



## Danube Sturgeon

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### 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.

## 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](#)