

First Announcement

7th International Symposium on Sturgeons

**Sturgeon, Science and Society – at the Crossroads:
Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century.**

The International Symposia on Sturgeons (ISS) are held at four-year intervals to provide a global platform to assess the progress made in both conservation and aquaculture but also to discuss and develop science-based recommendations that serve as guiding principles for future research and management measures.

ISS7 presents a unique opportunity to discuss issues critical to sturgeons in the 21st century. The challenges include both the current dire future of many feral populations and the promise of sturgeon hatcheries to support ecological (conservation/restoration) and economic (food production) benefits to society.

During the past decade awareness of the economic and ecological importance of the rapidly dwindling sturgeon populations has grown in most of the range states. As identified by the IUCN-WSCS workshop associated with the 6th International Symposium on Sturgeons (ISS6, October 2009, Wuhan, China), the conservation status of most sturgeon stocks largely deteriorated over the past 15 years with some species now facing extinction. Therefore, the international community and governments in range states are extremely concerned about the future of sturgeon stocks and extensive efforts to improve conservation and rehabilitation measures have been developed in a number of range states. However, there is an urgent need to not only intensify the efforts but also to vigorously enforce the protection plans and measures proposed in a harmonized manner.

Conversely, market demand for caviar and meat is growing creating ample opportunities for sturgeon aquaculture. This development inherits both benefits and risks - in particular for the design and operation of sturgeon hatcheries. While aquaculture will necessarily focus on domestication of stocks with selection of specific target traits, culture for release demands strategies to increase genetic variability and avoid domestication effects. Good science is required to strategically increase dual benefits. There is a need to develop standardized guidelines, protocols and manuals that specifically serve both purposes. Concurrently, proper identification of product origin and traceability to the market are essential for effective enforcement to prevent illegal trade.

The upcoming 7th ISS is taking place from July 21- 25, 2013, co-hosted by Vancouver Island University (VIU) and the City of Nanaimo, Canada. ISS7 is your opportunity to address the above concerns and contribute to the science-based management of sturgeons.

The meeting title - ***Sturgeon, Science and Society – at the Crossroads: Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century*** reflects the current state of sturgeon populations worldwide and the need for active and fast support required to maintain, restore and secure a positive future for sturgeons while accruing the benefits to society. We invite your contributions to the following conference themes:

1. General biology and ecology
2. Status and management of populations
3. Sturgeon – a heritage fish: First nations/aboriginal sturgeon initiatives
4. Human impacts on sturgeons stocks and mitigation measures
5. Aquaculture
6. Processing, marketing and sturgeon products including caviar
7. Regulations for conservation and international trade (monitoring and enforcement, traceability)

Specific session topics within each of the seven theme areas will be refined over the upcoming months. A formal Call for Papers providing the information on structure and deadlines can be found on the ISS7 website - <http://iss7.viu.ca/call-for-papers-abstracts>

Sincerely,

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