



Evidence for sturgeon trafficking

as case example &
links to the
EU Action Plan



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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

The background of the slide features a stylized illustration. On the left, a shark is depicted with a large, bloody wound on its side. On the right, a bowl is filled with black caviar, with several caviar pearls scattered around it. The background is composed of abstract shapes in shades of green, beige, and white.

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)



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 ...I”

- > *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](#)

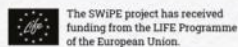
<https://wwfcee.org/what-we-do/sturgeons>

<https://stopwildlifecrime.eu/>

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CRIMES
ARE WILD
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LIFE.**

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



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