



NOTICE TO THE WILDLIFE IMPORT/EXPORT COMMUNITY



October 28, 2005

Subject: Trade in Beluga Sturgeon (*Huso huso*) Caviar and Meat Suspended from Black Sea Basin Countries

Background: On April 21, 2004, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the listing of beluga sturgeon (*Huso huso*) as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). On March 4, 2005, the Service issued a special rule (Federal Register Vol. 70, No. 42 10493-10507) for beluga sturgeon that outlined requirements for the conservation of the species as provided for by section 4(d) of the ESA.

The special rule indicated that each Black Sea basin country wishing to export beluga caviar or beluga meat to the United States without a threatened species permit must submit basin-wide cooperative management plans and national legislation and regulations that implement these basin-wide management plans by September 6, 2005. The rule states that the Service will immediately suspend trade with all countries in a basin or with a given country if the countries fail to submit this required information.

The Service announced that it has suspended the import of, and foreign commerce in, beluga sturgeon (*Huso huso*) caviar or meat originating in the Black Sea basin countries of Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Turkey, and Ukraine because the required information was not submitted. This suspension applies to shipments that have been exported directly from these countries, re-exported through an intermediary country, or transported as personal or household effects. It also prohibits foreign commerce.

The Service previously suspended trade in beluga sturgeon caviar and meat from Caspian Sea basin countries on September 30th.

Action: Effective immediately, the Service will refuse clearance on imports of beluga sturgeon caviar (including products containing caviar such as cosmetics) or meat originating from Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Turkey, and Ukraine that were shipped on or after October 28, 2005.

Affected imports include caviar or meat shipped directly from these countries, re-exported from an intermediary country, or transported as personal or household effects. Re-export, in beluga sturgeon caviar or meat originating from the Black Sea basin on or after October 28, 2005 is also prohibited.

Interstate commerce of beluga caviar or meat legally imported prior to the suspension will continue to be authorized under the special rule. Because of the perishable nature of sturgeon caviar and meat, interstate commerce must be completed within 18 months from the issuance date of the original CITES export permit.

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