



Danube Sturgeon

Why in News

According to a report released by the [World Wildlife Fund \(WWF\)](#), illegal sale of **Danube Sturgeon**, one of the **most endangered species** in the world, is rampant in the lower Danube (River) region, especially in Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.

- Danube is the **second longest river in Europe after the Volga**. It rises in the **Black Forest mountains of western Germany** and flows for some 2,850 km to its mouth on the **Black Sea**.



Key Points

- **About:**
 - Sturgeons have **existed since the time of dinosaurs**, for about **200 million years**. Some of the species can grow up to **eight metre in length and live more than a century**.
 - They are called **'living fossils'** because their appearance has altered very little over the years.
 - **Living Fossil** is an organism that has **remained unchanged from earlier geologic times** and whose close relatives are usually extinct.
 - Other than Sturgeons, [Horseshoe crab](#) and ginkgo trees are examples of living fossils.

- Because the sturgeons live for so many years, mature late and spawn with long intervals, they take a long time to recover from environmental and human pressures, according to WWF. This makes them **great indicators for the health of the river and other ecological parameters.**

▪ **Habitat:**

- There are **27 species of sturgeons** and paddlefishes distributed across the Northern hemisphere. While **some species inhabit only freshwater**, most species are anadromous, spawning in freshwater but spending much of their life history in marine or brackish environments.
- Danube sturgeons live mostly in the **Black Sea**, migrating up the Danube and other major rivers to spawn.

▪ **Threats:**

- **Over-exploitation and poaching** (exacerbated by poor fishery management and insufficient legal enforcement of fishing bans).
- **Blocked migration routes** through dams.
- Loss or **degradation of habitats.**
- **Pollution.**

▪ **Protection Status:**

- [IUCN Red list](#): There are **6 species of sturgeon in the Danube River**. Five of them are now listed as **critically endangered.**
- [CITES](#): **Appendix-II.**

World Wildlife Fund for Nature

▪ **About:**

- It is the **world's leading conservation organization** and works in more than 100 countries.

▪ **Establishment:**

- It was **established in 1961** and is **headquartered at Gland, Switzerland.**

▪ **Mission:**

- **To conserve nature** and reduce the most pressing threats to the diversity of life on Earth.

▪ **Important Initiatives of WWF:**

- [TX2 Goal](#)
- [TRAFFIC](#)
- [Living Planet Report](#)
- [Earth Hour](#)

Black Sea



▪ **About:**

- Black Sea is an **inland sea** located between far-southeastern Europe and the far-western edges of the continent of Asia and the country of Turkey.
- It **connects to the Mediterranean Sea first through the Bosphorus Strait**, then **through the Sea of Marmara and the Dardanelles Strait**, then south through the **Aegean Sea** and the **Sea of Crete**.
- The Black Sea is **also connected to the Sea of Azov by the Strait of Kerch**.

▪ **Bordering Countries:**

- Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, and Turkey.

[Source: DTE](#)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/danube-sturgeon>