

Species: European Sturgeon

OSPAR Recommendation 2014/01:

Contracting Parties are required to report progress with implementation of recommendations every six years, with initial more frequent reporting until 2019.

Measures taken by Contracting Parties to protect the European Sturgeon include protection in national legislation, designation of MPAs and measure to improve access to critical habitats



Description

The European Sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*) is a migratory species reproducing in fresh water and then moving into the sea until ready to spawn again. It is a long-lived and slow-growing species, feeding on crustaceans, molluscs, polychaete worms and small fishes. It has a long life cycle reaching maturity at an age of 8 - 14 years, and possibly lives to 100 years. It was originally exploited for its flesh and, more recently, for caviar. In the early 1900s, annual fish catches were of the order of 10 000 in Western Europe. The Rhine and the Elbe were the most important west European rivers for the species.

62%

Action Highlights

Each Recommendation requires Contracting Parties to report on the methods used to implement the measures. The methods are Legislation, Administrative action and Negotiated agreement, or any combination of these. Recent examples include:

1. Are protected by legislation in Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Spain, and the UK;
2. France and Germany have national action plans;
3. Awareness raising activities are undertaken in France and Germany
4. France has 6 MPAs;
5. There are monitoring programmes in France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain;
6. France, Spain, and the Netherlands has adopted measures and made decisions that minimise impacts and improve access to critical habitats.

Engagement

The engagement index (left) measures how well Contracting Parties have engaged with the national measures in the Recommendation. The higher the score the greater the number of actions that Contracting Parties, which have reported, have taken to implement the measures in the Recommendation. Click here for more information on the index.

Condition

Today the species only forms one relict population in the Gironde, France. The main foraging grounds of the species are located in the Gironde estuary for the first seven years of the life cycle, during the following years the fish have mainly been caught along the coastal waters of the Western Gulf of Biscay and along the English Channel. There has been no known change in condition since it was first listed. Future trends are currently very unclear, with this species facing a high risk of extinction.

