Interreg Danube Region

Co-funded by the European Union

MonStur in the Danube

Connecting the dots for migratory fishes
Budapest, 7 October 2025

MonStur in the Danube & sturgeon research in Hungary

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Széchenyi István University

MonStur project data

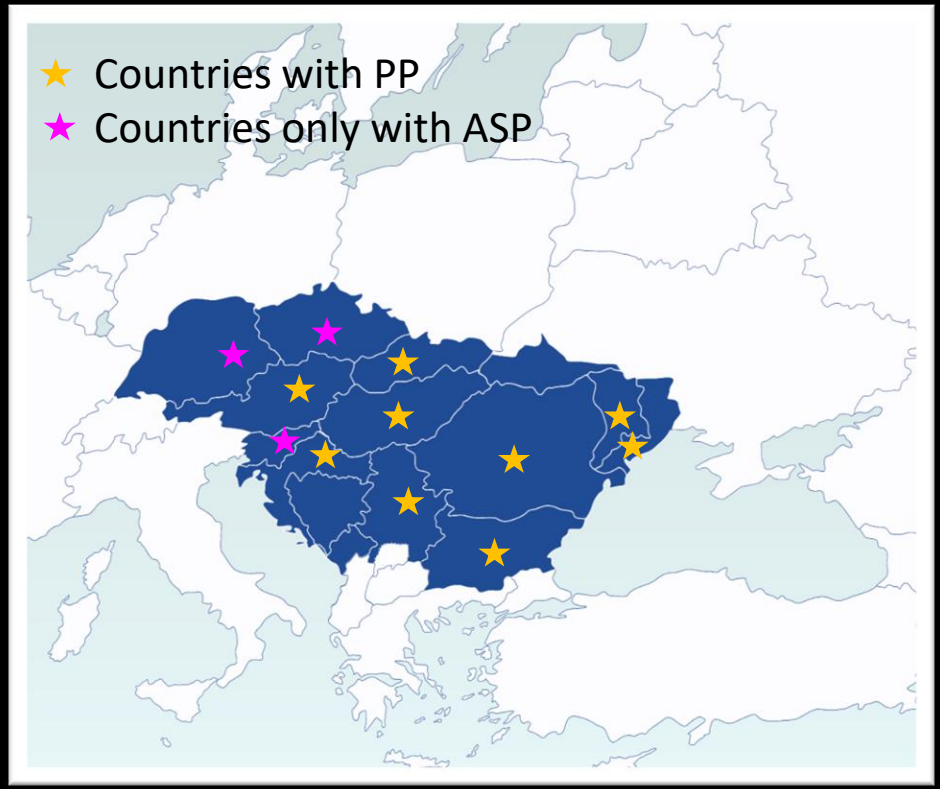
*"Establishing, testing and launching a transboundary system for **Mon**itoring **Stur**geons, to manage and safeguard migratory fish in the Danube River Basin"*

Duration: 36 months
(April 2025 – March 2028)

Partnership: 13 project partners (PP),
17 associated partners (ASP)

Covering **12 DRB countries**
(9 EU member and 3 non-EU countries)

Total Budget: 2 071 996 EUR
Interreg DRP Funds 80%



Project Partners (13 PP – 9 country)

Lead partner: Romanian Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests

Partners:

- University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna (Austria)
- WWF Central & Eastern Europe
- International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)
- WWF Bulgaria
- Ministry of Environmental Protection and Green Transition – Croatia
- Széchenyi István University – Hungary
- Danube Delta National Institute for Research and Development – Romania
- WWF Romania Association
- University of Belgrade – Institute for Multidisciplinary Research – Serbia
- Water Research Institute – Slovakia
- WWF Ukraine
- Moldova State University (Institute of Zoology)

Associated Strategic Partners (17 ASP – 11 country)

Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management, Austria
Viadonau, Austria
Croatian Waters
Ministry of Environment, Czech Republic
Region of Lower Bavaria, Fishery Department, Germany
Bavarian State Ministry of the Environment and Consumer Protection, Germany
Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, Germany
General Directorate of Water Management, Hungary
Lower Danube River Administration, Romania
Ministry of Environment, Slovakia
Moldavian Waters Agency, Apele Moldovei
State Agency of Melioration and Fisheries of Ukraine
State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic
State Enterprise “Srbijasume”
Public Company “Vojvodinasume “
Josip Juraj Strossmayer Water Institute Croatia
Revivo, Slovenia

Specific objectives:

1) Build a joint, transnational sturgeon monitoring system including a habitat and population database within the framework of the ICPDR:

- to collect scattered data from individual projects,
- shared databases for status assessment and development of conservation management.

2) Promoting joint governance and increasing cooperation among stakeholders:

- to ensure the sustainability of the sturgeon monitoring system in the DRB,
- improve the national policy environments and clarify responsibilities,
- fostering political cooperation at the macro-regional level.

3) Test and apply monitoring methods to close knowledge gaps and development more efficient conservation measures:

- using innovative methods (eDNA, sonar, telemetry),
- identification of key habitats (spawning, nursery, wintering …),
- develop transboundary Action Plan for Upper-Middle Danube countries,
- develop recommendations for river engineering.

MonStur contribution to the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons

Goal is the re-establishment of self-sustaining sturgeon populations

Objective 1: „Protection of wild populations from removal“

Objective 2: „Support of population structure (ex-situ)“

Objective 3: „Protection & Restoration of habitats“

Objective 4: „Facilitate sturgeon migration“

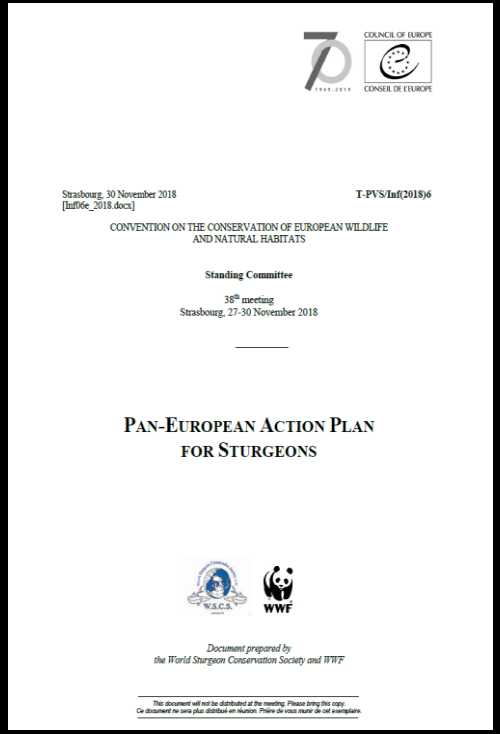
Objective 5: „Population monitoring“

Objective 6: „Eliminate illegal trade of sturgeon“

Objective 7: „Secure funding“

Objective 8: „Increase support of public, authorities & stakeholders“

Objective 9: „Monitor Action Plan implementation“



COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 30 November 2018
[Inf06e_2018.docx]

T-PVS/Inf(2018)6

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

38th meeting
Strasbourg, 27-30 November 2018

PAN-EUROPEAN ACTION PLAN FOR STURGEONS

W.S.C.S.
WWF

Document prepared by
the World Sturgeon Conservation Society and WWF

This document will not be distributed at the meeting. Please bring this copy.
Ce document ne sera plus distribué en réunion. Prière de vous munir de cet exemplaire.

MonStur builds on previous projects

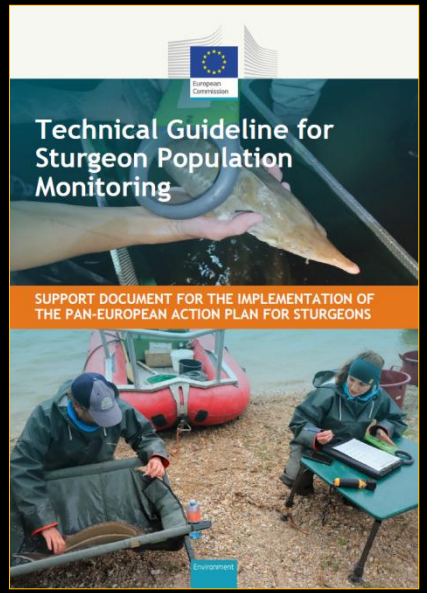
Monitoring is based on EC guidelines, endorsed for implementation by the Bern Convention

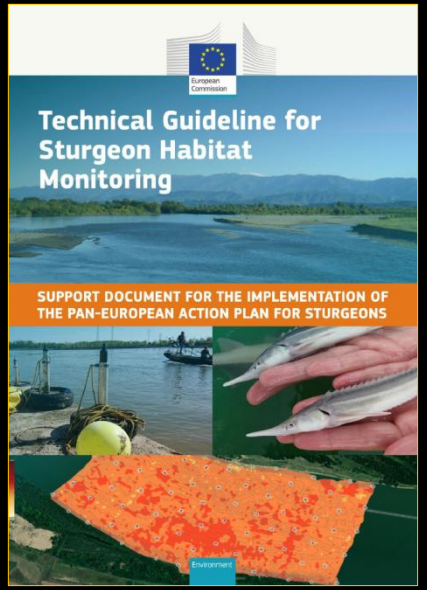
Technical guideline for sturgeon population monitoring

BC Recommendation No. 222 (2024).

Technical guideline for sturgeon habitat monitoring

BC Recommendation No. 223 (2024)





Data collection is based on:

- LIFE 4 Danube Sturgeons (LIFE, 2016-2020)
- MEASURES (Interreg DRP, 2018-2021)
- SCUTE (EC service contract, 2023-2024)

MonStur – wider benefits that contribute to:

1. **ICPDR's strategies**:

- JDS5
- Update of the ICPDR RBM (2027)
- ICPDR policy related to the hydropower development
- Joint Statement on Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection

2. **Transnational cooperation** for the recovery measures for endangered umbrella species, by creating a shared knowledge base needed to plan and evaluate future conservation actions.

3. **National Cooperation** in range countries among key stakeholders such as responsible authorities from water and biodiversity management and experts

4. **Implementation of international biodiversity commitments**: the Pan-European Action Plan for sturgeons, the Bern Convention, the Habitats Directive, the Nature Restoration Law or other biodiversity commitments (CMS, CBD,…)

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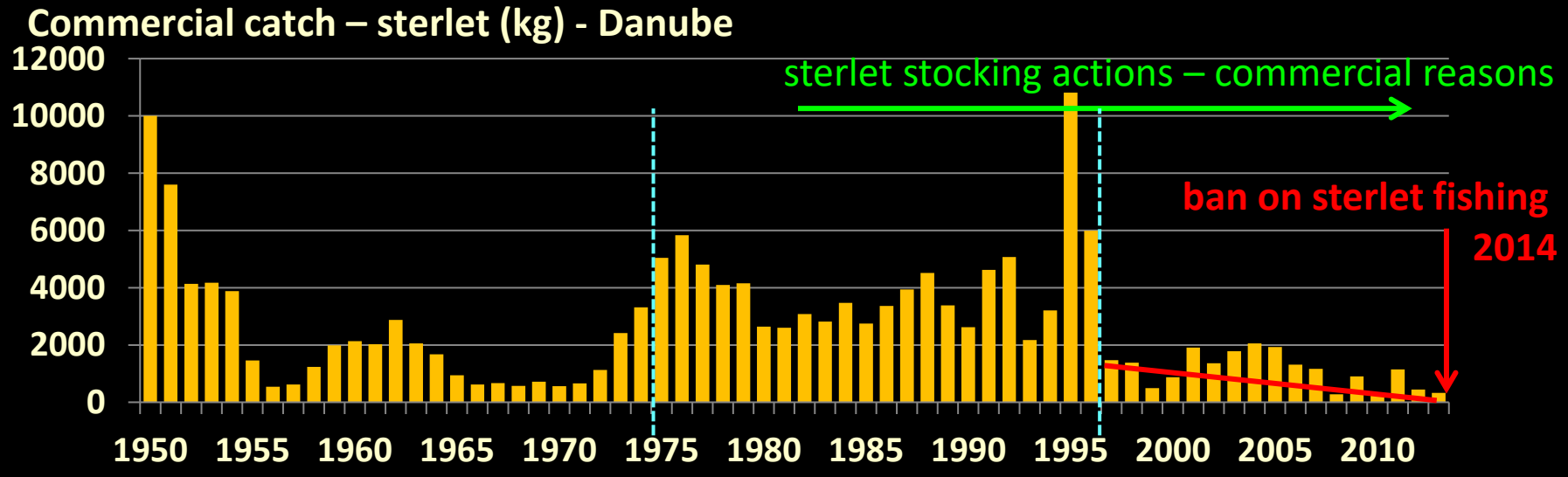
Activities and plans in Hungary related to sturgeon monitoring

Conditions for sturgeon monitoring in Hungary

Only sterlet out of the five species

no monitoring system in operation, but catch data of commercial fishery



The main tasks of sterlet monitoring and conservation in Hungary

1) Ensuring the technical conditions for providing population and habitat data for the transnational sturgeon monitoring system

- testing and application of population monitoring
- testing and application of habitat monitoring

2) Improve the national policy environment to ensure the sustainability of the sturgeon monitoring activity.

3) Review the Hungarian Action Plan for Sterlet Conservation, **with consideration of monitoring results**.

- contribution to development of transboundary Action Plan for Upper-Middle Danube countries

Testing and application of population monitoring

species detection by e-DNA sampling

Technical fishpass

eDNA sample

Dam and navigation lock on the Moson Danube

Testing and application of population monitoring

study potential sterlet habitats
using trammel nets

Information on sterlet occurrence
from anglers

sterlet is very rare in the upper section of the Hungarian Danube
→ Consideration: extension of study area downstream to Budapest?

Testing and application of habitat monitoring

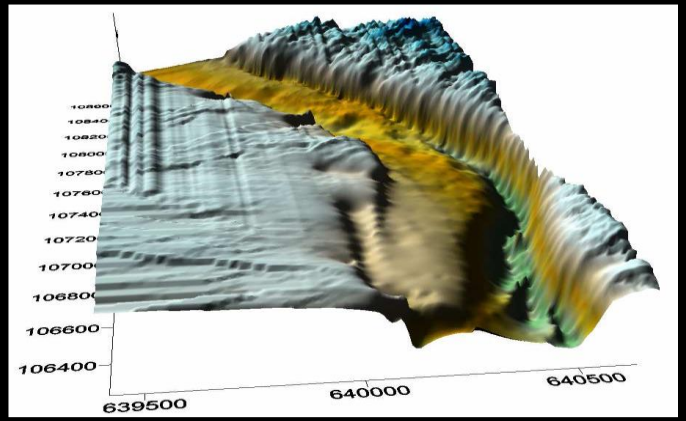
high-resolution sonar

→ to study fish habitats

measure flow velocity
near the surface of riverbed

→ hydraulic model

mapping of river morphology
based on sonar images

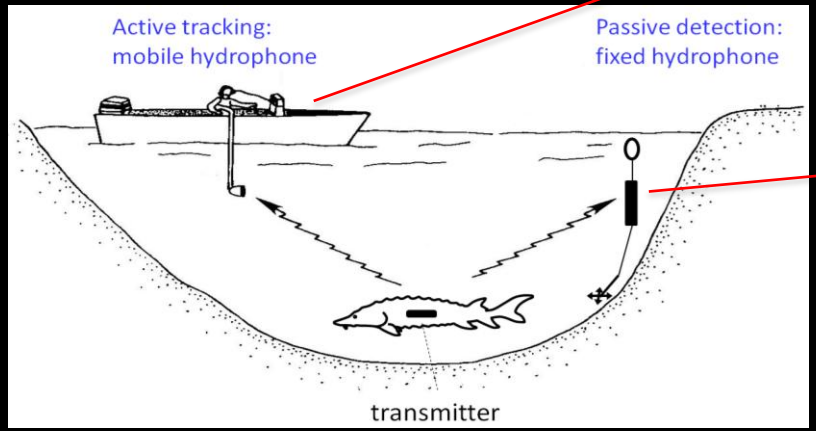


Additional population monitoring within the SWIM project (HORIZON)

establishment of a telemetric monitoring in the Danube (Vének – Budapest, 130 km)

Fishing for sterlet

Implantation of transmitter



https://interreg-danube.eu/projects/monstur-in-the-danube

Thank you for your attention!