

IUCN SSC Sturgeon Specialist Group



2020 Report



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Co-Chairs

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Location/Affiliation

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Number of members

49



Mission statement

The mission of the IUCN Sturgeon Specialist Group (SSG) is to provide accurate information on the status of sturgeons and paddlefishes and promote their conservation and recovery.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

By 2020, we envision an SSG with enhanced capacity to contribute to the conservation of sturgeons and paddlefishes on global, regional and local scales. The SSG will have greater impact on decision making at global meetings (CITES, Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)) and will provide expertise in the areas of conservation of wild stocks and impact of aquaculture. With an up-to-date Red List for all species, accurate information on the status of wild species and necessary conservation actions will be available. For the most threatened species, action plans will be under development to guide restoration and recovery efforts.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Red List: (1) update Red List assessments for European and Asian species; (2) publish updated Red List assessments for North American species.

Plan

Planning: ensure action plans are in development for at least four of the most imperilled species.

Policy: (1) increased presence at CMS; (2) prepare position papers/information documents for CITES meetings where sturgeon is discussed, particularly in areas of aquaculture, labelling and stock identification.

Network

Membership: enhance regional representation (e.g. Hungary, Bulgaria, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan).

Proposal development and funding: ensure at least two grants are submitted by SSG members as a result of SSG activities.

Scientific meetings: hold annual meetings for regional representatives.

Synergy: create strong working groups on topics of importance (e.g. identification of management units, stock assessments, trade control and link to aquaculture).

Communicate

Communication: (1) revise mission statement, website and portal membership list; (2) ensure better communication internally and with outside groups (e.g. World Sturgeon Conservation Society, North American Sturgeon and Paddlefish Society); (3) publish at least two position papers.

Activities and results 2020

Assess

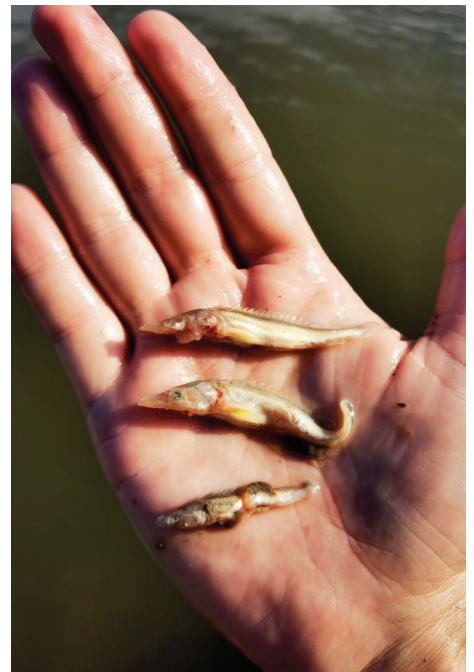
Red List

i. Eighteen species assessments plus several subpopulation assessments for European and Asian species will be submitted to the IUCN Red List Unit in 2021. (KSR #2)

ii. Nine species assessments plus several subpopulation assessments for North American species will be submitted to the IUCN Red List Unit in 2021. (KSR #2)



Young of the year wild Beluga (*Huso huso*) caught in Danube
Photos: Tudor Ionescu



Stomach content of a pikeperch captured in June 2021 that had three sturgeons in its stomach. The two individuals above are almost certainly Sterlet (*Acipenser ruthenus*), although they could be hybrids; and the one below may be a Russian Sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*)
Photo: Tudor Ionescu

Plan

Policy

- i. Several members joined five online meetings of CMS. (KSR #26)
- ii. Two IUCN position documents and guidelines were published: identification of species and hybrids, source and geographical origin of sturgeon and paddlefish (*Acipenseriformes* spp.) specimens and products in trade. (KSR #26)

Network

Membership

- i. New members joined SSG from Georgia and Bulgaria.

Proposal development and funding

- i. We applied for two IUCN grants and support from the Chinese Academy of Sciences for an assessment meeting.

Synergy

- i. The World Sturgeon Conservation Congress has been postponed to 2022 or 2023 due to COVID-19.

Communicate

Communication

- i. We worked in close cooperation with WWF and the World Sturgeon Conservation Society (WSCS). (KSR #28)
- ii. We produced a letter to the EU Commission, a joint statement with WWF and WSCS on the conservation of European sturgeons. (KSR #28)

Acknowledgements

The IUCN Sturgeon Specialist Group wants to thank the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Wuhan Fisheries Research Institute for financial support for the Red List Assessment Meeting in Shanghai 2019. We also thank WWF Austria for financial support for support for meeting organisation. Special thanks go to our long-term partner, WSCS.

Summary of activities 2020

Species Conservation Cycle ratio: 4/5

Assess	2	
Plan	2	
Network	3	
Communicate	2	

Main KSRs addressed: 2, 26, 28

KSR: Key Species Result