

German rivers repopulated with sturgeon

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Atlantic sturgeon from Canada are being transported to Germany for reintroduction into that nation's rivers.

A test batch of aquarium-raised fish has already been re-introduced and a school of fish will likely be released in the Oder River this fall, the German magazine Der Spiegel reported Tuesday.

Frank Kirschbaum, a fish specialist at Berlin's Leibniz Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries, is working with colleague Jorn Gessner and Polish researchers. "We're planning Europe's largest practical experiment in sturgeon re-population," Gessner told Der Spiegel.

The scientists want to release approximately 6,000 young fish in the Oder by 2008.

Although the Elbe, Weser, Oder and other German rivers once teemed with sturgeon, factories and sewage from the cities polluted the rivers and modern dams prevented the fish from reaching their spawning grounds, scientists told Der Spiegel. The last German sturgeon was seen in the Eider in 1969 and, since then, sturgeon has been considered extinct in Germany.

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