Cardoso, A.C. (2013). Exploring variations in the application of the composite ecosystem services approach for freshwater species conservation. Deliverable 6.4 to the European Commission, DG Research as part of the BioFresh project (ref. 226874).

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