

Can we help sturgeons to survive in the Danube River Basin? – Yes, we can!

Once a majestic population in the Danube River Basin and the adjacent Black Sea, the sturgeons declined dramatically in the last century until the edge of extinction....Once, fishermen used to report hundreds of tonnes of sturgeons caught annually at the mouths of the Danube River...today we speak about individuals...

Can we help sturgeons to survive under the increasing human pressures? The answer lies in our willingness to understand the need of other living communities to share the natural resources with us...as they all represent the very basis of our existence...

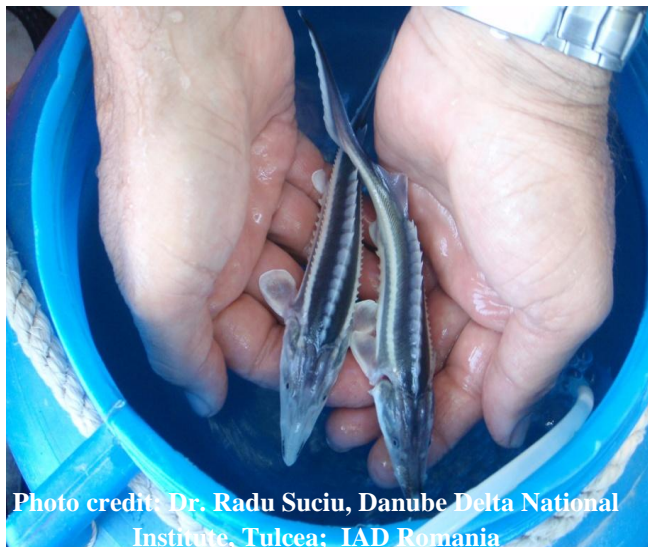


Photo credit: Dr. Radu Suci, Danube Delta National Institute, Tulcea; IAD Romania

From the former six Danube species, one is already extinct, while the others are critically endangered, with the stocks under continuous decline. Hence, urgent measures are needed to prevent the disappearance of these flagship species and protect their habitats. The Danube Sturgeon Task Force (DSTF), established in January 2012 with governmental and NGO support, aims to be an active interface to effectively crosslink all the synergies in the catchment and beyond to foster sturgeon conservation. The support of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, Priority Area 6 (Biodiversity) and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) are positive signs that sturgeons get higher priority on the political agenda.

The Sturgeon Action Plan, prepared in line with the “RAMSAR declaration on Global Sturgeon Conservation”, was adopted in 2005 under the Bern Convention and represented the basis to launch the program “**Sturgeon 2020**” for sturgeon revival in the Danube River Basin and the Black Sea. An integrative strategy at catchment level including habitat/species conservation measures will help mitigating or even preventing existing pressures such as over-exploitation, pollution, navigation, channelization, embankments, climate change, etc.), but its implementation depends on the basin wide governmental commitment.

The Danube Sturgeon Task Force launches an appeal to the decision makers and the wider public to support the implementation of the program **Sturgeon 2020** and prevent the extinction of these species...their fate is in our hands...

Current coordinator of Danube Sturgeon Task Force and point for inquiry:

Dr. Cristina Sandu

International Association for Danube Research (IAD)

Institute of Biology Bucharest, Romanian Academy

Splaiul Independentei no.296, sect.6, 060031, Bucharest

Tel: +4021.223.90.72, e-mail: sanducristi@yahoo.com