Table of Contents

Summar	y	7
1. Introd	luction	
1.1. Stur	geons as unique biological and ecological ecosystem entities	
1.2. Gen	eral environmental threats to population decline and risk for extinction	
1.3. Biol	ogical characteristics of the Common sturgeon	
1.3.1.	State of knowledge on the historical range of A. sturio	10
1.3.2.	Sequential decline of the populations within range watersheds	11
1.4. Driv	ing forces for conservation	12
1.4.1.	Application of conservation guidelines	14
1.4.2.	Potential options for sturgeon remediation	14
1.4.3.	Political background for sturgeon remediation in Germany and the EU	15
1.4.4.	To split a hair: Terminology considerations on sturgeon re-establishment	16
1.5. Hist	oric conservation and enhancement approaches	17
1.6. Orga	anisational prerequisites for a concerted remediation	18
1.7. Scop	e of the remediation programme	18
1.7.1.	Verification of species status on population level	19
1.7.2.	Development of ex-situ stocks	20
1.8. Obje	ctives and scientific working hypothesis	24
2. Result	5	27
2.1. Publ	ications and submitted manuscripts addressing the objectives of the working	
hypo	thesis	27
2.1.1.	Characterization of the species	
2.1.2.	Historic reasons for the decline	
2.1.3.	Testing substrate requirements for juveniles	
2.1.4.	Identification of critical habitat availability for early life stages in the Oder J	River
	catchment	
2.1.5.	Verification of transport technology for A. oxyrinchus broodstock	29
2.1.6.	Potential threats for re-establishment: impacts of Exotic sturgeons	31
2.1.7.	Anticipated Fisheries impacts on recovery measures and potential managem	ient
	implications	31
2.2. Appl	ication of the results	32
2.3. Publ	ications	33
2.3.1.	Species characterization	33
2.3.2.	Reasons for the decline of the species	49
2.3.3.	Substrate selectivity of early life phases	10
2.3.4.	Localization of habitat for early life phases	···· // קיף
2.3.4.1.	Initial development of a nabital survey	/ /
2.3.4.2.	Expansion of the habitat survey in the Oder River calchment	101
2.3.3.	Establishment of air transport techniques for adult sturgeon	115
2.3.0. 2 2 6 1	resence and effects of non-indigenous stureon species in open waters	115
4.3.0.1. 1 2 6 1	The role of interpretional trade in the communication of evolution	172
2.3.0.2. 7 2 7	ne role of international trade in the occurrence of exotic sturgeons.	120
4.3.1. 7 2 9	Summaining overview	127
2.3.0.	Summarizing Overview	157



4

3. Dis	scussion	. 147
<i>3.1</i> . J	Verify species identity and determine the feasibility to employ model species for	
	experiments overcoming initial deficiencies in basic knowledge	. 148
3.1.1.	Identification of specimens to be selected for remediation	. 148
3.1.2.	Characterization A. sturio / A. oxyrinchus	. 149
3.2. E	Cological and biological characteristics of the species	154
3.2.1.	Utilization of model species to determine common requirements and thereby ident	ify
	common threats	. 155
3.3. D	Determine the reasons for the historic decline of populations and verify the	
	degree of their persistence	. 157
3.3.1.	Fisheries	. 157
3.3.2.	Habitat loss	. 158
3.3.3.	Water quality	159
3.3.4.	Mechanical stress	160
3.3.5.	Climate change	161
3.3.6.	Effects of the population decline and consequences for reproductive success.	162
3.3.7.	Implications of factors contributing to the decline for the management plan	162
3.4. Id	dentification of species-specific traits in behaviour and physiology linked to	
	environmental conditions for reproductive success	164
3.4.1.	Habitat requirements in early life stages	164
3.4.2.	Relevance of the findings for future actions	165
3.5. D	etermine availability of critical habitat for early life stages in rivers	
1	historically being important	166
3.5.1.	Habitat assessment	166
3.5.2.	Assessment of habitat quality for reproduction and early life stages	167
3.5.3.	Verification of the criteria utilized for the assessment of habitat quality	167
3.5.4.	Suitability of the habitat identified	168
3.5.5.	Alternative strategies to assess potential of rivers for remediation of sturgeon	
	populations	169
3.5.6.	Requirements to preserve/improve the available habitat (Management	
	implications)	169
3.6. Ia	lentify and adapt methods for broodstock development for endangered	
	species as basis for subsequent reproduction and release	.171
3.6.1.	Identification of potential donor populations	171
3.6.2.	Ex situ conservation	172
3.6.3.	Adaptation of transport techniques	172
3.6.4.	Application of the results	.173
3.7. D	evelopment and evaluation of methods circumventing pertaining problems -	
su	ch as fisheries pressure or introduction of exotic sturgeon species - to	
pro	wide support measures for management	.174
3.7.1.	Representative character of the data obtained	175
3.7.2.	Feasibility to apply alternative fisheries techniques	176
3.7.3.	Effectiveness of the technique applied	177
3.7.4.	Socio-economic conditions on influencing the applicability	178
3.7.5.	Requirements to substitute the present techniques	178
3.8. R	isks for remediation associated with the introduction, culture, trade an	
	release of exotic sturgeon species	177
3.8.1.	Limitations to data acquisition	. 177
3.8.2.	Potential impact of exotics on remediated stocks	. 178
3.8.3.	Concurrence for feed	. 178

4. Con	clusions	35
4.1.	Status of species identification and the feasibility to utilize model species 18	13
4.2.	The identification of historic reasons for the decline of the species abundance and the degree to which these impacts persist today are considered key factors	
12	to develop concepts and strategies for remediation measures.	4
4.3.	Substrate preferences of early life history stages indicate essential habitat characteristics	86
4.4.	In-situ identification of critical habitats for early life stages	37
4.5.	Transport stress has important implications for the viability of transferred specimens and thereby may determine the success of the programme in	
	building up the brood stocks	37
4.6.	Identifying criteria that point to potential threats for re-establishment:	38
4.7.	Exotic sturgeon species and their potential interaction with conservation	
	measures 18	39
5. Out	look 19	90
6. Ack	nowledgements 19	91
7. Refe	erences 19	92