

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



Twenty-eighth meeting of the Animals Committee
Tel Aviv (Israel), 30 August-3 September 2015

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

Sturgeons and paddlefish [Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP16)]

STURGEON MANAGEMENT IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

1. This document has been prepared by the Sturgeon Management Authority of the Russian Federation.*
2. The Commission on Aquatic Bioresources is the regional agency for fisheries in the Caspian Sea basin. The Committee on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (COFI FAO), the permanent working body at the FAO Council established in 1965, being the only global intergovernmental forum to discuss the most important problems of the world fisheries and aquaculture, as well as making recommendations for their resolution, which are addressed to governments, regional fishery bodies, non-governmental organizations and representatives of the fishing industry - takes this into account in its activities.
3. During 2013 – 2015, the Russian Federation has been the chairing Party to the Commission on Aquatic Bioresources (hereinafter referred to as the Commission). Being in this status the Russian Federation informs of the following.
4. The Caspian littoral countries (the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan) did not carry out commercial catch of sturgeons in 2014. The catch of sturgeon fish species in 2014 was carried out only for research purposes and for the purposes of artificial reproduction. Considering the decisions taken at the state level in all the above mentioned countries about a ban on commercial fishing of sturgeon fish species in 2014, the Parties decided will not to establish export quotas for caviar and other products from sturgeon species for the year of 2014.
5. Being in the status of the chairing Party at the 35th meeting of the Commission (May 2015, St. Petersburg), the Russian Federation informs that: “All Parties to the Commission (the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan) will not be carrying out commercial catch of sturgeons in the Caspian Sea in 2015 and 2016.”
6. The Parties have decided not to establish export quotas for caviar and other products from sturgeon species for 2015-2016. The catch of sturgeon fish species in 2015-2016 will be carry out only for research

* *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.*

purposes and for the purposes of artificial reproduction. Thus, like in the previous years of 2012-2014, all the Caspian countries do not carry out industrial (commercial) fishing of sturgeons.

7. At the Fourth Caspian summit, which took place on 29 September 2014 in Astrakhan, the Russian Federation, the authorized representatives of the Governments of the Caspian States signed the Agreement on conservation and rational use of the aquatic biological resources of the Caspian Sea. Under this Agreement, the sturgeons are referred to as a shared species of aquatic bioresources.
8. The Agreement established the status of the Commission on Aquatic Bioresources as an intergovernmental body. We think it reasonable to take into account this status of the Commission while the respective bodies of the CITES Convention interact with the Commission on aquatic bio-resources of the Caspian Sea.
9. In the Russian Federation, the issues of conservation of sturgeons, taking into account the importance, significance and acuteness of the problems, are posed and solved at the highest state level – that of the President of the Russian Federation. In particular, on behalf of the President, the Government approved a special state sub-programme on "Sturgeons". The sub-programme is financed from the Federal budget. It also considers the importance of collaboration in the conservation of sturgeons by all countries of the geographical range. In particular, referring to the Caspian Sea these are: the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan.
10. In 2013, in the Russian Federation, a special article was introduced in the criminal code in order to enhance the responsibility for the catch of valuable fish species and other species of aquatic biological resources covered by the CITES, Convention, i.e. the sturgeon species included in the appendices of the CITES Convention.
11. Methods of estimation of stocks of sturgeons and determination of total allowable catches applicable in the Russian Federation are objective. This fact was confirmed by the participants of the international seminar which was held in the city of Astrakhan (Russian Federation, 2011). They reviewed the methodology of the assessment of stocks of sturgeons of the Caspian Sea in materials of user surveys, conducted by the Russian side. Ways of further improving the trawl surveys of Caspian sturgeons have been planned. The seminar was attended by representatives of the FAO.
12. Taking into account the works to perfect the methods of assessment of sturgeon stocks which are undertaken by the Federal Agency for Fisheries under the guidance of the head of the All-Russian Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography, it is considered the issue of holding an international workshop on this subject in the Russian Federation in 2016.
13. The certified sturgeon caviar shipped from the Russian Federation in accordance with Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP16) is marked with special marks.
14. Prior to shipment, all the lots of such caviar are subjected to the specific molecular genetic identification by the methods developed and approved by the specialists of the Scientific authority for sturgeons of the Russian Federation. The All-Russian Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography performs the functions of such authority.
15. Centers of molecular genetic studies of sturgeons and products have been created and are functioning in the system of the Federal Agency for Fisheries: the leading centre being in Moscow (the All-Russian Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography), in Astrakhan (the CaspNIRKh institute) and in Rostov-on-Don (the AzNIIRKH institute). The scientific and practical developments of these Centers, as well as their instrumental base and high qualification of specialists, pursuant to the recommendations of the 16th Conference of the Parties of CITES (Bangkok, 2013) may be used by the Executive bodies of CITES (the Animals Committee, the Scientific Department and others) through the Scientific authority for sturgeons of the Russian Federation (the All-Russian Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography).