

In 2011, [the countries of the Western Balkans](#) proposed a small number of areas for inclusion in the European Emerald network of protected areas. But [many rivers in the region are still unprotected](#) - a new proposal is aimed at correcting that omission.

A group of scientists and civil society organizations from 11 countries today published a list of 88 priority rivers for protection and are calling on the countries of the Western Balkans that are signatories to the Bern Convention to expand the Emerald network in the region, the Center for the Environment announced.

The Emerald network was established by the Council of Europe in 1989 according to the Berne Convention on the Protection of European Wild Species and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention), and it consists of areas of special importance for nature protection in order to preserve plant and animal species in their natural habitats.

As signatories to the Berne Convention, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia began inclusion in the Emerald Network in 2011 when they proposed a small number of areas for protection.

However, to date, none of the countries has expanded that list, most areas do not have any protection under national legislation, they are not managed or provided with systematic data collection or the necessary resources. Because of all this, most rivers and fish species are still not protected.

The list of rivers published today is the result of the Emerald Green seminar organized by the [NGO CEE Bankwatch Network](#) in December 2022.

The participants of that seminar collected relevant scientific data on individual fish species and their habitats, on the basis of which a list of rivers to be included in the Emerald network was prepared, Sarajevo Times writes.