



# Evidence for sturgeon trafficking

as case example &  
links to the  
EU Action Plan



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Beate Striebel-Greiter,  
WWF Sturgeon Initiative

# Sturgeon in Europe face extinction

- Least Concern
- Vulnerable
- Near Threatened
- Endangered
- Critically Endangered
- Extinct



● **Beluga sturgeon**  
(*Huso huso*)



● **Sterlet sturgeon**  
(*Acipenser ruthenus*)



● **Atlantic sturgeon**  
(*Acipenser o. oxyrinchus*)



● **European Atlantic sturgeon**  
(*Acipenser sturio*)



● **Danube or Russian sturgeon**  
(*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*)



● **Stellate sturgeon**  
(*Acipenser stellatus*)



● **Ship sturgeon**  
(*Acipenser nudiiventris*)



● **Adriatic sturgeon**  
(*Acipenser naccarii*)



Overfished in the past,  
poaching today



# Market survey and compilation of authority seizures

in Serbia,  
Bulgaria,  
Romania  
and  
Ukraine



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# Authority data on sturgeon trafficking (illegal fishing & gear)

214 cases (UA; BG; RO) in approx 4 years



Minimum 594 pieces of illegal sturgeon hook lines alone in BG



Minimum 602 sturgeon specimen affected/lost



Numbers increasing over years maybe linked to more efforts of authorities



# Market Survey Results



- **Forensic method (isotope & DNA) to identify wild versus aquaculture source**
- **Evidence on the regional scale for poaching and illegal trade - - impact on shared populations**

145 sturgeon meat & caviar samples collected in an undercover approach from markets, shops, restaurants, street vendors, online trade, etc.

- 30% of all samples were sold illegally
- 27 of 145 samples from wild-caught sturgeon
- 17 caviar samples violating with CITES regulations
- Fraud (wrong declarations)



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# Tackling the root causes Recommendations – EUWAP



Obj 1.2 “Ensure that rural communities in source countries are engaged in and benefit from wildlife conservation”

→ *Rural fishing communities of sturgeon range countries currently see no benefit but have been confronted with fishing bans*

Objective 1.3 “Increase business sector engagement in efforts to combat wildlife trafficking and encourage sustainable sourcing of wildlife products”

→ *Aquaculture must comply with CITES regulations and increase efforts to exclude laundering of wild products through their supply chain*

# Implementation of existing EU rules Recommendations –EUWAP



Priority 2 – Making implementation and enforcement of existing rules and the fight against *(organised)* wildlife crime more effective

Action 10 – „improve detection rate“

→ *use sturgeon trafficking report as baseline and for risk based analysis*

→ *Controls along the whole trade chain – fishing to aquaculture to vendors (incl online)*

Action 12. “Assessing enforcement priorities ...!”

→ *Include highly threatened sturgeon as target species!*

# Inter-agency and cross-country cooperation

*Links to several EUWAP actions (13,15,18,24,28,30...)*

*Lack of inter-agency cooperation identified as main shortcoming*

*(police/fishing authorities/ food & sanitary inspection/ customs/ CITES authorities; judiciary)*

*→ Report as encouragement for structured data collection & exchange*

*Cross border cooperation for cross border migratory sturgeon populations is key.*

*→ Share intelligence & conduct common controls not only on trade related aspects but also including enforcement against illegal fishing/poaching.*





Wildlife crime also threatens the survival of species within EU borders

To assess and tackle the impact of wildlife crime on migratory populations better cooperation of range countries (EU and non-EU) are needed



stopwildlifecrime.eu



# Sturgeon NEED US

We need to act now to  
save the most  
threatened species  
group  
on the planet

[Read more :](#)  
[Sturgeon Trafficking Report](#)

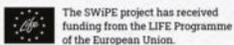
<https://wwfcee.org/what-we-do/sturgeons>

<https://stopwildlifecrime.eu/>

[bstriebel@wwfcee.org](mailto:bstriebel@wwfcee.org)

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**LET'S TEAM UP AGAINST  
THE WORLD'S 4TH LARGEST  
INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.**



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