

Freshwater Programme | Protecting freshwater ecosystems and livelihoods

SUMMARY

Synchronicity Earth's Freshwater Programme works to protect rivers, lakes and wetlands that support billions of people yet remain among the most overlooked areas of conservation funding. It addresses this gap by backing locally grounded action, strengthening knowledge and building collaboration around freshwater ecosystems, which are essential to water security, food systems, livelihoods and cultural life.

OVERVIEW

The programme works across three connected strands: catalysing conservation action for freshwater species in partnership with SHOAL (a freshwater species initiative); supporting communities to protect freshwater ecosystems; and advancing knowledge and coordinated action across the sector.

In 2025, the programme supported 21 partners across 13 countries convened a strategic roundtable at the International Union for Conservation of Nature ("IUCN") World Conservation Congress and continued a strategy review to sharpen its regional and thematic focus.



OUTCOME

This approach is helping shift freshwater conservation from a neglected issue to a more coordinated field of action.

Scientific assessment, policy engagement and practical work on fisheries and habitats are strengthening protection for freshwater biodiversity, while also supporting cleaner water, more secure livelihoods and stronger local stewardship.

IMPACT

With the support of Synchronicity Earth, the Freshwater Programme has:

- Supported 21 partners across 13 countries in 2025.
- Enabled the International Union for Conservation of Nature ("IUCN") Biodiversity Assessment and Knowledge Team to deliver the first global Red List assessment of freshwater fauna.
- Advanced sustainable freshwater fisheries as a conservation tool through partners in Brazil, Peru, Thailand and Malaysia.
- Contributed to freshwater policy outcomes at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in 2025, where Synchronicity Earth and its partners co-sponsored, supported and provided input to eight of the 13 freshwater resolutions adopted.
- Convened funders, practitioners, researchers and Indigenous Peoples and local communities to raise the profile of freshwater conservation.



Sustainable development goals:



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