

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Twenty-fourth meeting of the Animals Committee  
Geneva, (Switzerland), 20-24 April 2009

Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix-II species

REPORT ON SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION FROM THE RANGE STATES OF *HUSO HUSO*

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. In the course of the implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP14) on *Conservation of and trade in sturgeons and paddlefish*, the Secretariat became concerned about the levels of trade in the species *Huso huso*, in particular from Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan.
3. Consequently, the Secretariat wrote to the Animals Committee on 19 April 2007, suggesting that it include this species in the Review of Significant Trade in accordance with paragraph c) of Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP13), with immediate effect.
4. The Chair of the Animals Committee agreed to propose a postal procedure to the Committee following the communication procedure in Rules 27-29 of the Committee's earlier Rules of Procedure. This postal vote concluded on 24 August 2007. The Committee decided not to include the species in the Review of Significant Trade in accordance with paragraph c) of Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP13).
5. At its 23rd meeting (Geneva, April 2008), the Animals Committee decided not to retain this species in the Review of Significant Trade and to re-discuss this issue at its following meeting. The Committee recommended that the Secretariat and the range States provide a document at the 24th meeting of the Animals Committee, with detailed scientific information on which to base a decision.
6. In order to assist the range States in compiling relevant data, a questionnaire was prepared by the members of the Animals Committee.
7. On 28 August 2008, the Secretariat sent out the questionnaire to the range States of *Huso huso* requesting that they return the completed questionnaire to the Secretariat by 31 October 2008.
8. By the deadline, the Secretariat had received responses from Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova and Serbia. Hungary sent the completed questionnaire on 30 January 2009.
9. Montenegro informed the Secretariat that the species does not occur on its territory and that no cases of export, import or captive breeding of *Huso huso* had been recorded in Montenegro. They had therefore not completed the questionnaire.

10. The content of the completed questionnaires from Hungary, the Republic of Moldova and Serbia is provided in the Annex to this document.
11. The Secretariat remains concerned about the levels of trade in *Huso huso* and wishes to bring to the attention of the Committee that no information had been received from the range States with the highest volumes of trade in *H. huso*.
12. The Committee is invited to review the information from the range States and decide whether or not to include the species *Huso huso* in the Review of Significant Trade in accordance with paragraph c) of Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP13).

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE FROM THE RANGE STATES OF *HUSO HUSO*\*

HUNGARY

**Summary**

Although Hungary is a range state for *Huso huso*, the species was last recorded in 1987 in Hungarian waters. Specimens can not migrate up to the Hungarian stretch of the Danube-river due to the construction of the Iron Gate dams.

**Population and its distribution**

*Not appropriate*

**Ecology**

*No information*

**Fisheries Management & Conservation measures**

Fishing regulation – *not appropriate*

The species is protected in Hungary according to the *Decree of the Minister of Environment no. 13/2001 (V. 9.) KÖM on the protected and strictly protected plant and animal species, strictly protected caves as well as on the plant and animals species of Community importance*

According to *Act no. 53 of 1996 on nature conservation*, the authorization of the environmental, nature conservation and water inspectorates (as the regional nature conservation authorities) shall be required for:

1. any population control
2. the collection, capture, killing, possession and training of any individual
3. the breeding in captivity of any individual
4. the taxidermal preparation and preservation or the possession of such
5. preparations of any individual
6. the keeping of any individual in live animal collections
7. the supplementing of any population with individuals from foreign populations
8. the artificial exchange of genetic material between populations
9. the exchange or sale and purchase of any individual
10. the exportation from, importation to or transportation through the Republic of Hungary of any individual
11. the reintroduction or introduction of any individual
12. the domestication of any individual of protected species.

**Enforcement:**

- Total Commercial Catch (ton)/year – *not appropriate*
- Number of Caught fish/year (1998-2007) – *not appropriate*

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\* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

- Average size of caught fish/year – *not appropriate*
- By-catch/year – *not appropriate*
- Fingerling release/year (1998 – 2007) – *not appropriate*

#### **Aquaculture (Captive Breeding)/year**

Captive population is 23 specimens, kept by one single operation, fish are not yet mature.

### REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

#### **Summary**

In the Republic of Moldova *Huso huso* is a protected species (EN Endangered), the number of which has considerably reduced. This species is included in the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova and is included in the list of protected species in Law on animal kingdom.

#### **Population and its distributions**

- Population identification (Molecular techniques)
- Size of population/s (estimate) and distribution of the population/s  
(\* On what basis is the estimation made ?)

In the Republic of Moldova *Huso huso* is rarely found in the Nistru river, isolated individuals being registered in the period of spring and summer and can be met starting with the lake dam in Dubasari as far as the delta of the Nistru .

#### **Ecology**

- Sexual maturity (age and size)

Isolated individuals having the weight of about 100 kg are sometimes recorded in the Nistru river. It gets sexual maturity at the age of 12-18 years. At the age of 75 years it reaches the weight of 1000-1500 kg

#### **Fisheries Management & Conservation measures**

- Fishing regulation
- Enforcement

Protected by

1. Listed in the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova;
2. Law on animal kingdom;
3. Law on Red Book of the Republic of Moldova;
3. Law on state natural area protected found;
4. Law on Fishing and fisheries resources protection
5. Code on administrative contraventions

- Total Commercial Catch (ton)/year
- Number of Caught fish/year (1998-2007)
- Average size of caught fish/year
- By-catch/year
- Fingerling release/year (1998 – 2007).

Legislation it is not permitted the only catch of *Huso huso*. The Ecological Inspection doesn't register any cases of illegal for last years.

#### **Aquaculture (Captive Breeding)/year**

- Meat (weight)
- Caviar (weight)

In Moldova existed the unique production complex on growing sturgeon fishes in recirculated system "Aquatir", Ltd. (Tiraspol). The main goal of complex is getting, processing and realization of caviar and sturgeon fishes. This complex is calculated on producing 5 tons caviar per year and 80-100 tons of market fish and approximately 500 thousand of fry reproduction. In our sturgeon complex we use the latest achievements and technologies in sturgeon breeding sphere, they make the fish farm ecologically safe and let us get the production of high quality that correspond to international standards and technical regulations.

They have got:

- 800 belugas from Scientific Production Centre BIOS, Astrakhan, Russia in 2006.
- 1262 belugas from Scientific Production Centre BIOS, Astrakhan, Russia in 2007
- 1500 belugas from Federal State Unitary Enterprise South Filial, Krasnodar, Russia, 2008.

The "Aquatir", Ltd complex planned to get 13800 kg meat from beluga in 2012, when screening of beluga males take place.

First caviar in amount of 480 kg is planned for 2014.

## SERBIA

### **Summary**

Detailed research of beluga population is still lacking in Serbia. Some advancement was achieved during last few years but undetrimental analysis of beluga population requires more sophisticated methods for research that still is not developed in Serbia. Protection of beluga in Serbia is regulated by the Law on Fishery, Law on Environmental Protection and others Decrees, Order and Decisions. There is no beluga catch in Serbia from 2006 in accordance with ban of sturgeon catch in Romania and Bulgaria. Legal beluga catch in 2003, 2004 and 2005 was 894 kg, 1,683 kg and 1,834.83 kg, respectively. There is only one fish farm in Serbia which rear beluga but till now days there was no export of beluga from aquaculture.

### **Population and its distributions**

The presence of beluga (*Huso huso*) on the territory of Serbia is limited to 17.8 km of Danube, from the confluence of river Timok till the power-plant system 'Djerdap II', built on the 863 km of the River Danube.

There is no detailed analysis of population identification by molecular techniques till now. Samples of beluga fin were collected from 2004 – 2006 and preserved in absolute ethanol for subsequent analysis. During these years 11 samples of beluga fins were collected, 9 from females and 2 from males. They were collected mainly during September, October and November. Only one specimen was collected in February and one in April. Concerning the research of belugas (*Huso huso*) population genetics, we would apply same nuclear markers (microsatellites) that we use in sturgeon (Afu (LS)-19, 34, 39, 68, Aox-45, 23, and Spl 101, 105, 173). This research is financing by Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning Republic of Serbia in frame of project 'Standardization and harmonization of techniques for compilation of sturgeon population studies and artificial spawning'.

Research relating to estimate of size of population and distribution of the population didn't perform till now in Serbia.

### **Ecology**

Pectoral fin rays were collected from beluga specimens caught in Serbian part of the River Danube. Pectoral fin rays collected from eight females of beluga and 1 male. Sections of pectoral fins will be done

according to standard procedure for sturgeons and age determination will be performed based on calculation of growth zones on sections. All caught specimens were sexually mature.

### **Fisheries Management & Conservation measures**

Protection of beluga in Serbia is regulated by:

1. The Law on Fishery ('Official Journal of the Republic of Serbia' no. 35/94).
2. The Order on establishment of the closed season for particular fish species on the fisheries district or its parts, and on prohibition of fishing a fish under ascribed size ('Official Journal of the Republic of Serbia' no. 100/2003).
3. Decree of fishing tools, fishing methodology and facilities ('Official Journal of the Republic of Serbia' no. 25/95).
4. Decision on establishment of fisheries districts ('Official Journal of the Republic of Serbia' no. 76/94, 11/96, 53/2000, 1/2002, 6/2002).
5. The Decision on renting the 'Danube IV' fisheries district consigned by Public Company 'SrbijaŠume' from year 2001.
6. The Law on Environmental Protection ('Official Journal of the Republic of Serbia' no. 135/04).
7. The Decree on control of utilization and trade of wild flora and fauna ('Official Journal of the Republic of Serbia' no. 31/2005, 42/2005, 22/2007).

The Decrees on Establishing closed season and minimal landing size for particular fish species from 2003 ('Official Journal of the Republic of Serbia' no. 100/2003) establishes:

1. Closed season is introduced for beluga (*Huso huso*) from March 1 to September 30.
2. The fishing of the beluga (*Huso huso*) shorter than 250 cm is prohibited.

This is in contrary to measures established in the Decree on control of utilization and trade of wild flora and fauna ('Official Journal of the Republic of Serbia' no. 31/2005, 42/2005, 22/2007) where minimal landing size for beluga male is 180 cm and for female 210 cm and closed season is from April 1 to May 31.

Total commercial catch of beluga for period from 2003-2005 is presented on Table 1.

Table 1. Catch of beluga in Serbian part of the Danube River

Year	Females (N)	Males (N)	Females Average Weight (kg)	Males Average Weight (kg)	Caviar Average Weight (kg)
2003	5	4	109	87.3	17.9
2004	9	3	139.7	95.3	19.6
2005	8	8	144.2	85.1	13.7

Total beluga catch in 2003 was 894 kg of meat and 88.52 kg of caviar, in 2004 total beluga catch was 1,683 kg of meat and 176.61 kg of caviar while in 2005 total beluga catch was 1,834.83 kg of meat and 95.73 kg of caviar. Meat used for internal use while caviar used for commercial trade.

Concerning illegal catch it is very hard to estimate it even there is some evidence that illegal catch was presented during cited three years. It is obvious that in 2004 were more males than 3 which were reported.

Serbia did not release any beluga fingerlings into natural waters.

### **Aquaculture (Captive Breeding)/year**

There is only one fish farm in Serbia which rear beluga. It is company 'Feniks' in Kusjak (just upstream of Djerdap II dam). They imported juvenile beluga from Bulgaria and Romania. They did not export beluga from aquaculture till now.