

Danube Sturgeon Task Force

EUSDR PA6 Task Force

@ EUSDR PA4 Meeting

3-4 June 2025

Beate Striebel-Greiter, on behalf of DSTF Executive Committee

Fish Passage at Iron Gate Dams Follow-up of WePass2 Project



- WePass2 project finalised in October 2024
- Final Report published by EC:
<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/19c0d2f7-da0a-11ef-be2a-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>
- DSTF [Briefing](#) and [FAQ documents](#) (January 2025)
- Letters to relevant Ministers in Serbia and Romania, Joint Iron Gate Commission and hydropower companies Hidroelektrica (RO) and EPS (SR) (January 2025)
- Information to ICPDR, EC (DG ENV), EIB (January 2025)

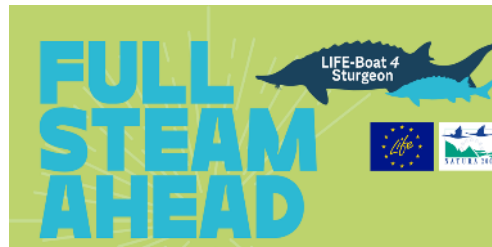
Trap and Transport an (interim) solution??

- DSTF Position Paper published on scientific assessment:
<https://dstf.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/DSTF-Position-Paper-on-Trap-and-Transport-at-the-Iron-Gates.pdf>
- Upstream passage: fish will be captured, handled and transported in a sensitive time of their reproductive cycle → **significant risk of abortion of spawning behaviour.**
- At the current low and declining population levels, every reproducing individual counts and should not be put at risk.
- Downstream passage: **not a feasible nor economically viable option** in the context of the Danube (Iron Gate I reservoir depth plus very long period)
- Furthermore, T&T for sturgeons would **not resolve the issues for other migratory species**
- **DSTF therefore opposes implementation of trap and transport solutions for sturgeon migration at the Iron Gate dams.**

Definition: Trap and transport is a method to facilitate the migration of fish over an existing barrier by catching the fish and then physically transporting it across the barrier.

LIFE - Boat 4 Sturgeon *update*

- Boat officially opened in April in Vienna;
- open for visits;
- Broodstock acquisition according to plan for all 4 remaining Danube sturgeon species
- Releases started in 2025 also below Iron Gates for anadromous species
- <https://lb4sturgeon.eu/>



EC Service Contract to Support Implementation of the PANEUAP

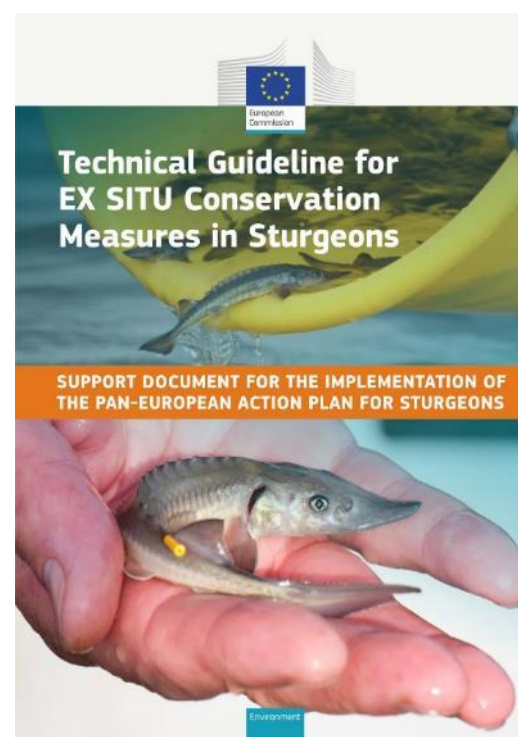
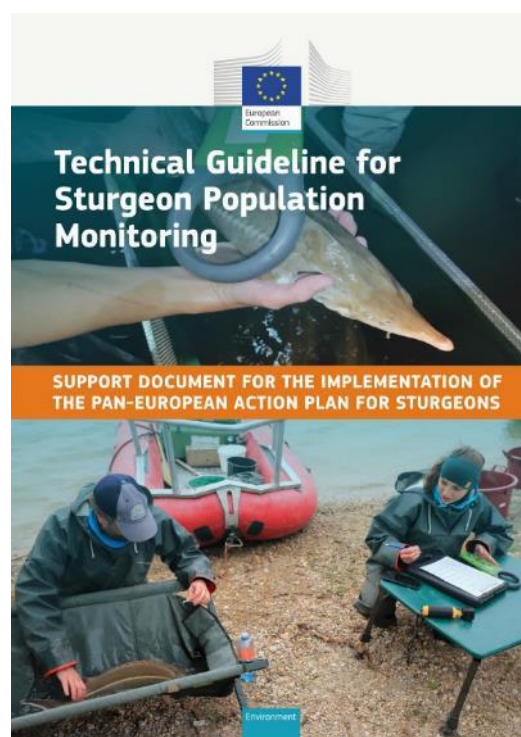
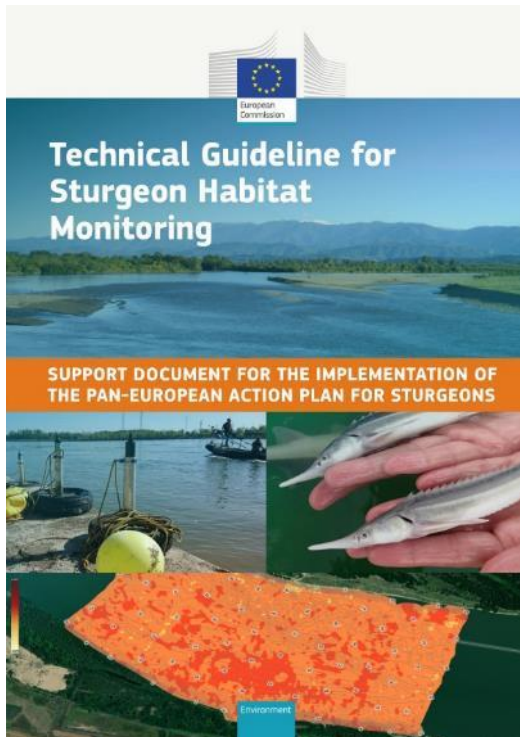
(concluded Feb 25)

Results

- ***Technical Guidance published by EC***
 - [*Population Monitoring*](#)
 - [*Habitat Monitoring*](#)
 - [*EX-Situ facilities*](#)
- ***State of implementation of PANEUAP***

18 countries including 10 in the Danube basin published:

 - [*Lower Danube & Black Sea*](#)
 - [*Upper/Middle Danube*](#)

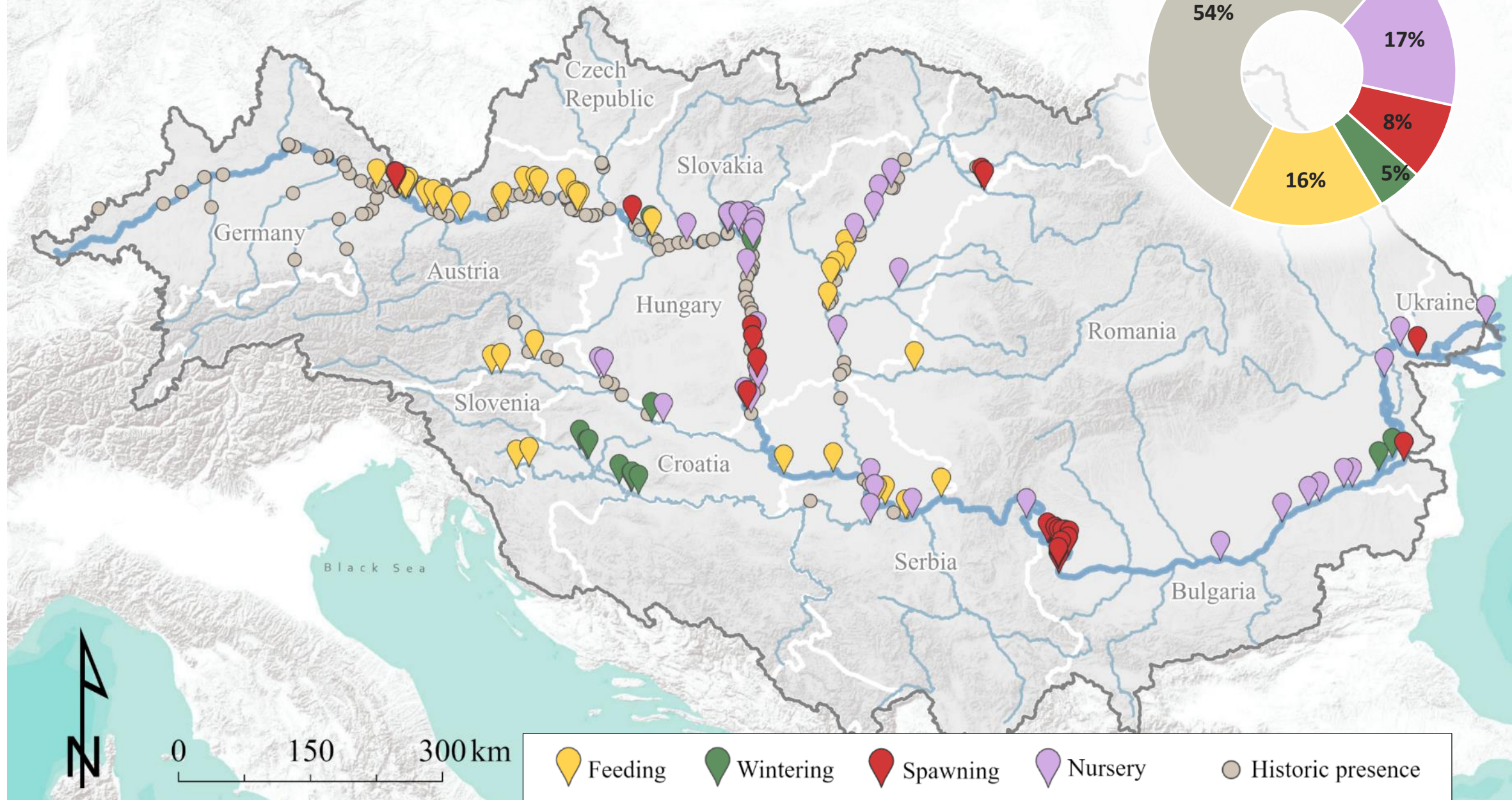
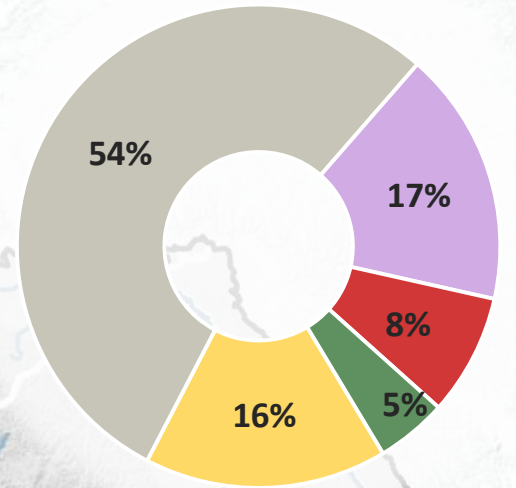


Status quo for sturgeon habitat assesment

- [EC Technical Guidelines for sturgeon habitat monitoring](#) endorsed for implementation by Standing Committee of the Bern Convention with [Recommendation No. 222 \(2024\)](#) – valid for all Danube range states.
- Existing knowledge of sturgeon habitats has been compiled in lists and maps (MEASURES, EC PANEUAP contract)
- These maps/lists are a static snapshot of current knowledge – gaps remain!
- **Need for an updatable habitat inventory to bring together existing data and integrate further information from future research projects**
- DRP MonStur Project : aims to create a habitat inventory in frame of ICPDR (April 2025-2028)

Confirmed habitats & historic presence

n = 357



Status quo for population monitoring

- [EC Technical Guidelines for sturgeon habitat monitoring](#) endorsed for implementation by the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention with [Recommendation No. 223 \(2024\)](#)
– valid for all Danube range states!
- 5 steps are important to assess the status of a population:
 - 1) Assessment of sturgeon **presence** (often eDNA)
 - 2) Identification of timing and **habitat use**
 - 3) Identification of the **genetic properties of a population**
 - 4) Determination of the **recruitment** into the reproductive population & year class strength
 - 5) **Data management – joint database for joint populations!**
- ICPDR - Joint Danube Survey 5 : eDNA sampling for sturgeons and report with sturgeon chapter
- MonStur Project : will create a Danube wide joint sturgeon population database in frame of ICPDR to compile existing data and create a procedure for including future data;
- Workshops are planned to include institutions from all countries!

Thank You for Your Attention!