

The first global analysis showed that the number of populations of freshwater migratory fish species is declining significantly worldwide. In Europe, populations of freshwater migratory fish species are disappearing at an alarming rate, and dams, small hydropower-plants, overfishing, climate change and river pollution are the main causes of freshwater fish extinctions, WWF Adria said.

Dozens of small hydropower plants are planned to be built throughout Montenegro, although we are already witnessing the terrible consequences that these plants have on nature, but also local communities to which rivers mean life, said Milija Čabarkapa, national coordinator of WWF Adria for Montenegro.

“Globally, the population of these fish species has decreased by 76 percent since 1970, while in Europe the figure is much higher at 93 percent. Europe has become an infamous leader in the loss of freshwater fish populations, directly caused by devastation. Across Europe, over 60% of freshwater habitats (rivers, streams, lakes and swamps) are in poor condition, and one of the main causes is over a million different barriers that block European rivers and prevent natural dynamic “In addition, a recent study on the state of fish species in Mediterranean countries has shown that dams and hydroelectric power plants are the main reason for their declining numbers,” the statement said.

“Images of dry riverbeds, destroyed shores, felled forests along rivers, as well as the disappearance of wildlife, and especially fish that depend on rivers, have become our daily routine. These reports further point out what has already been lost, but also testify to the importance and value of it that we have not lost in Montenegro, clean mountain rivers of free flow “, said Čabarkapa.

In a statement, WWF Adria points out that, unfortunately, these figures are not a sufficient warning to stop harmful projects across the continent:

“Over 2,700 small hydropower plants are planned in Southeast Europe alone. Their construction is destroying Europe’s last free-flowing rivers, resulting in a significant loss of biodiversity and a markedly negative impact on the lives of local communities across those rivers.” their contribution to electricity production is negligible, and the incentive system that led to their rapid development directly affects private interests and causes direct financial damage to the state and citizens. It is important to note that free-flowing rivers have multiple benefits for local communities - from supply drinking water and climate change mitigation, to the development of sustainable tourism potentials and the sustainable use of natural resources “.

WWF Adria Nature Protection Program Director Petra Remeta said that, given all the available data and the worrying speed with which freshwater species populations and their

habitats are disappearing, it is necessary to insist on participatory and inclusive decision-making and implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy:

“Like the EU and national legislation on nature and water protection. However, given the large number of existing and planned hydropower plants in Europe, it is important that law enforcement is accompanied by fundamental changes in the way this energy source is perceived, approved and funded by the European Union, emphasizing other renewable energy sources such as solar and wind “, Remeta points out.

A statement from WWF Adria states that we have big decisions ahead of us

“Given the increasingly extreme weather conditions, frequent floods and droughts, fires, the emergence of new diseases and the period of recession that will follow the coronavirus pandemic, it is important to recognize nature as an ally in mitigating the effects of crises, stopping bad projects, removing obsolete river barriers, nature-based solutions, sustainable energy solutions, as well as raising awareness, active citizenship and the circular economy”. Remeta points out that it is important to keep in mind how we can still influence and stop negative trends.

“We are witnessing the awakening of civic awareness around the world, including our region. People are fighting for the nature that surrounds them and are becoming aware that without a healthy and preserved nature we cannot build a prosperous society. We have lost too much time, it is necessary to act immediately and ensure a future in which people and nature live in balance “, concludes Remeta.

Source: vijesti.me