



Press Release

Brussels, August 10th, 2022. For immediate publication

Subject: The FEAP is greatly disturbed by an amendment to the US laws banning the import of EU caviar to the US market

All sturgeon species fall under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)¹. This makes the trade of these species and their derivatives (like caviar) extremely regulated, the objective being to protect the wild specimens of these species in the natural environment. As a result, currently, the international trade of sturgeons (and their caviar) is only done with farmed specimens raised in captivity.

However, some weeks ago FEAP learned that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)² intends to add two amendments to its Endangered Species Act legislation (ESA)³ aiming to ban the trade and the presence of the five European species of sturgeons (*Acipenser schrenkii*, *Acipenser stellatus*, *Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, *Acipenser nudiiventris* and *Acipenser persicus*) and their derivatives on United States soil:

- Docket FWS-HQ-ES-2020-0100 (*Acipenser schrenkii*)⁴
- Docket FWS-HQ-ES-2021-0073 ("Ponto-Caspian" Sturgeon: *Acipenser stellatus*, *Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*, *Acipenser nudiiventris* and *Acipenser persicus*)⁵

Mr Benoît Thomassen, chair of the FEAP Sturgeon Commission has stated that "this modification of the legislation is based on the state of the wild stocks of these species but fails to take into account the existence of farmed specimens that are perfectly traceable and distinguishable from wild sturgeons. Moreover, it also negates all the efforts undertaken by numerous sturgeon farmers in Europe, and in the world, that contribute to efforts to reintroduce these species in the wild, by maintaining broodstock and rearing fingerlings for restocking in the natural environment".

If these amendments are finally signed, their inaccurate interpretation of the situation will completely block the trade of EU caviar by preventing the many European producers from exporting to the United States, besides putting an end to the US national production of these species.

¹ <https://cites.org/eng/disc/what.php>

² <https://www.fws.gov/>

³ <https://www.fws.gov/law/endangered-species-act>

⁴ <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FWS-HQ-ES-2020-0100>

⁵ <https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2022-14731.pdf>