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BELUGA STURGEON / HUSO HUSO

The giant sturgeon

STATUS CRITICALLY ENDANGERED STATUS STATUS

STURGEONS PROTECT DANUBE'S TREASURE

Source of the highly sought after and valuable Beluga caviar

67% decline

in the Middle Danube in 12 years

The only true predator among the six Danube sturgeon species

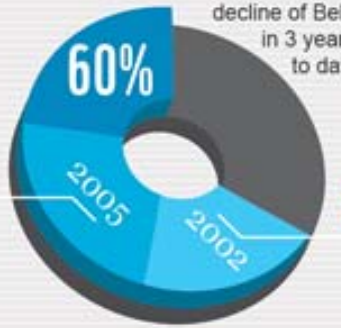
The Beluga migrates further upstream to spawn than any other sturgeon. However, this migration has been interrupted – as for all other sturgeons – by the Iron Gates dams.

Though mainly eating fish, the larger individuals can feed even on aquatic birds. The Belugas are the only true predators among Danube sturgeons.

11th century chronicles mention Huso huso as providing important rations for troops marching along the Upper Danube in Austria.

The Beluga is extremely long lived. Individuals can reach more than 100 years in age and can still be caught in areas where their spawning sites have been cut off.

8.4 TONNES
caught in Romania



decline of Beluga catch in 3 years according to data from Romania

21.3 TONNES
caught in Romania

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EUROPEAN STURGEON / ACIPENSER STURIO

The missing sturgeon

STATUS CRITICALLY ENDANGERED STATUS

STURGEONS PROTECT DANUBE'S TREASURE

The rarest sturgeon in the world

One single wild population exists, in the Garonne and Dordogne rivers in France

Most probably extinct in the Danube

In the Black Sea basin the European Sturgeon was always the rarest sturgeon species and its presence was only documented until the beginning of the 20th century.

European Sturgeons enter rivers from January to October, with peak migration usually occurring in periods of high water between April and May.

During their stay at sea, European Sturgeons stick to estuaries and their muddy bottoms.

We know that this species spawned in the Lower Danube because hybrids with other Danube sturgeon species were described in the 1930s.

In former times documented in the Atlantic, English Channel, Mediterranean and Black Sea amongst others

Once ascended all major river systems in these regions to spawn

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RUSSIAN STURGEON / ACIPENSER GUELDENSTAEDTI

The fast swimmer

STATUS CRITICALLY ENDANGERED STATUS STATUS

STURGEONS PROTECT DANUBE'S TREASURE

Very rare in the Black Sea basin

Some spawning still exists in the Lower Danube river

Likes to migrate a considerable distance upstream before spawning

Most common sturgeon species in Bulgarian caviar farms

209,000 INDIVIDUALS WERE FEEDING IN THE NORTH-WESTERN PART OF THE BLACK SEA IN THE PERIOD 1966-1974. THE CURRENT STOCK SIZE IS UNKNOWN BUT REGARDED AS VERY LOW.

Source of the Osietra caviar

The Russian Sturgeon was formerly the most common sturgeon species in the Danube river. It regularly migrated upstream as far as Bratislava. Some individuals have even been spotted in Vienna (river km 1,925) and Regensburg (river km 2,381).

Individuals migrating in spring enter freshwater just before spawning and spawn in lower reaches of the river (320-650 km upstream). Individuals migrating in autumn spawn the following spring further upstream (900-1200 km).

The annual catch in ex-Yugoslavia dropped from 14,636 kg in 1983 to 1,636 kg in 1985 (a decline of almost 90%) due to the construction of Iron Gate II dam in 1984, which cut off spawning grounds.

99% is the decline of Russian Sturgeon catch in 4 years according to data from Romania

2002	2003	2004	2005
3,726 kg	1,499 kg	440 kg	37 kg

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SHIP STURGEON / ACIPENSER NUDIVENTRIS

The phantom sturgeon

STATUS CRITICALLY ENDANGERED STATUS STATUS

STURGEONS PROTECT DANUBE'S TREASURE

Believed to be on the verge of global extinction

Possibly extinct in the Danube

THE SPECIES WAS NEVER ABUNDANT IN THE DANUBE RIVER BASIN.
IN 2009, THE LAST SHIP STURGEON WAS CAUGHT IN HUNGARY, IN THE MIDDLE DANUBE.
THERE HAVE BEEN NO DOCUMENTED CATCHES IN ROMANIA FOR AT LEAST 30-40 YEARS.

The last scientifically recorded catch of Ship Sturgeon in Romania was in the 1950s. Ship Sturgeons are listed as extinct in Romania and Bulgaria.

The Ship Sturgeon likes to live at sea, close to shores and estuaries. In freshwater it favours deep stretches of large rivers.

The Ship Sturgeon spends at least part of its life in salt water, returning to rivers to breed, but some non-migratory freshwater populations also exist.

Considered the most fertile among the sturgeon species

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STELLATE STURGEON / ACIPENSER STELLATUS

The star-spangled sturgeon

STATUS CRITICALLY ENDANGERED STATUS STATUS

STURGEONS PROTECT DANUBE'S TREASURE

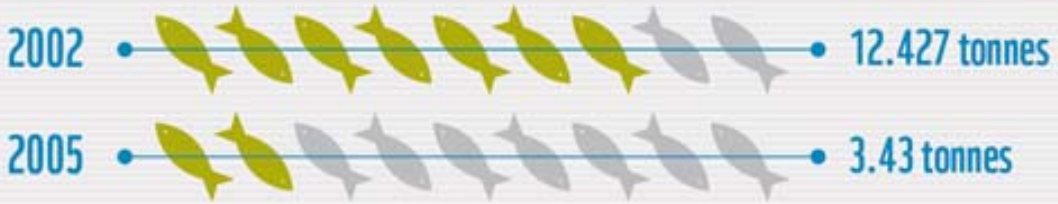
Migrates upstream at higher temperatures and therefore later than other sturgeons

87% decline in global commercial catch reflects the decline in species population

55,000 sturgeons found dead in the Sea of Azov in 1990 as the result of pollution

Source of the Sevruga caviar

72.5% is the decline of Stellate Sturgeon catch over a 4-year period according to data from Romania



Stellate Sturgeons migrate in spring and autumn. Males remain at spawning sites for up to six weeks, females for only 10-12 days.

Stellate Sturgeons stop eating once they start their migration. After spawning, they return to the sea quickly where they begin feeding again.

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STERLET / ACIPENSER RUTHENUS

The freshwater sturgeon

STATUS VULNERABLE STATUS STATUS

STURGEONS PROTECT DANUBE'S TREASURE

30% - 50%

is the estimated wild native population decline over the past 20-30 years

Populations in the Ural, Volga and Danube have stabilised in recent years

Lives entirely in freshwater and unlike other sturgeons does not migrate from the Black Sea

Overfishing mostly for their meat is major threat to this species

Nowadays the most widely distributed sturgeon species in the Danube River basin

The average reproductive age of this species is comparably low, about 8 years. In the Danube it is even lower – about 7 years.

This species is largely sedentary, undertaking only short spawning migrations. Tagging has revealed a maximum migration distance in the Danube of just over 300 km.

The only available catch data for the Danube is for 1958-1981, where catches ranged from 117 tonnes in 1963 to 36 tonnes in 1979, with an average catch of 63.5 tonnes per year.

Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania have all reported re-stocking programmes for their stretches of the Danube.

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ZOBODAT - www.zobodat.at

Zoologisch-Botanische Datenbank/Zoological-Botanical Database

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