

Recommendations adopted by the Standing Committee at its 45th meeting,
regarding Caspian Sea stocks of *Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, *A. nudiiventris*,
A. stellatus and *Huso huso*

1. Taking account of the commitments made at a meeting in Geneva on 12-13 June 2001 by four States that conduct commercial fishing of sturgeon in the Caspian Sea, the Standing Committee recommends a suspension of all imports of specimens of these species from the Caspian Sea stocks of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan if the Secretariat has not been able to verify that they have done the following:

Actions to be implemented before 20 July 2001

- a) Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation have:
- i) informed the Secretariat of all stocks of specimens intended for export that are currently held from sturgeons harvested in the spring of 2001 only, indicating the amounts of all types of specimens for each species separately;
 - ii) agreed to restrict further exports in 2001 to the amounts of stocks referred to in subparagraph i), provided that such amounts do not exceed the quotas published in Notification to the Parties No. 2001/005 and amendments to these quotas that the Secretariat has accepted based on the quotas established by the Commission on Aquatic Bioresources of the Caspian Sea; and
 - iii) agreed to suspend all commercial harvesting for the remainder of 2001 as a demonstration of their commitment to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of sturgeons;
- b) Turkmenistan has confirmed in writing to the Secretariat that it will undertake the actions specified in paragraphs c)-e); and
- c) Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan have agreed to facilitate the verification by the Secretariat of undertakings specified in paragraphs a)-e) including the issuance of multi-entry visas to facilitate the work of the verification teams.

Actions to be implemented before 31 December 2001

- d) Without prejudice to the legal status of the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation (and Turkmenistan where appropriate) have:
- i) agreed an appropriate mechanism for the establishment and implementation of a common policy for the conservation and utilization of sturgeon resources involving all countries exploiting sturgeons in the Caspian Sea,* which shall be the basis of coordinated management of shared sturgeon resources (including the establishment of catch and export quotas for 2002);

* Models to be considered should include any earlier agreement on these issues.

- ii) conducted a comprehensive survey of sturgeon stocks in the Caspian Sea involving representatives of all States that conduct commercial fishing of sturgeon in the Caspian Sea; and
- iii) requested Interpol to conduct an analysis of illegal trade in sturgeons, and requested the CITES Secretariat, in collaboration with Interpol and WCO, to conduct a study of enforcement needs for implementing CITES and measures in national legislation aimed at combating illegal harvesting and trade; and
- iv) noted that the failure to implement subparagraphs d) i)-iii) before the end of 2001 will result in the Secretariat not accepting any catch or export quotas for sturgeons from these countries for 2002; and

Actions to be implemented before 20 June 2002

- e) Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation (and Turkmenistan where appropriate) have:
 - i) established a long-term survey programme as the basis for future management of sturgeon stocks in the Caspian Sea, incorporating up-to-date technology and techniques, and taking account of advice from FAO and other bodies as appropriate;
 - ii) requested FAO to provide advice concerning the operations of regional fisheries management organizations, the management of shared fish resources and dealing with unregulated fisheries;
 - iii) adopted a collaborative basin-level management system for sturgeon fisheries in the Caspian Sea as the basis for sustainable commercial exports of sturgeons, taking into account the advice referred to in subparagraph e) ii);
 - iv) significantly increased efforts to combat illegal harvesting and illegal trade, and to regulate domestic trade;
 - v) made samples of sturgeon specimens available for DNA testing and established priorities for further research on the identification of sturgeon stocks and specimens in trade;
 - vi) submitted a funding proposal to the Global Environmental Fund, or other donors as appropriate, for the rehabilitation of sturgeon stocks, hatcheries and restocking programmes, and for support for stock assessments, marking systems, identification of specimens in trade, public awareness and enforcement;
 - vii) implemented the caviar labelling system established in Resolution Conf. 11.13 for all exports; and
 - viii) fully implemented all other recommendations of the Animals Committee made in accordance with Resolution Conf. 8.9 (Rev.).

2. A suspension of imports or a reduction of a quota for commercial fisheries will not include the following:
 - a) fertilized live eggs and live fish; and
 - b) specimens acquired through research or scientific fisheries for stock assessment and monitoring, strictly up to the catch quota limits established by the Commission on Aquatic Bioresources of the Caspian Sea for 2001 for Azerbaijan (2,000 kg for *Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, 800 kg for *A. stellatus* and 200 kg for *Huso huso*), Kazakhstan (1,000 kg for *Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, 500 kg for *A. stellatus* and 1,500 kg for *Huso huso*) and the Russian Federation (5,300 kg for *Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, 2,800 kg for *A. stellatus* and 1,900 kg for *Huso huso*). Caviar exports per species may not exceed 10 per cent of these catch quotas. These limits will apply to scientific fisheries for the duration of the suspension.
3. Amounts of specimens from the 2000 quota that have been registered with the Secretariat before 15 January 2001, if any, (and amounts similarly registered in future years) are not affected by this recommendation.