

Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP13)*

Conservation of and trade in sturgeons and paddlefish

RECALLING Resolution Conf. 10.12 (Rev.), adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 10th meeting (Harare, 1997) and amended at its 11th meeting (Gigiri, 2000), and Resolution Conf. 11.13, adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 11th meeting;

AWARE that sturgeons and paddlefish of the Order Acipenseriformes represent a valuable renewable biological and economic resource that in recent years has been affected by such negative factors as illegal fishing and illegal trade, regulation of water flow and decrease in natural spawning sites;

NOTING the need for further research and the importance of scientific monitoring of the status of stocks and an understanding of their genetic structure as the basis for sustainable fisheries management;

CONSIDERING that Eurasian range States of Acipenseriformes species are in need of funds and technical assistance in order to develop regional management and monitoring programmes for conservation, habitat protection, and the combating of illegal fishing and trade;

RECALLING that Article VI, paragraph 7, of the Convention provides that specimens of species listed in the Appendices may be marked to assist in identifying them;

CONSIDERING that the labelling of all caviar in trade would be a fundamental step towards the effective regulation of trade in specimens of sturgeons and paddlefish;

NOTING that, in order to assist the Parties in identifying legal caviar in trade, marking should be standardized and that particular specifications for the design of labels are fundamental, should be generally applied and should also take into account marking systems currently in place and anticipated technological advances in marking systems;

CONSCIOUS that there is a need for improvement of monitoring of caviar re-exports in relation to the original export and the level of exports in relation to annual export quotas;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

URGES the range States of species in the Order Acipenseriformes to:

- a) encourage scientific research and ensure adequate monitoring of the status of stocks¹ to promote the sustainability of sturgeon and paddlefish fisheries through appropriate management programmes;
- b) curtail the illegal fishing of and trade in sturgeon and paddlefish specimens by improving the provisions in and enforcement of existing laws regulating fisheries and export, in close collaboration with the CITES Secretariat, ICPO-Interpol and the World Customs Organization;
- c) explore ways of enhancing the participation of representatives of all agencies responsible for sturgeon and paddlefish fisheries in conservation and sustainable-use programmes for these species;

d) promote regional agreements between range States of sturgeon and paddlefish species aiming at proper management and sustainable utilization of these species; and

e) in the case of range States of sturgeons in the Eurasian region, take into account the recommendations in document CoP12 Doc. 42.1 when developing regional conservation strategies and action plans;

RECOMMENDS, with regard to regulating trade in sturgeon products, that:

a) range States license legal exporters of specimens of sturgeon and paddlefish species and maintain a register of such persons or companies and provide a copy of this register to the Secretariat by 30 November each year. The Secretariat should distribute this information via a Notification to the Parties;

b) each importing, exporting and re-exporting Party should establish, where consistent with national law, a registration system for processing and repackaging plants in its territory and provide to the Secretariat the list of these facilities and their official registration codes. The list should be updated as needed. A copy of the list should be provided to the Secretariat by 30 November each year. The Secretariat should distribute this information via a Notification to the Parties;

c) importing countries be particularly vigilant in controlling all aspects of the trade in specimens of sturgeon and paddlefish species, including the unloading of sturgeon specimens, transit, re-packaging, re-labelling and re-exports;

d) Parties monitor the storage, processing and re-packaging of specimens of sturgeon and paddlefish species in Customs free zones and free ports, and for airline and cruise line catering;

e) Parties ensure that all their relevant agencies cooperate in establishing the necessary administrative, management, scientific and control mechanisms needed to implement the provisions of the Convention with respect to sturgeon and paddlefish species;

f) Parties consider the harmonization of their national legislation related to personal exemptions for caviar, to allow for the personal effects exemption under Article VII, paragraph 3, of the Convention and consider limiting this exemption to no more than 250 grams of caviar per person;

g) range States intending to authorize exports in a given year of specimens of Acipenseriformes species from shared stocks that were obtained in a preceding year must inform the Secretariat by 31 January of the nature and quantities of the specimens still held in stock and the Secretariat should distribute this via a Notification to the Parties. In 2005, all remaining stocks of caviar should be exported by 31 March at the latest. Parties should not import caviar harvested in 2004 if it is exported after 31 March 2005. From 2006 onward, all caviar must be exported before the end of the quota year in which it was harvested and processed. From 2006 onwards, Parties should not import caviar harvested or processed in a preceding year;

h) no re-export of caviar should be authorized more than 18 months after the date of issuance of the relevant original export permit;

i) Parties should supply to the Secretariat, on a regular basis, copies of all export permits and re-export certificates issued to authorize trade in caviar; and

j) importing Parties should not accept shipments of caviar unless they comply with the provisions of the universal labelling system outlined in Annexes 1 and 2;

RECOMMENDS² further, with regard to catch and export quotas, that:

a) Parties not accept the import of any specimen of Acipenseriformes species from stocks shared between different range States³ unless:

i) export quotas for all specimens of Acipenseriformes species for that year have been established by the range States⁴ concerned and have been communicated by the Secretariat to the Parties by 31 December of the preceding year;

ii) the export quotas referred to in subparagraph i) have been derived from catch quotas agreed amongst States that provide habitat for the same stock of an Acipenseriformes species;

iii) catch quotas are based on an appropriate regional conservation strategy and monitoring regime for the species concerned; and

iv) the Secretariat has confirmed that catch and export quotas have been agreed by all relevant range States, on the basis of information provided to the Secretariat by 30 November of the preceding year on the status of stocks of the species concerned; and

b) if a range State of a shared stock of a species of Acipenseriformes decides to reduce its quota established in accordance with this Resolution under stricter domestic measures, this shall not affect the quotas of the other range States of this stock;

URGES Parties to implement without delay the labelling of caviar in accordance with Annexes 1 and 2;

URGES further that range States cooperate with the Secretariat to implement, on a three-year cycle beginning in 2006, an evaluation by appropriate experts of the implementation of the regional conservation strategy and monitoring regime for stocks of Acipenseriformes species subject to the provisions under RECOMMENDS further, paragraph a) above and respond to the results accordingly;

CALLS UPON range States, importing countries and other appropriate experts and organizations such as the IUCN/SSC Sturgeon Specialist Group, in consultation with the Secretariat and the Animals Committee, to explore the development of a uniform DNA-based identification system for parts and derivatives and aquaculture stocks of Acipenseriformes species to assist in the subsequent identification of the origin of specimens in trade;

DIRECTS the Secretariat:

a) in collaboration with range States and international organizations from both industry and the conservation community, to assist with the development of a strategy including action plans for the conservation of Acipenseriformes; and

b) to provide assistance with securing financial resources from Parties, international organizations, United Nations specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and industry; and

REPEALS the Resolutions listed hereunder:

a) Resolution Conf. 10.12 (Rev.) (Harare, 1997, as amended at Gigiri, 2000) – Conservation of sturgeons; and

b) Resolution Conf. 11.13 (Gigiri, 2000) – Universal labelling system for the identification of caviar.
documents containing the information referred to in paragraph c), d) or e).