

Fish swims amazing distance

Marine ecologist Niels Brevé could hardly believe his eyes when he checked his emails recently. One of the fish he had fitted with a transponder for a study in 2017 had resurfaced. Literally, as a German fisherman had caught the fish in Mannheim Harbour. That was 550 kilometres from the Haringvliet sluices where Brevé had released the fish.

Fish no. 11328 was one of 67 pike-perches with transponders that were released in the sea in early 2017 for an experiment. The aim was to see whether these freshwater fish could find their way back to the rivers. Thousands of freshwater fish are flushed out to sea every day through the sluices. Do they all end

Pike-perch no. 11328 migrated further than ecologists thought possible

up dead or do some find a way back? Eleven of the 67 pike-perches managed

to return to the freshwater. They used the sluice for boats or the special fish passages in the sluice pillars. One of these 11 fish was caught by a fisherman 194 days later, 112 kilometres upstream. So pike-perch no. 11328, a male, is an exception. This fish migrated further than ecologists thought possible.

Sluices

No. 11328 has done a lot for science, explains Brevé. In part because of this experiment, the sluices are now managed in such a way to give the fish more chance of swimming back. 'We are working with all stakeholders, including the Dutch angling association, which employs me and funds my PhD research, to see how we can keep the sluices open as much as possible.' ^{RK}