

Dams “concrete straitjackets” for river ecosystems, says new podcast by Ben Goldsmith

NEW PODCAST by renowned conservationist and financier, Ben Goldsmith has warned against the dangers of too many dams in Europe’s waterways.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- NEW PODCAST by renowned conservationist and financier, Ben Goldsmith has warned against the dangers of too many dams in Europe’s waterways.

In the third episode of his new podcast *Rewilding the World*, released today (23/05/23), Goldsmith speaks to Pao Fernández Garrido from Dam Removal Europe about the importance of freeing up Europe’s waterways for wildlife.



Ben Goldsmith

In the podcast, Goldsmith and Fernández Garrido set out the various ways rivers can be set “free from the concrete straitjackets that have been placed on them over the past hundred years.”

According to Fernández Garrido, man-made barriers like dams and weirs pose a serious threat to nature by disrupting the natural functioning of rivers. There are currently more than one million dam barriers are thought to exist in Europe’s rivers.

Often, these contribute to a wide-scale decline in fish and other river wildlife by blocking fish from moving along their natural pathways between feeding and spawning grounds, causing interruptions in their life cycles and ability to reproduce.

Similarly, the dams can cause erosion and can lead to the disappearance of beaches as sediment is unable to move down rivers.

The podcast series - which launched last week - covers various rewilding projects across the globe. Last week Goldsmith spoke to Alison Fox, CEO of American Prairie Reserve; Deli Saavedra, Head of Landscapes at Rewilding Europe; and Christoph Promberger, Executive Director of Foundation Conservation Carpathia.

In this episode, Goldsmith deep dives into dam removal as a form of rewilding. The pair discuss challenging negative public perception around dam removal, citing how multiple dams are obsolete, with many being over 100 years old and serving limited economic or functional purpose.

Garrido highlights that less than half of the 1.2 million dams in Europe are still in service, meaning many are obstructing river ecosystems while serving no functional purpose.

In the podcast, Goldsmith says: "The most obvious negative impact of these dams is the blockage of migratory species. [...] The movement of European Eels, for example, has been impeded such that their population has crashed by more than 90 percent"

The limited podcast series features six episodes in total. The podcast was produced by The Podcast Coach and can be heard on Spotify, Apple and on the web.

The podcast immediately follows the launch of Goldsmith's new book, *God is an Octopus*. The book reflects on Ben's grief after losing his teenage daughter, Iris, in a tragic accident and the solace nature offered him.

Ben has also recently launched The Iris Prize, named after his late daughter, which is seeking to reward outstanding young people who are working on projects to restore nature around the world

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