

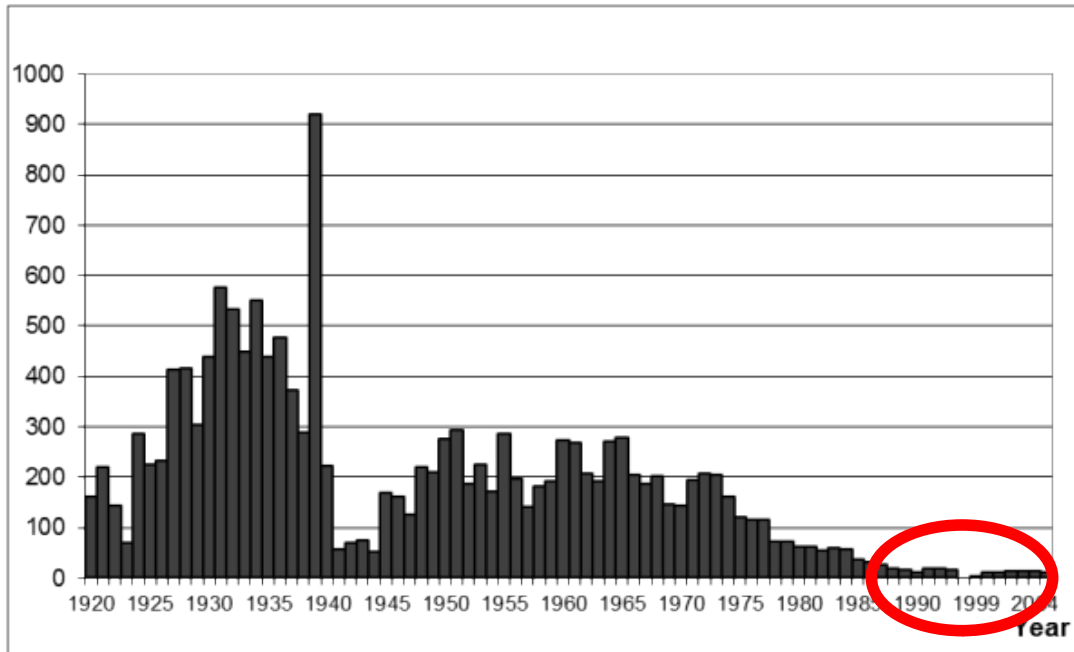
# **Action Plan for the Conservation of sturgeons in the Danube River Basin**

**- status of implementation -**

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**Danube Sturgeon Task Force (DSTF), EUSDR – PA 06  
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International Association for Danube Research (IAD)**

## Why a conservation plan was needed?



**Dramatic decline of Danube sturgeons:**

- habitat loss
- overfishery

**Beluga sturgeon catches (tons) in the Lower Danube (1920-2005)(from Paraschiv and Suciu 2006)**

# Action Plan for the conservation of Danube sturgeons

**2005 – Adoption of Sturgeon Action Plan under the Bern Convention**

**2006 – 2011 – gradual ban of sturgeon fishery until 2015, supportive restocking measures**

**2011 – FAO scoping mission for restoring fish migration at the Iron Gates**

**2011 – EU Strategy for the Danube Region included as target “revival of Danube sturgeons and other indigenous fish species by 2020”**

**2012 – Danube Sturgeon Task Force (DSTF) – established in the frame of EUSDR PA 06 (Biodiversity)**

**2013 – Elaboration of “Sturgeon 2020” Program & Strategy (based on SAP, 2005)**



Strasbourg, 5 October 2005  
[dette\_2005.doc] T-PV/Inf(2005)12

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

25<sup>th</sup> meeting

Strasbourg, 28 November-1 December 2005

**Action Plan for the Conservation  
of the Sturgeons (Acipenseridae)  
in the Danube River Basin**

*Document compiled and edited by:  
Jörg Klusch, Tim Jones, Ralf Reinartz, Deane Driscoll*

# Sturgeon 2020 - political awareness

**International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River  
Sturgeons – the flagship species of the Danube Basin (Feb. 2016)**

**European Commission – EUSDR – “Sturgeon 2020” selected as one  
of the success stories of the EUSDR (Oct. 2016)**



# Current status of sturgeon populations

## Wild anadromous sturgeons – IUCN status changed from EN (1996) to CR (2010)


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Scope: Global  
Language: English



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**Taxonomy (tax)**

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Chordata	Actinopterygii	Acipenseriformes	Acipenseridae

**Scientific Name:** *Huso huso* (Linnaeus, 1758)  
**Intra-specific Taxa Assessment:** See [Huso huso/Atlantic Sea sturgeon](#)  
**Regional Assessments:** [Europe](#)  
**Common Name(s):** English – Beluga, European Sturgeon, Giant Sturgeon, Great Sturgeon

**Taxonomy Assessment Information**  
 Geographic Range  
 Population  
 Habitat and Ecology  
 Use and Trade  
 Threats  
 Conservation Actions

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[Home](#) > [Acipenser gueldenstaedtii](#) (Russian Sturgeon)

Scope: Global  
Language: English

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**Taxonomy (tax)**

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Chordata	Actinopterygii	Acipenseriformes	Acipenseridae

**Scientific Name:** *Acipenser gueldenstaedtii* Brandt & Ratzeburg, 1833  
**Regional Assessments:** [Europe](#)

**Taxonomy Assessment Information**  
 Geographic Range  
 Population  
 Habitat and Ecology  
 Use and Trade  
 Threats  
 Conservation Actions

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[Home](#) > [Acipenser stellatus](#) (Star Sturgeon, Stellate Sturgeon)

Scope: Global  
Language: English



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**Taxonomy (tax)**

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Chordata	Actinopterygii	Acipenseriformes	Acipenseridae

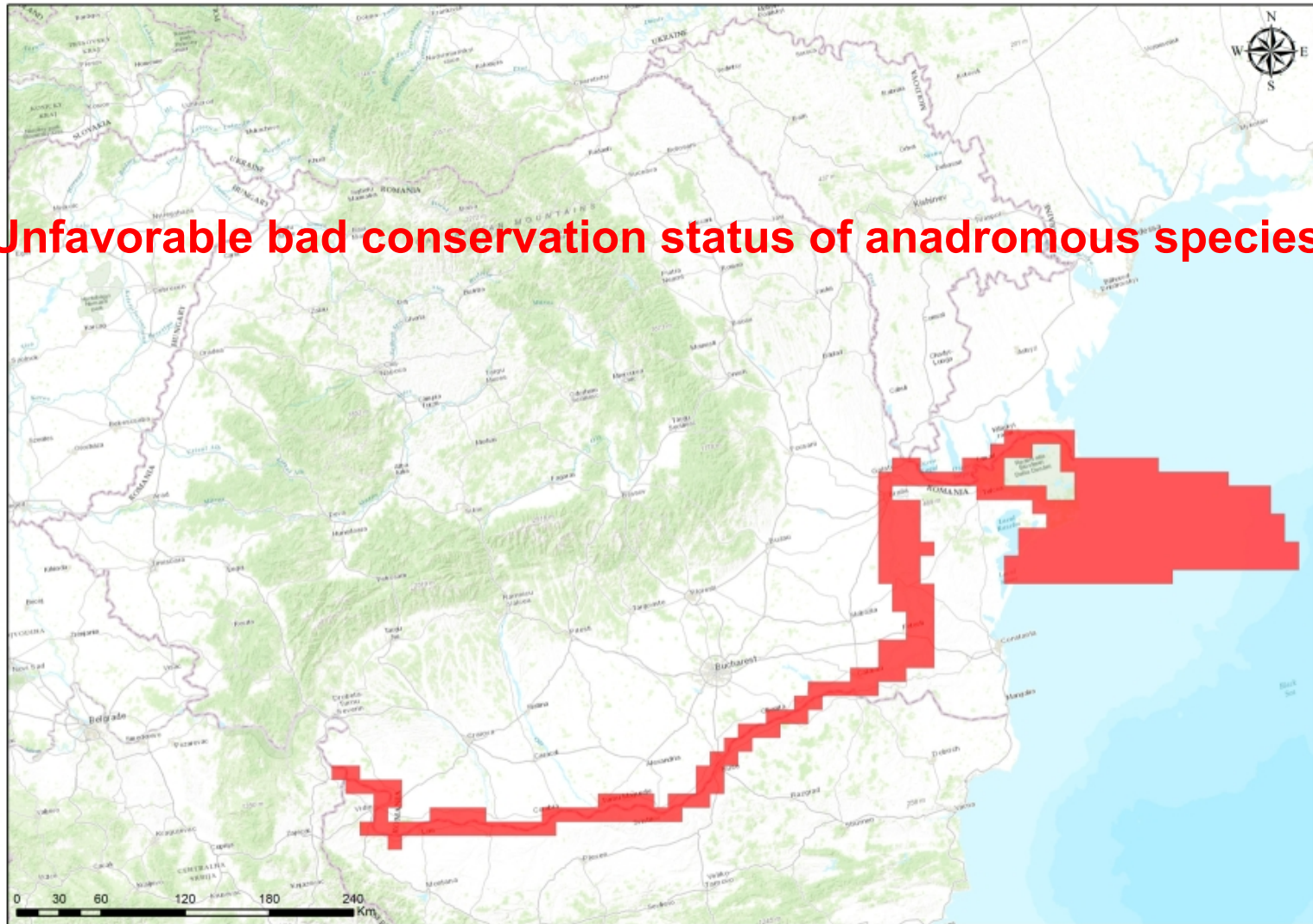
**Scientific Name:** *Acipenser stellatus* Pallas, 1771  
**Regional Assessments:** [Europe](#)  
**Common Name(s):** English – Stellite Sturgeon, Star Sturgeon  
 French – Esturgeon Étoile  
 Spanish – Esturión Estrelado

**Taxonomy Assessment Information**  
 Geographic Range  
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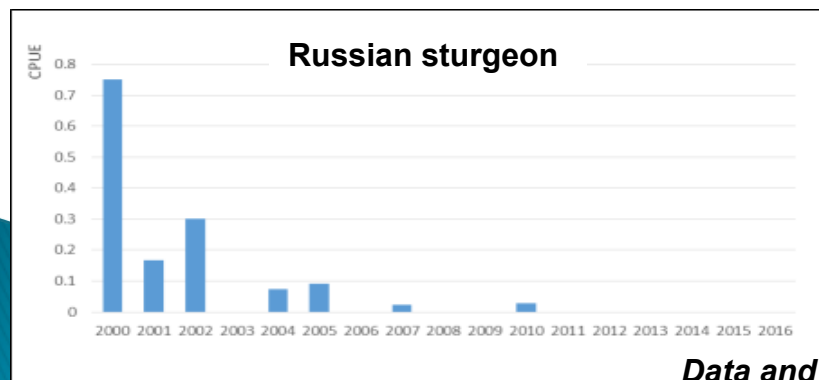
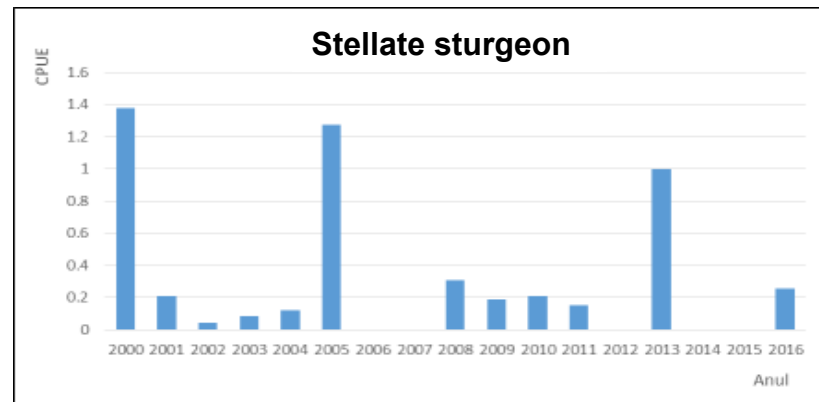
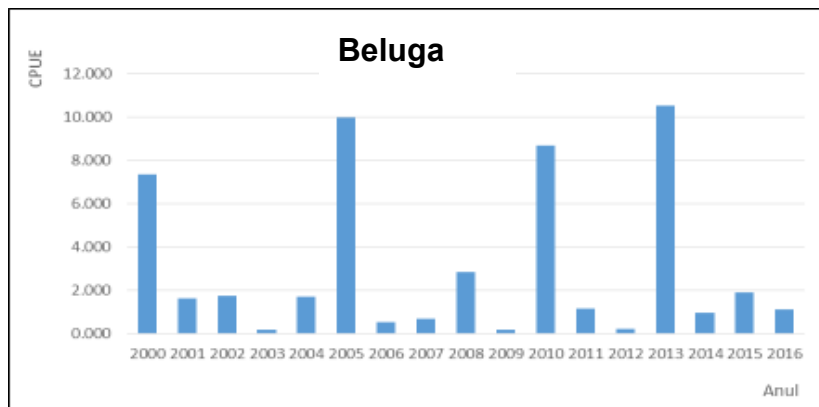
# Current status of sturgeon populations

**Unfavorable bad conservation status of anadromous species**



**Distribution map of 5040 *Acipenser gueldenstaedtii* in Romania. The red color reveals unfavorable bad conservation status (compiled after: Mihăilescu et al., 2015; <http://discomap.eea.europa.eu/map/>)**

# Low success of natural reproduction



**Beluga and stellate sturgeon – highly fragmented populations**

**Russian sturgeon – on the brink of extinction**

**Ship sturgeon – considered extinct in the LD**

**Remnant wild adults should be protected to avoid extinction (Allee effect)**



# SAP implementation status

SAP Objective	Implementation status
1. Comprehensive policy on sturgeon fisheries and their management	Launched, not finalized
2. Research for scientifically based management of sturgeon stocks	Scarce investigations, no concerted transnational research
3. Legislation on sturgeon fisheries and trade effectively implemented	Scarce controls, transnational coordination lacking
4. Stop illegal harvesting of sturgeons	Not implemented
5. Improve the socio-economic conditions for local-community stakeholders involved in sturgeon fisheries.	Not implemented
6. Eliminate illegal international, national and regional trade in sturgeon products	Not implemented
7. Secure genetic material of all species and populations and supportive stocking	Supportive stocking launched/ abandoned



# SAP implementation status

SAP Objective	Implementation status
8. Catch moratorium and restoration of <i>A. nudiventris</i> and <i>A. gueldenstaedti</i>	Catch moratorium established, restoration not implemented
9. Re-open sturgeon migration routes by enabling upstream and downstream sturgeon passage at dams and other current barriers to sturgeon movements	Launched (initial steps for FS to re-establish migration at IG), not implemented
10. Implement appropriate protection, management and restoration measures for key sturgeon habitats and migrations	Not implemented
11. Ensure that water quality and quantity throughout the Danube River Basin meet the conditions required by sturgeon populations at all life-cycle stages.	Under implementation (ICPDR)
12. Avoid further degradation of riverine ecosystems within the Danube River Basin and ensure that the requirements of sturgeon conservation are fully integrated into implementation of the EU WFD	<p>Degradation of river ecosystems ongoing</p> <p>Integration of sturgeon needs in RBM - under implementation (ICPDR)</p>

## **Urgent measures to prevent extinction of Danube wild sturgeons**

- **Total restriction of wild sturgeon harvesting (concerted efforts to spare the remaining adults – for very rare exceptions, advice from WSCS and DSTF)**
- **Intergovernmental agreement on sturgeon conservation in the Danube River Basin and the NW Black Sea**
- **Enhanced control of fishery ban and combatting poaching and illegal caviar traffic**
- **Inclusion of all Danube sturgeon species under Ap. II of Bern Convention**
- **Restoration and protection of key sturgeon habitats (migration corridors, spawning, nursery, feeding grounds)**
- **Restore migration at the Iron Gates dams**
- **Establish ex-situ conservation facilities and launch concerted restocking programs**

## Take home message

### Danube River Basin & NW Black Sea

- **Scientific data indicate alarming trends for sturgeon populations**
- **Concerted measures of Danube countries urgently needed to prevent their extinction**
- **Enhanced implementation of SAP required**

### European level

**Other European sturgeon species face similar problems – an Action Plan for the conservation of all species needed**

**Thank you for your attention**

**Contact:**  
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