

TRANSBOUNDARY MANAGEMENT ON THE UPPER RHINE RAMSAR SITE



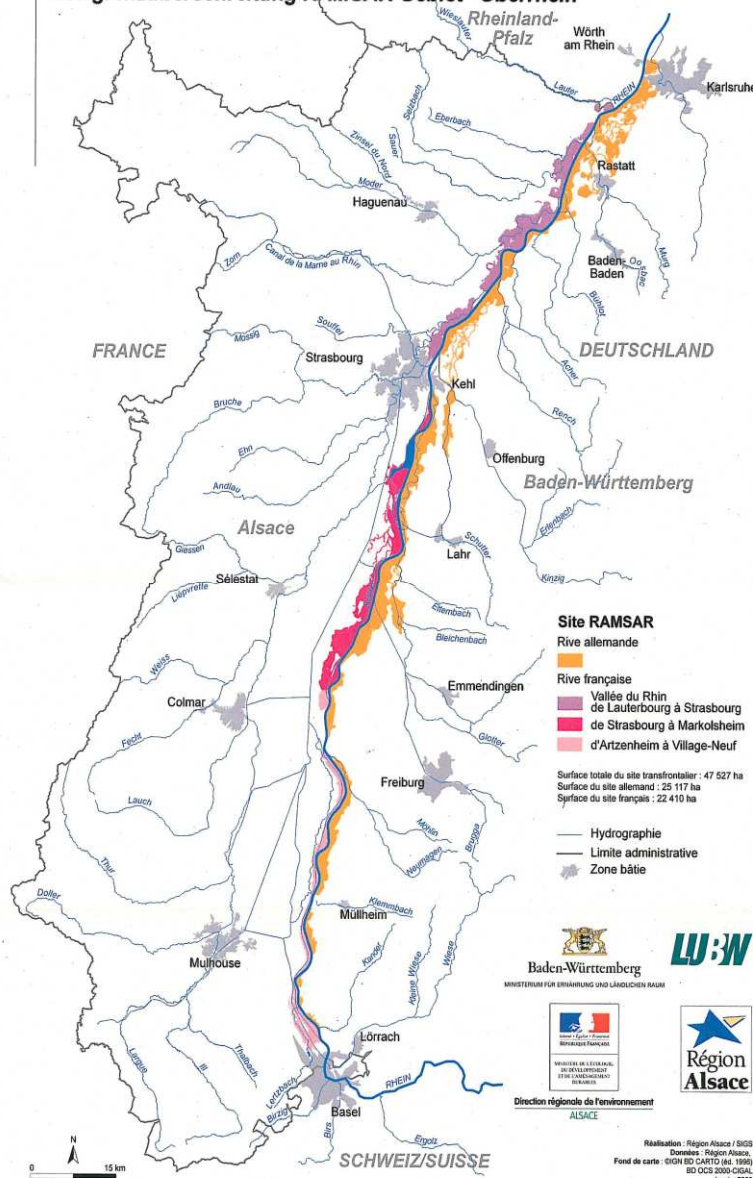
**SUBREGIONAL WORKSHOP ON TRANSBOUNDARY WATER
COOPERATION IN CENTRAL AND WESTERN EUROPE**

Budapest, Hungary, 8-10 February 2011

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Alsace Nature

**Le site RAMSAR transfrontalier du Rhin supérieur
Das grenzüberschreitend RAMSAR Gebiet "Oberrhein"**



The French-German transboundary Ramsar

Site "Upper Rhine"

A strip of forests and floodplains from Basle (CH) to Karlsruhe (D):

190 km long, max.11 km wide and 47,500 Ha

The largest European underground water

The largest N/W European waterway

10 hydropower dams

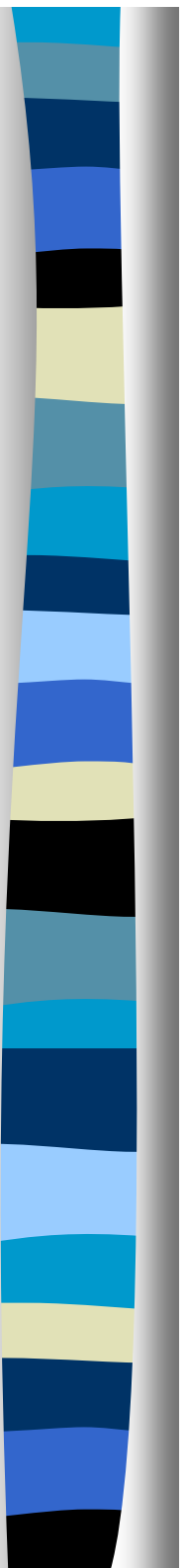
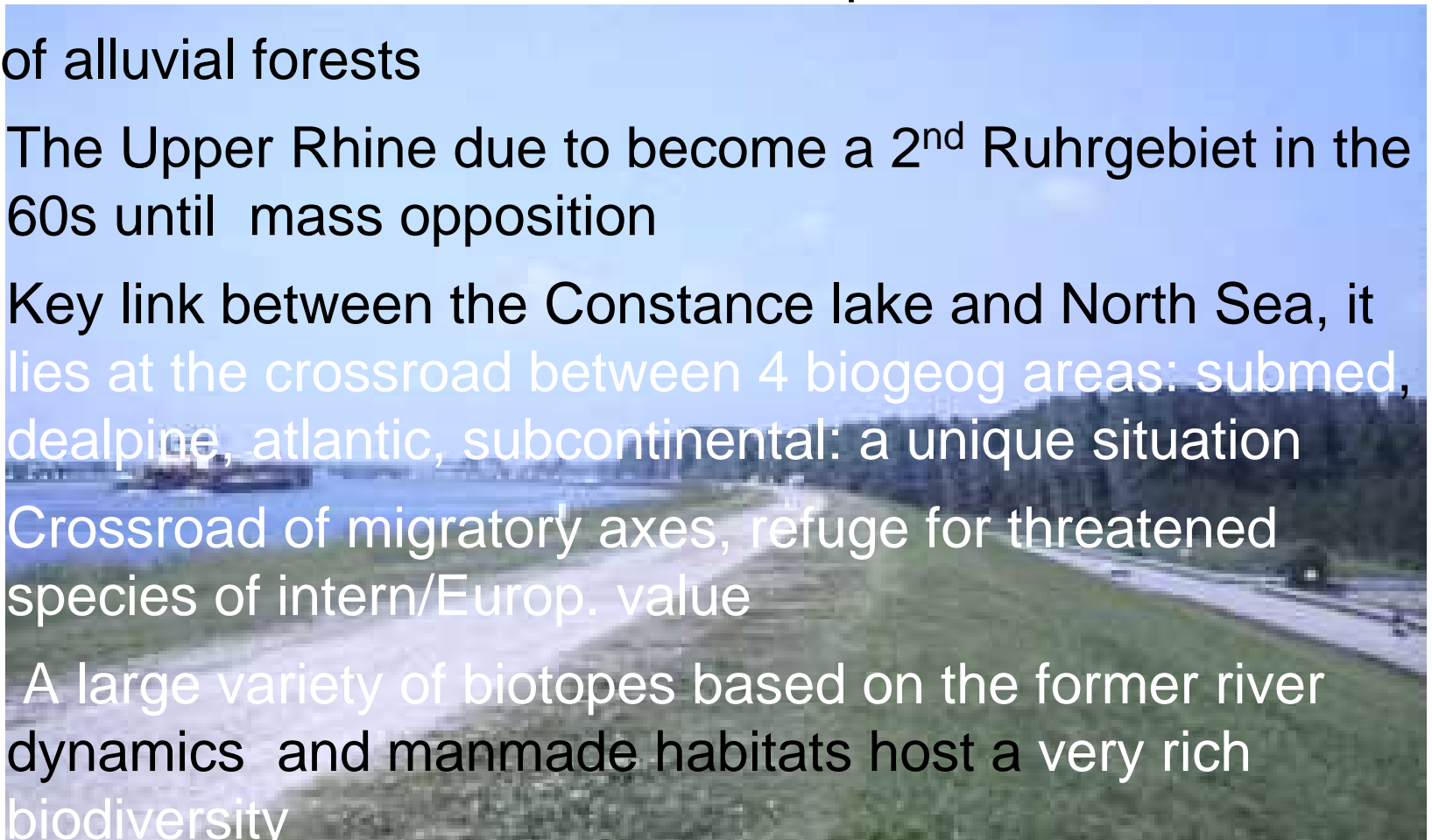
The area covers Natura 2000 sites on both sides

Designated in 2008 after 16 years efforts

A degraded ecosystem but wetland of international importance

Regulated over 3 phases since the 19th century, the Upper Rhine lost 30 km, 85% of its floodplains and 60% of alluvial forests

- The Upper Rhine due to become a 2nd Ruhrgebiet in the 60s until mass opposition
- Key link between the Constance lake and North Sea, it lies at the crossroad between 4 biogeog areas: submed, dealpine, atlantic, subcontinental: a unique situation
- Crossroad of migratory axes, refuge for threatened species of intern/Europ. value
- A large variety of biotopes based on the former river dynamics and manmade habitats host a very rich biodiversity





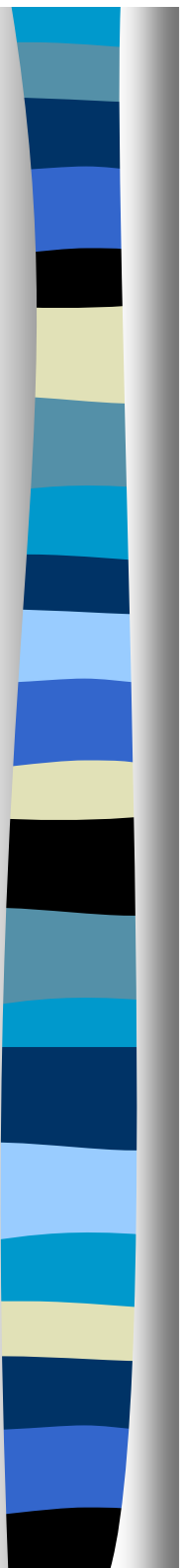
Biodiversity values

- Remnants of former floodplains with their mosaic of habitats, hydrog. network and hydrological variations provide this Ramsar site an international heritage value:
- The site hosts a large number of habitats on which animal and plant communities depend. It is also a refuge for threatened habitats and species.
- 13 floodplain habitats appear on the Red List
- About 9000 plant species of which 70 rare or threatened
- 40 native fish species, 5 diadromous migratory sp.
- 17 amphibians, 4 reptiles, 55 dragonflies, 170 wild bees, 78 wasps, 41 grasshoppers, 55 terrestrial gastropods, 60 diurnal butterflies
- 36 bird species of EU importance, up to 60,000 wintering birds (2nd site in France); 2 species over 10,000 individuals (mallard, tufted ducks)
- Aquatic habitats are key for migratory species at all biological stages
- Their conservation depend on alluvial forests, water provision and suitable management.



Cultural values of the wetland area

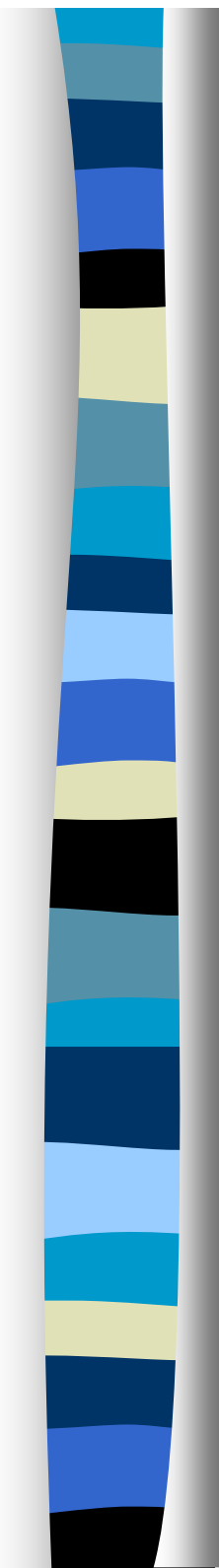
- A rich historical heritage
- Before river training : landscape, linguistic and cultural unity
- After : physical, linguistic, administrative borders: a handicap for Tb. management
- Many river linked activities disappeared but still forestry, sport fishing, gastronomy...
- Developing new interest for the site and shared dialect: a basis for comprehension and support





Supporting socio-economic services

- **Ecosystem services of great value, considered as a free asset:**
- Groundwater feeds 80% of people, 50% of industry needs, 25% of intensive agriculture
- Hydraulic exploitation: 10 dams, 8,6 b-kwh
- Largest inland waterway and harbours
- Wealth of alluvia, attractive fish abundance
- Flood retention but need to recreate floodplains
- Environmental education, local tourism
- Scientific research since the 80s on floodplains and water quality (ICPR, Universities)

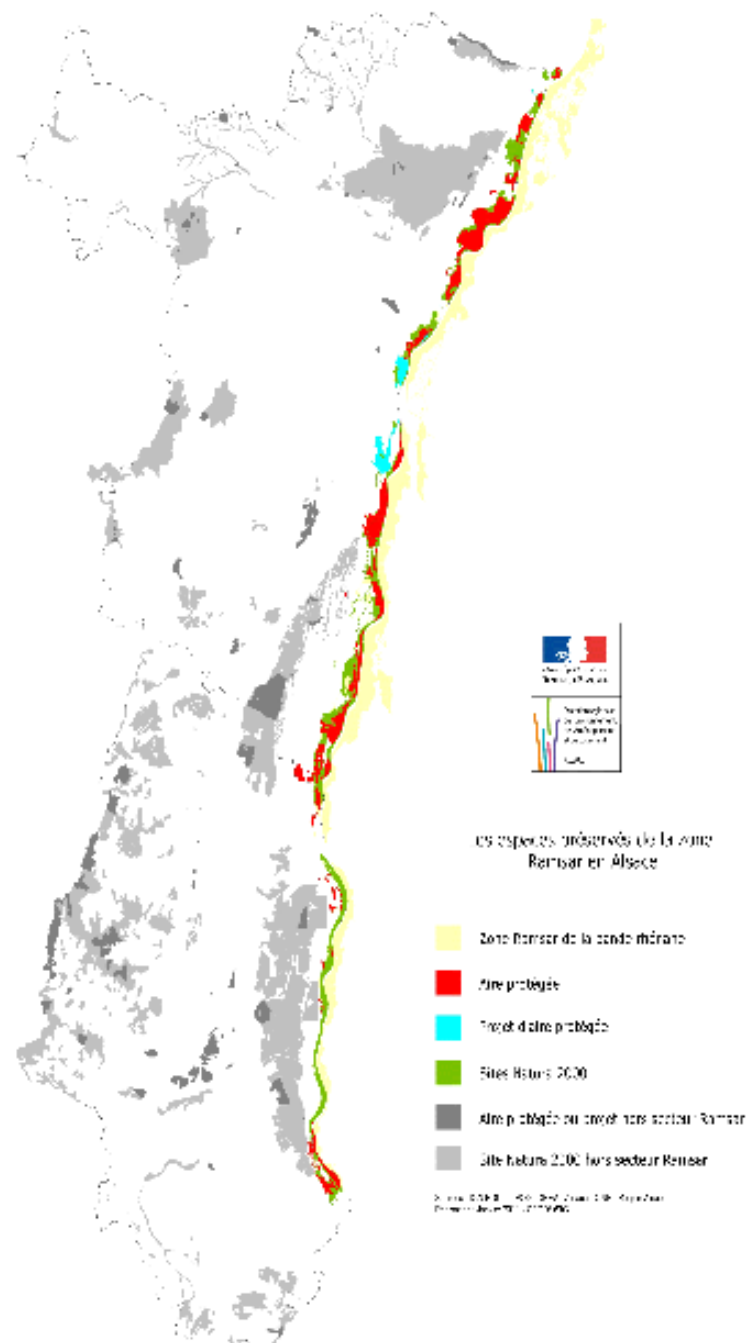


Pressure factors and transboundary impacts

Abundance of resources generated a destructive exploitation of habitats and space:

- 10 dams and a tiny reserved flow to the non regulated Rhine
- River dynamics and solid load lost and need to pour 300,000 T downstream the last dam
- Ecological continuum broken, detrimental to migratory fish
- Remaining floodplain forests are desiccating and still regress, then filter function and flood retention decreased
- Intensive agriculture and diffuse pollution, a drawback for river and groundwater water quality
- Nautical activities disturb the fauna, risk from tourism
- Developing river navigation (sustainable) and accidental risks
- Industrial facilities at the edge of national borders + aging N.P.P.
- **Competition between uses: most transboundary impacts**

Espaces préservés de la zone RAMSAR



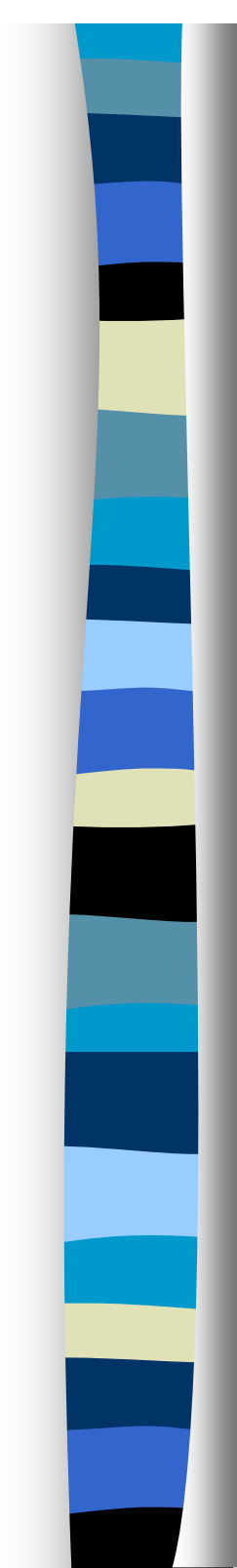
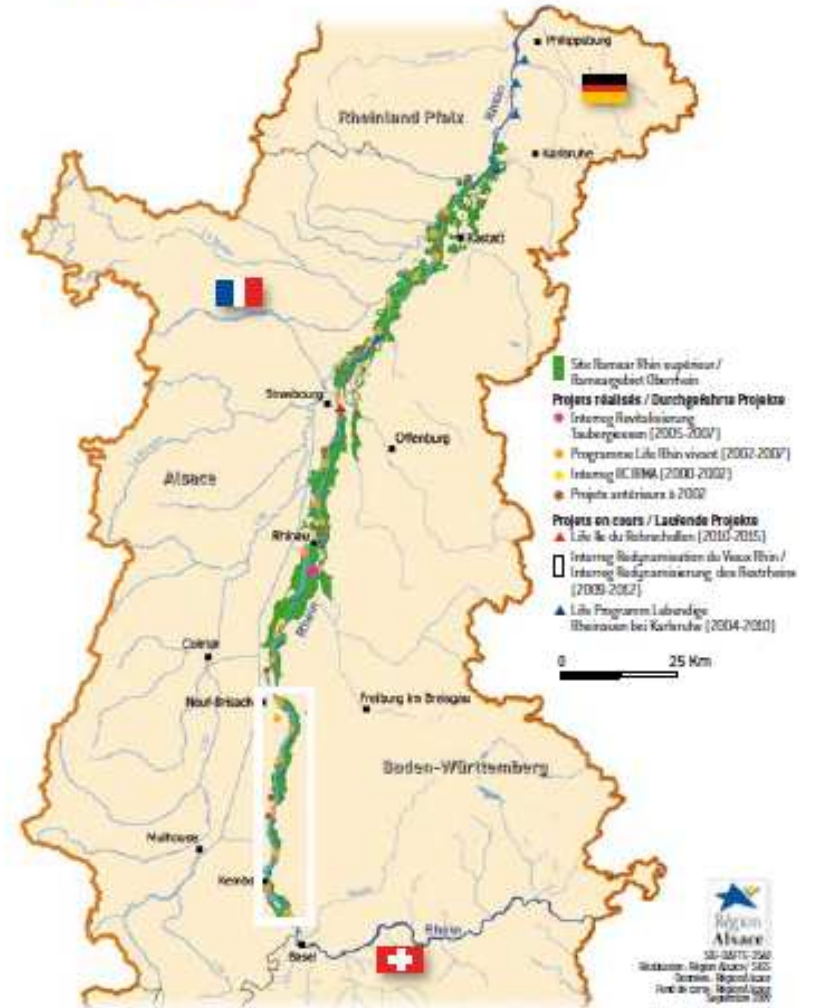


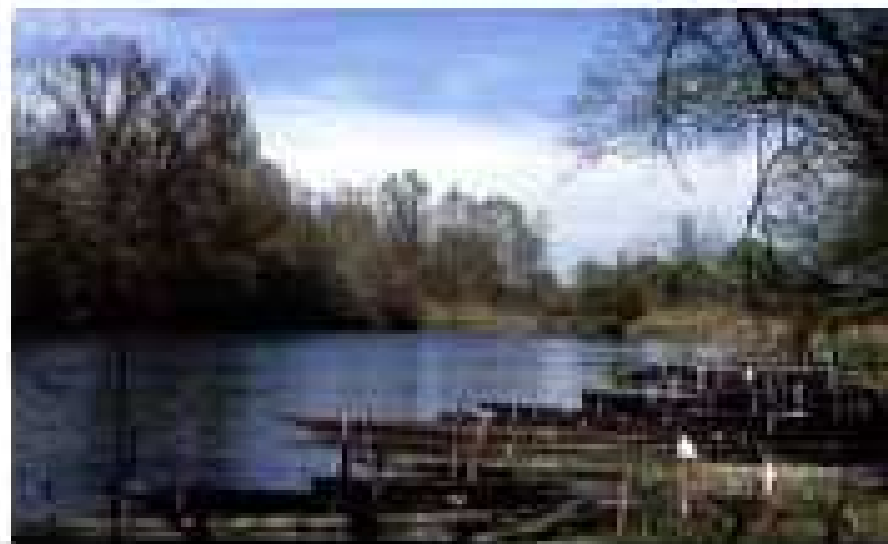
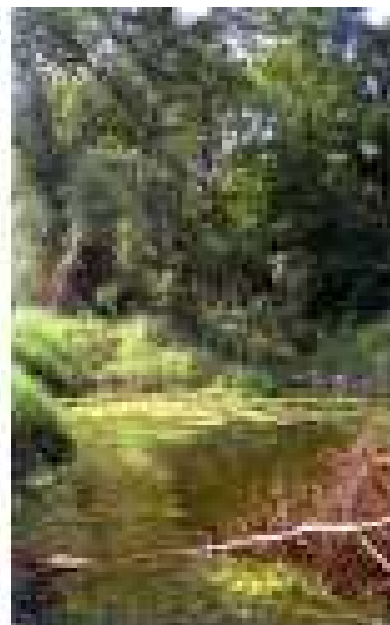
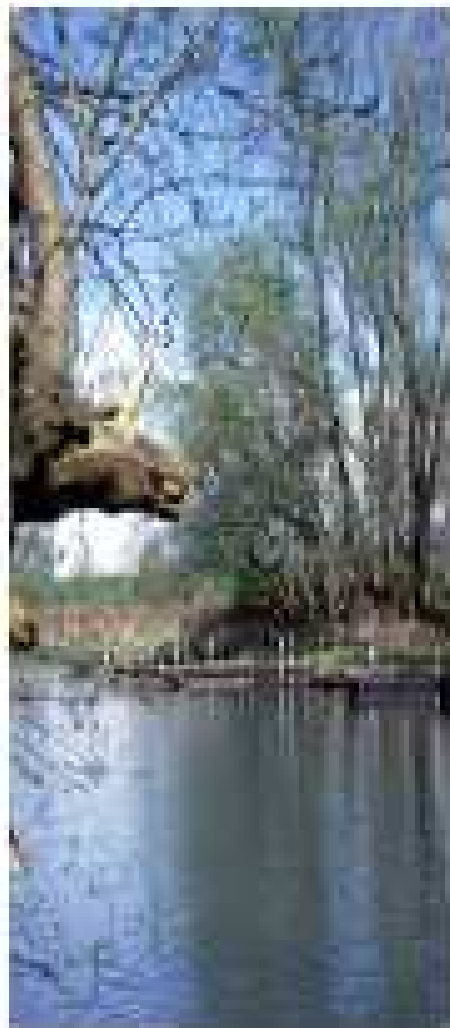
Transboundary wetland management

- The region at the front of transboundary co-operation initiatives:
- Intergovernmental Tripartite Conference; Upper Rhine Council
- Transborder Rhine Park PAMINA
- ICPR reactivated since 1986 : restoration prog, fish passes, flood retention, ecological network, WFD transb. management plan
- F- D Ramsar group for coordination & exchanges, consider differences in systems and state of Natura 2000; WWD in turn
- Regional projects are carried out in dialogue: IRP, renewal of power plants concessions to increase reserved flow
- LIFE and INTERREG programmes for restoration activities
- Living Rhine NGO for sustainable tourism, Salmon Rhine NGO for migratory fish, Bird NGOs for waterfowl,
- Environ. Education centres and NGOs for bilingual publications

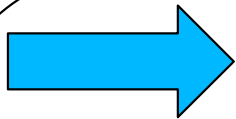


**DES PROJETS POUR PRÉSERVER ET RESTAURER LE RHIN SUPÉRIEUR
 PROJEKTE ZUM SCHUTZ UND ZUR RENATURIERUNG DES OBERRHHEINS**





TRS Upper Rhine management



■ Much was done in the last 20 years but much still remains to be done to restore the multifunctionality of this wetland and in particular to coordinate actions on both sides of the Upper Rhine in spite of the many differences. And to sensitise the stakeholders with the need to better managing this space and these resources which will play a key role in mitigating the impacts of climate change



■ The best way forward is to create a transboundary Park with one managing authority applying Ramsar guidelines.

**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
ATTENTION**

