

## Our achievements

Website is up and running, you may check it out! <http://danube-sturgeons.org>  
Content-related improvements are pending, including translation into national languages.

Baseline questionnaires are ready for use for fishing communities and law enforcement authorities in Ukraine and Serbia.

Capacity-building workshops with authorities on sturgeon biology and conservation have kicked-off in Ukraine. Insofar, 6 such trainings for the Fish Agency have been held.

May, Odessa | WWF-UA facilitated a regional workshop between DDBRA (RO) and DDBR (UA) authorities to improve cross-border cooperation on sturgeon protection ([memos here](#)).

May, Brussels | Our project was featured at the LIFE Information & Networking Event in Brussels (part of the Green Week), with a presentation held by Jutta ([presentation](#) & [video](#)).

June, Sofia | The first communications team workshop was held, which led to the finalisation of the regional communications strategy ([memos here](#))

June, Bucharest | The first Stakeholder Committee meeting was organized, with participation from the police, customs, NAFA, DDBRA.

Our project was presented at the LIFE Info Day event in Bucharest by DDBRA (RO); the team received very good feedback from the LIFE monitoring team in Ro (NEEMO GEIE)

June | Teams in BG, RS, UA celebrated the Danube Day in schools and local communities.

## Our work in photos and media



Authorities in Ukraine and Romania meet in Odessa to discuss cross-border cooperation on sturgeon protection (May 2017)



First National Stakeholder Committee meeting in Bucharest to discuss cooperation in the new phase of the project (June 2017)



Communications team workshop in Sofia (June 2017)



Visit to Vilково community in Ukraine (Feb 2017)



First meeting with fishermen in Isaccea, Romania (Mar. 2017)



Cristina Munteanu, talking about the current situation of Danube sturgeons ([link to news article](#)) and poaching ([link to radio broadcast](#));

Natalia Gozak, talking about the Ukrainian-Romanian trans-border cooperation on sturgeon conservation on public television ([link to TV programme, 4'35"](#))

## Our work in numbers

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**1** project website in  
**5** languages:  
EN, BG, RO, UA, RS

**25** visits to  
**22** communities<sup>1</sup>,  
**126** fishing community members engaged in  
conversations around the project

**1** Stakeholder Committee meeting (RO), with  
representation from NAFA, police, customs,  
DDBRA

**6** trainings with law  
enforcement authorities in UA  
(Fish Agency & Fish patrol),  
**151** participants in total

**1** regional workshop of  
enforcement officials in RO  
and UA to foster sharing of  
knowledge, experiences,  
and best practice  
procedures and reinforce  
trans-boundary  
cooperation and effective  
cross-border measures

**13** personal meetings with  
authority bodies,  
including border police (BG, RO, UA), EAFA  
(BG), Fish Agency (UA), Fish patrol (UA), Fish  
guard (RS), Ministry of agriculture and  
environmental protection (RS), etc.

**3,238** gadgets produced for distribution in RO,  
RS, UA, including pens, notebooks, measuring  
tapes, first aid kit, head lights, T-shirts.

<sup>1</sup> **Bulgaria-Danube:** Belene, Tutrakan, Nikopol, Vidin-Novo Selo, Lomo; **Bulgaria -Black Sea:** Balchik, Krapec/Durankulak, Varna, Kavarna, Byala, Chernomomrets/Kraimorie-Bourgas; **Romania:** Fetesti, Borcea, Galati, Giurgeni-Vadu Oii, Jurilovca, Isacea; **Serbia:** Prahovo, Radujevac, Negotin; **Ukraine:** Leski, Vilkovo.

## Stories from the field

### Romania

A couple of representatives from fishermen associations were invited to join the Stakeholder Committee in Romania, as part of the project. They already have some ideas on potential alternative income options (in Borcea, Galati). In Jurilovca, people agreed to provide support to the project's activities but remain somehow reserved to engage fully, as they don't know the project team very well. In Giurgeni-Vadu Oii, the head of the fishermen association requested support on a study regarding the visitors' references for alternative activities that could be provided by fishermen (this info can also be relevant for the project activities on alternative income development).

### Serbia

Among the fishermen associations (commercial and anglers), there is a strong desire for a moratorium on Sterlet fishing for at least five years. There are only two registered commercial fishermen in the project area. Until now, fishermen only revealed cases of sturgeon poaching on the Romanian side of the Danube. The team will invest more efforts in building legitimacy and trust in the community to be able to get more inside stories. In addition, the RS and RO teams will work closely to facilitate a meeting on the Romanian side of the Danube later in the project.

## Ukraine

Key outcomes of the UA-RO WWF-facilitated workshop in Odessa in May 2017: **(i)** DDBRA (RO), DBR (UA) and UA NAFA bodies (Fish Patrol and Odessa Centre of Yugniro) are ready to exchange info on the start of the mass sturgeon downstream migration event; **(ii)** the specialised Romanian interdepartmental commission and NAFA (from UA Ag Ministry) plan to carry out bilateral consultations on synchronisation of fishing prohibition periods in border areas; **(iii)** NAFA (UA) and DDBRA (RO) will investigate the possibility for joint control actions, as it was clarified by Border Police that the legal prerequisites are in place; **(iv)** DDBRA is ready to support a joint training for participants of such actions; **(v)** In autumn 2017 a similar visit could be considered by the UA delegation to RO; **(vi)** Izmail Border Police department prepared a short analysis on sturgeon-related violations and expects WWF to draw public attention to the cases of poaching on further prosecution stages; **(vii)** DBR is interested in information from BG and RS colleagues on their sturgeon protection measures.

*“This year carp fishing prohibition periods in RO and UA were not synchronized for 15 days, RO started and ended 14 days earlier (May 15) at the bordering area with DBR while in Ukraine this period lasts till May, 29. And on May 16 we’ve conducted monitoring for carp and identified that only 6% of this fish has already spawned. RO fishermen were recently stopped at UA border for fishing in UA waters. Prohibition period for herring fishing was also not synchronized for several days this year, which also resulted in certain tension among fishermen. So I see the clear need to coordinate decisions for the fishing prohibition periods at border areas.”*

(Mr. Voloshevich @ DBR-DDBRA meeting, Odessa)

## Bulgaria

Some communities are still indifferent towards existing fishing regulations and are not really interested in changing behaviour or to cooperate with the authorities (Black Sea: Krapec/Durankulak; Kavarna- Zhelenka, Bunata, Chirakmana; Tutrakan; Danube-Nikopol); other communities are already more open and willing to tell more inside stories (Danube: Belene, Vetren, Vidin Novo-Selo; BS: Varna, (Chernomorets). From the authorities’ point of view, there is willingness to cooperate and coordinate efforts; the border police from Ruse also suggested they would need a manual / methodology for checks and controls of legal imports of fish and fisheries products and also suggested organising joint control on the river between the Bulgarian and Romanian border police and WWF (this could give insights about the gaps and weaknesses of the methods the border police use in both countries).

*“The meeting was very difficult. With my mention of the word sturgeons, all fishermen close up and start giving each other looks. When answering questions about fishing, they are vague. Fishermen are not trusting; they don’t welcome me and think that what we do is impeding their fishing. Very few speak Bulgarian. I am not sure they understand what we were discussing. The fishing community in Nikopol is divided, and they don’t talk to each other [...] One of the fishermen we had worked with before has given up fishing altogether...”*

(Sturgeon advocate’s field notes, Nikopol community)

## Key upcoming events and milestones

