

# Russian, Ship, Persian, and Stellate Sturgeon Proposed Endangered Listing

## Public Hearing



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
August 11, 2022

# Agenda

- Meeting Ground Rules
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Presentation
- Public Comments
- Closing Remarks

# GROUND RULES

1. Microphones and videos of the audience will be turned off during the presentation.
2. This presentation will be recorded and posted to the website.
3. Comments can be submitted verbally today after the presentation, or via mail or regulations.gov (further information to be provided in this presentation).
4. Comments will be limited today to 5 minutes per participant, in order to allow everyone who is on the pre-registered commenter list the opportunity to offer a comment. We ask that you be mindful and respectful of this time limit.
5. If guidelines are not followed, your microphone will be muted, and we will move to the next person.

This public hearing will offer information about the Russian, ship, Persian, and stellate sturgeon, the Service's proposal to list the species as endangered under the Endangered Species Act, and explain how the public can comment on this proposal. After the presentation, the public will have an opportunity to provide verbal comments on the proposal.

## Participating employees of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service:

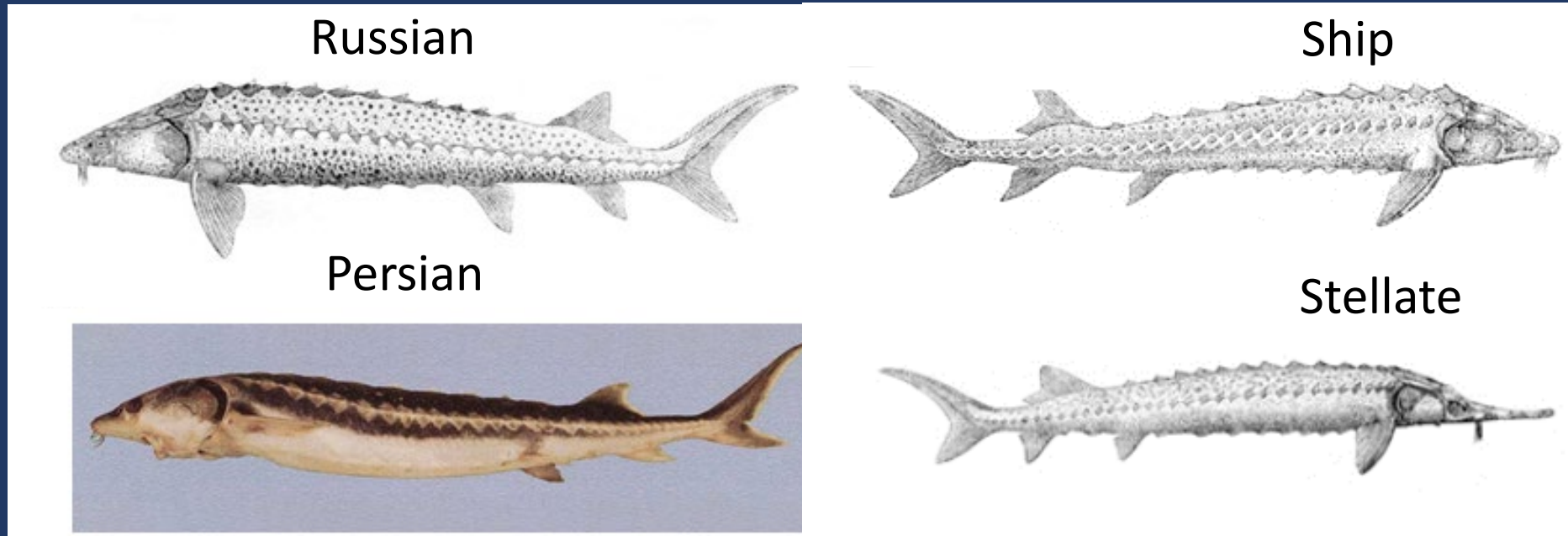
Elizabeth Maclin, Chief, Branch of Delisting and Foreign Species

Demetra Panos, Biologist, Branch of Delisting and Foreign Species

# What Action is Being Proposed?

- We proposed to list the Russian, ship, Persian, and stellate sturgeon as endangered on May 25, 2022
- A Public Comment period is currently open through August 25, 2022
  - Please submit comments via the public hearing portion of this meeting, electronically online, or in writing
- A final listing rule is due May 25, 2023

# Species Description



- ❖ Large fish – reaching up to 2 – 2.4 meters in length
- ❖ Downward-facing mouth
- ❖ Cartilaginous skeleton
- ❖ Series of bony plates in rows along their backs
- ❖ Tactile barbels hang from their mouth

# Life History

Downstream drift

8– 11 days

2-8 days

6-22 years

Longevity:  
30-70 years

Egg

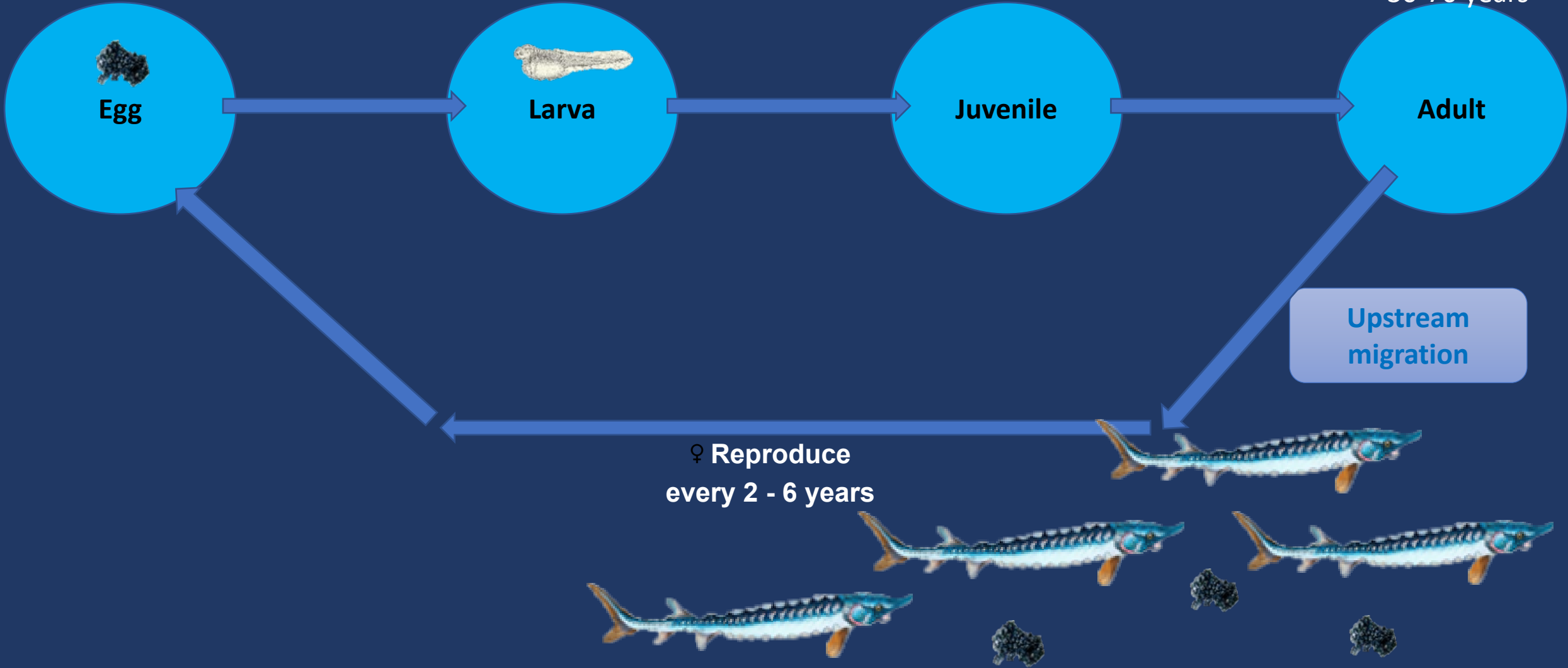
Larva

Juvenile

Adult

Upstream migration

♀ Reproduce  
every 2 - 6 years



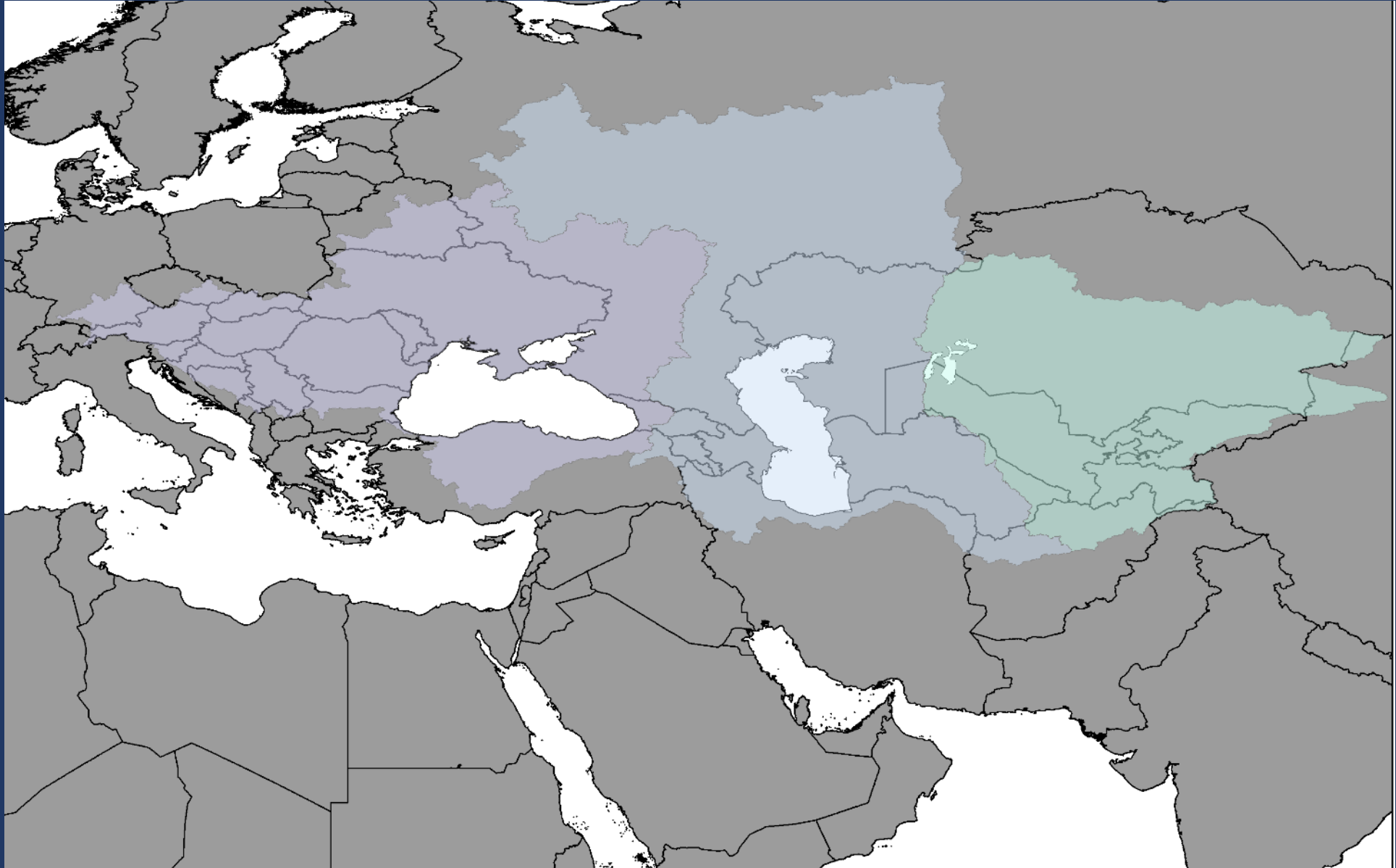
# Habitat Requirements

- Require connectivity of feeding and spawning grounds
- Diet varies by species but generally eat small fish, mollusks, worms, and crustaceans
- Specific flow rates and depths required for spawning
- Water temperature 8–16 °C (Russian, ship, and stellate) 16-25 °C (Persian)
- Clean, unpolluted water
- Well-oxygenated, low-turbidity water
- Water of suitable temperature and flow rate for spawning and development

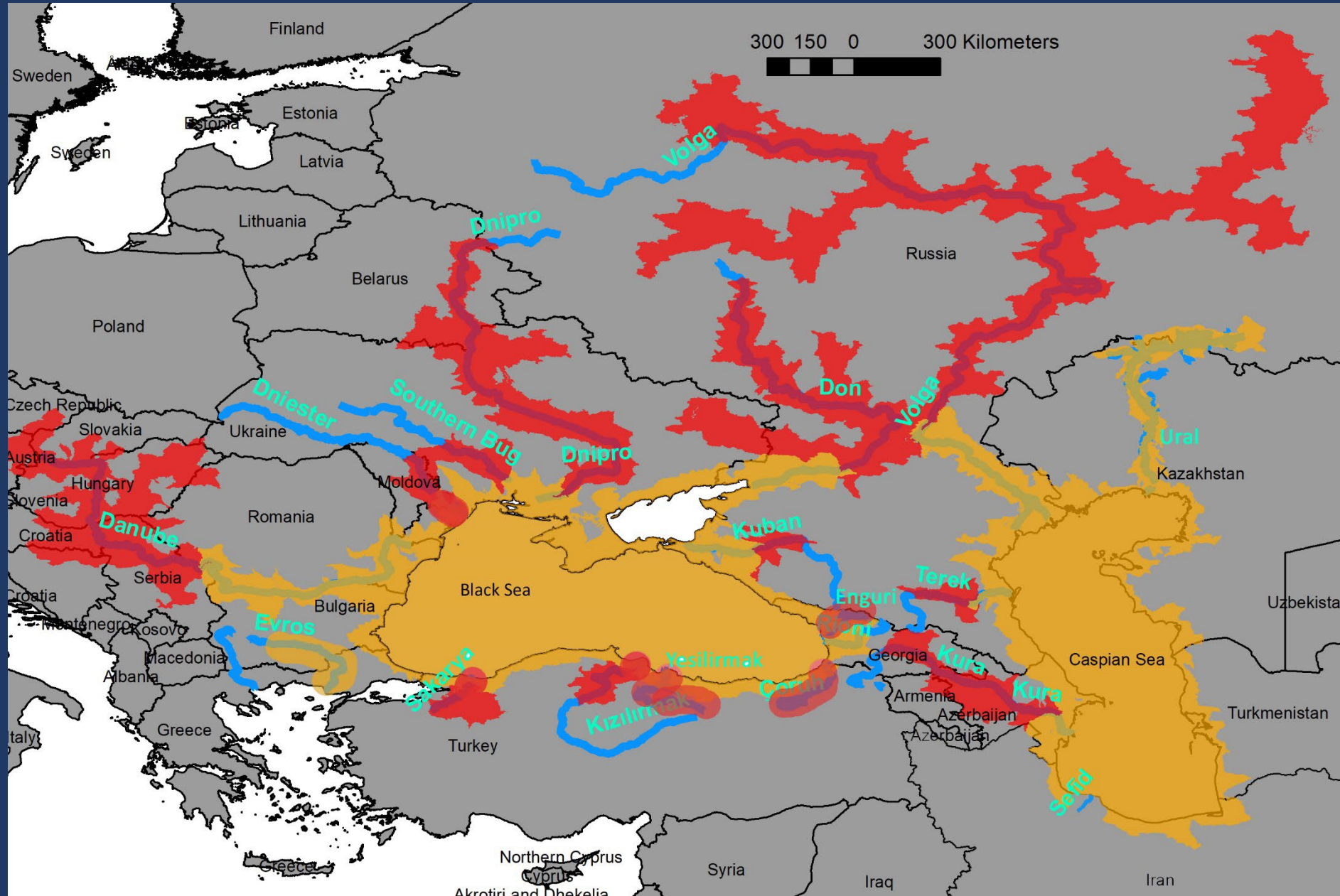




# Geographic Context



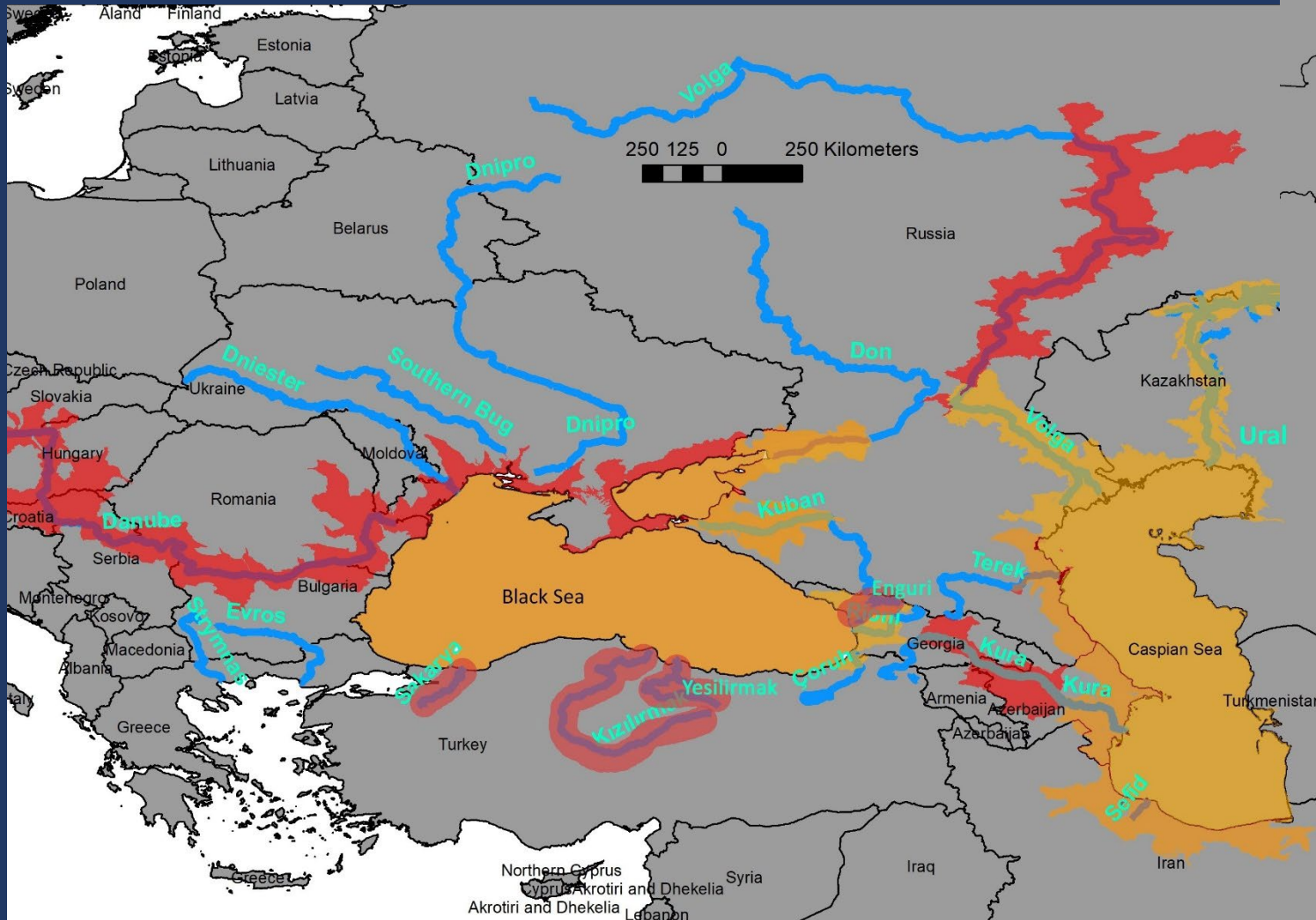
# Range – Russian sturgeon



Extant

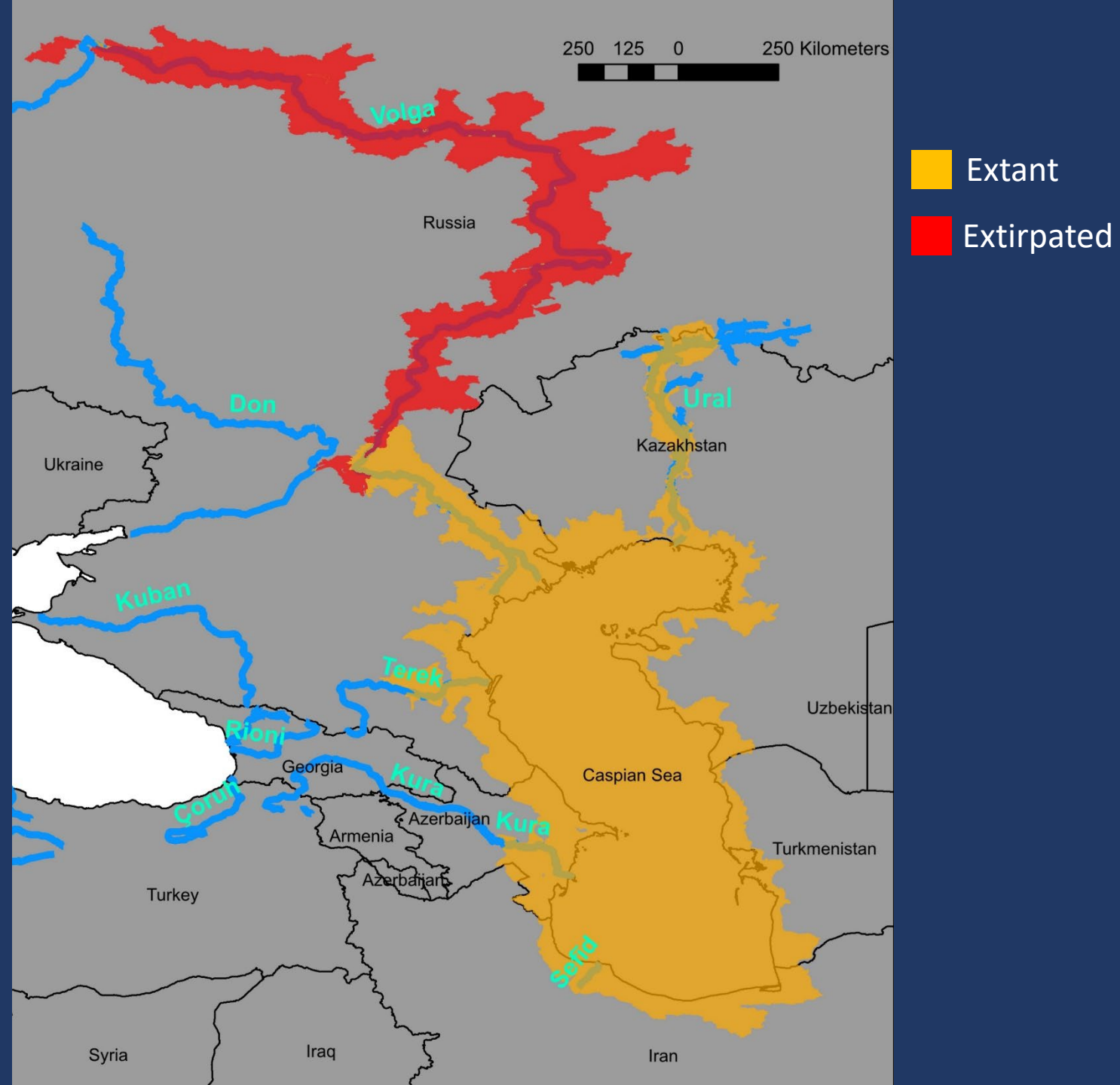
Extirpated

# Range – Ship sturgeon

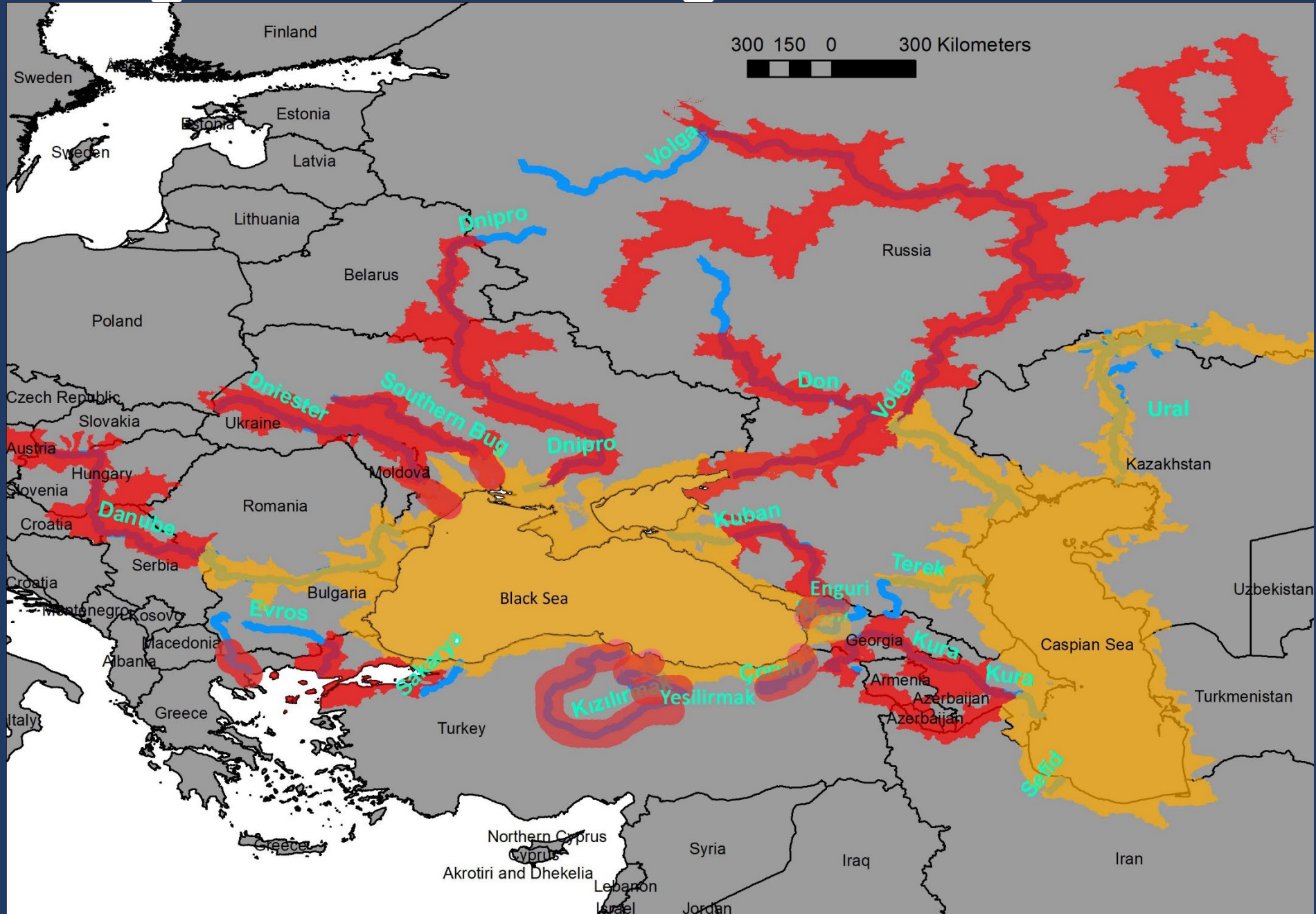


- Extant
- Extirpated

# Range – Persian sturgeon



# Range – Stellate sturgeon



- Extant
- Extirpated

# Threats

- Dams
- Overharvest
- Invasive species
- Pollution
- Water level changes
- Climate Change
- Disease



# 3-R Framework

## Resiliency

- a population's ability to be self-sustaining and to withstand natural demographic and environmental variability; improved in large, connected populations.

## Redundancy

- having a large number of populations, which safeguards against localized, catastrophic events.

## Representation

- the species' capacity to adapt to changing environments.

# Current Condition: Summary

## Resiliency

- Low to very low
- Likely no self-sustaining populations in historical ranges

## Representation

- Varies by species
- Likely reduced representation from inter-breeding of wild and stocked fish or hybridization with non-native species escaped from aquaculture

## Redundancy

- Low to very low
- Considerably reduced compared to historical level both in range and abundance (greater than 80% decline)



# Russian, ship, Persian, and stellate Sturgeon Determinations:

Endangered – any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

After assessing the best scientific and commercial information available, we conclude that the all four Ponto-Caspian sturgeon currently lack sufficient resiliency, redundancy, and representation for their continued existence to be secure and determine them to be in danger of extinction throughout all of their ranges

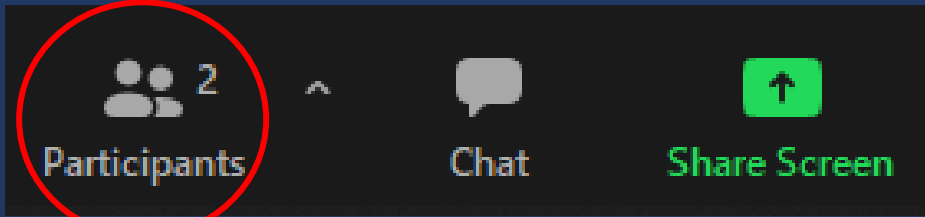
# Public comment period

- Service seeks new scientific and commercial information about the Ponto-Caspian sturgeon
  - This virtual public hearing is an opportunity for participants to comment on the proposed rule
  - The comment period closes on August 25, 2022
- All documents relating to this proposed rule can be found at <http://www.regulations.gov> under Docket No. FWS-HQ-ES-2021-0073
  - A copy of this presentation will also be available at: <https://www.fws.gov/event/public-hearing-proposed-listing-ponto-caspian-sturgeon>

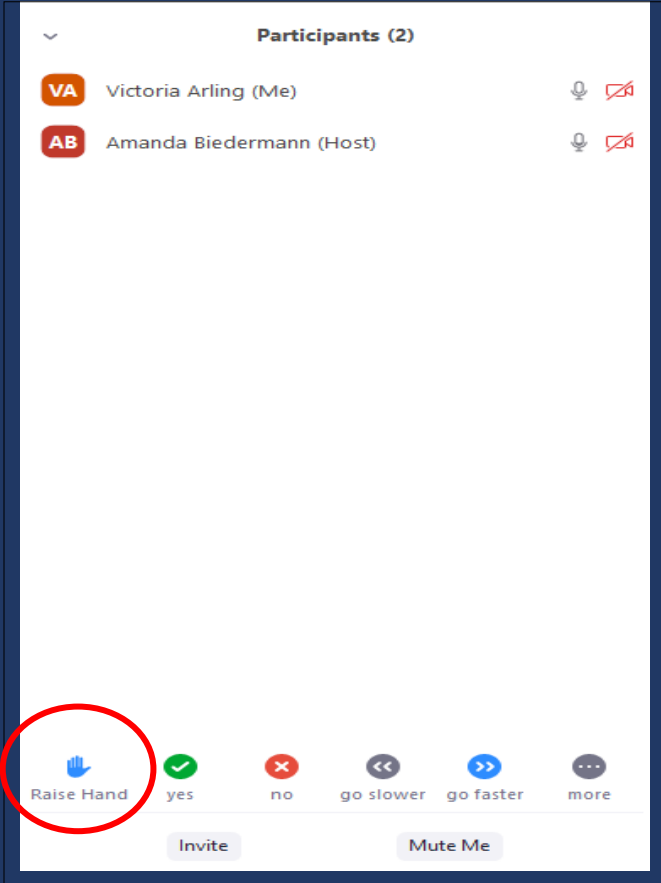
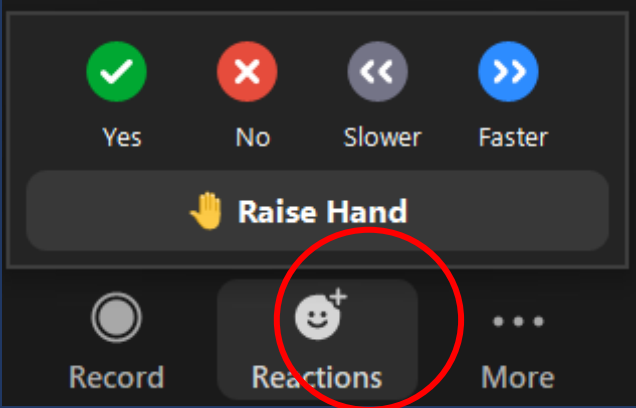
# INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMMENTERS

- Verbal public comments will be accepted in order of registration.
- When it is your turn, the moderator will call out your name and display your name on the screen.
- To indicate that you are ready to offer your comment when the moderator reads your name, please use the “raise hand” feature at the bottom of your participants list or, if you are calling in through the phone, please press \*9 to “raise your hand.”
- The moderator will then unmute you so that you can offer your comment.
- You will have 5 minutes to offer your comment. The moderator will prompt you to finish your comment once you have reached this 5-minute limit.
- Again, please spell out your full first and last name before you provide your comment.
- Your comment will be included in the project record.

Zoom Participants Icon



Zoom Reactions Icon



To access the raise hand feature, click on the participants list icon at the bottom of your Zoom screen, then click on the raise hand button at the bottom of your participants list. If you are calling in using your phone, press **\*9** on your keypad.

\*If you are unable to offer or complete your verbal public comment during the meeting today, the USFWS encourages you to submit your comment in writing through the *Federal Register*.

**Current Commenter:**

**Next Commenter:**

If you are having issues with your computer microphone, please dial in to the meeting: **Phone:** 346 248 7799;  
**Webinar ID:** 830 6668 8709

# Thank you for joining!

If you would like to offer a verbal public comment, please let us know by accessing the raise hand feature at the bottom of your participants list, in your Zoom reactions icon, or by pressing \*9 on your phone keypad. You can also chat directly to Megan Stone.

The USFWS is available to accept verbal public comments until 7:30pm Eastern Time.

Written comments can also be submitted via [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) (Search Docket Number FWS-HQ-ES-2021-0073).

# Thank you!

The public hearing has now ended.

We will accept comments received or postmarked on or before  
August 25, 2022

Submit by U.S. mail to:

Public Comments Processing. Attn: FWS-HQ-ES-2021-0073

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

MS: BPHC; 5275 Leesburg Pike,

Falls Church, VA 22041–3803

or via [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)

(Search Docket Number FWS-HQ-ES-2021-0073)