European sturgeon *Acipenser sturio* bycatch in the NE Atlantic : focus on the French « strategy »

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Equipe Freema: Fonctionnement et restauration des écosystèmes estuariens et des populations de migrateurs amphihalins https://www6.bordeaux-aquitaine.inrae.fr/eabx/EABX/FREEMA



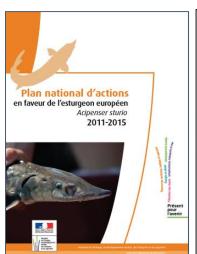


- > Context of *A. sturio* recovery in western Europe
- Collapse of the populations, last natural reproduction observed in France 1994
- Stocking implemented with juveniles born in captivity (St Seurin Captive Stock)
- ➤ In France Gironde Garonne Dordogne system

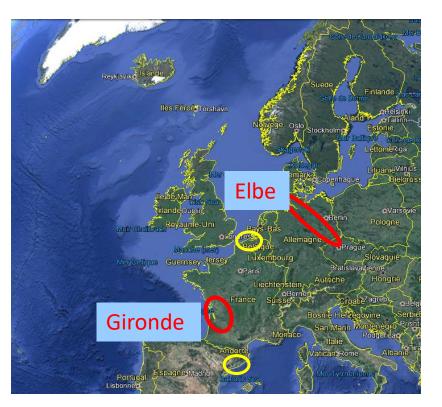
➤ In **Germany Elbe river**

1995, 2007-2015 and since 2022

More than **1,8 M juveniles**released

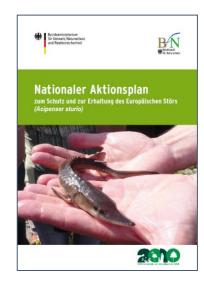






2008-2015

About **20 000 juveniles** released



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Bycatch Mitigation Workshop

4th September 2024 Bordeaux

Experimental releases in The Rhine (The Netherlands) and in the Ebre (Spain)

- Monitoring of the stocked populations : focus on the French "strategy"
- One of the monitoring tools: Incidental observations / Bycatch, similar to citizen science, with advantages and drawbacks
- In France **fishing ban** 1982
- In 2011 implementation of a National Action Plan involving fishermen representatives for increasing awareness









> Bycatch / Incidental observation information provided

 Data Base « STURWILD » built to gather and exchange observations information between the partners of the French NAP

STURWILD Déclarations Paramètres Administration documentation Déconnexion ?

Key information

- Localisation
- Date
- Type of gears
- Size and state of the fish
- ...



Estuaire Gironde juin 2023









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> Bycatch / incidental observations information provided

- Advantages
- Opportunity for awareness of the fishermen and citizens
- ➤ Large scale data in different environment, especially at sea, with limited cost
- > Increase international cooperation

Drawbacks & Bias

- Declaration based on volunteering
- Qualitative assessment : only presence data
 - ➤ High variability of the fishing activities, behaviour and gears
- Some bycatch can lead to mortality

Bycatch information provided

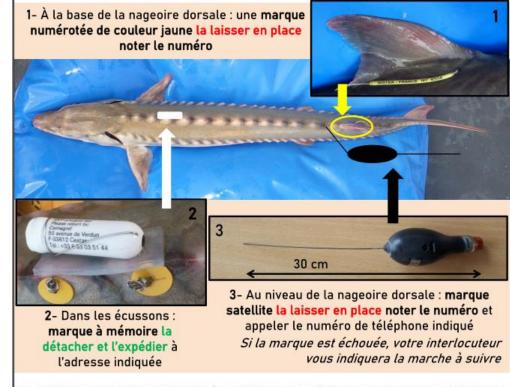
- Bycatch a way to increase observations of tagged fish at large scale
- Flyer built for the MOMIE & DiaDES project



Marquage des ESTURGEONS EUROPEENS Suivi des déplacements et des habitats

Migrateur emblématique, *Acipenser sturio* est menacé de disparition. Afin de contribuer à la restauration de l'espèce, les retours d'informations sur les esturgeons observés sont essentiels!

Depuis 2009, lors des campagnes scientifiques dans l'estuaire de la Gironde, les individus capturés sont marqués. Actuellement vous pouvez rencontrer trois types de marques :



► L'esturgeon européen est une espèce strictement protégée. En cas de capture accidentelle d'un esturgeon, il convient de le relâcher rapidement et avec précaution quelque soit son état.



▶ Vous avez observé un esturgeon européen ? Déclarez le au 05 57 49 67 59 ou sur sturio.fr

MERCI de votre vigilance et de votre collaboration

















> Bycatch / Incidental observations

1891 incidental observations recorded between 2006 et 2023* with 1850 in France

* Sturwild DB

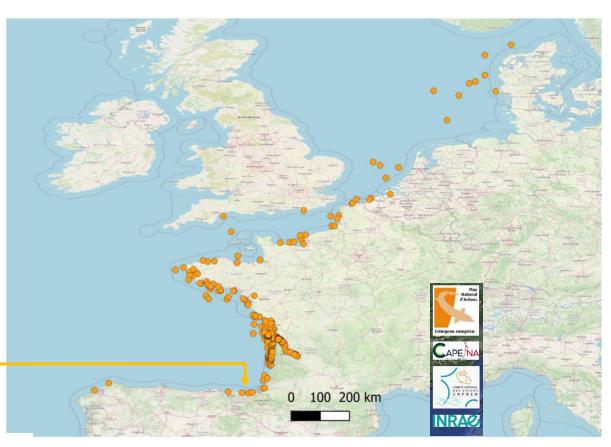
Spain April 2023, Tagged in the Gironde estuary in 2017



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Observation at sea from the North of Spain to the South of Norway

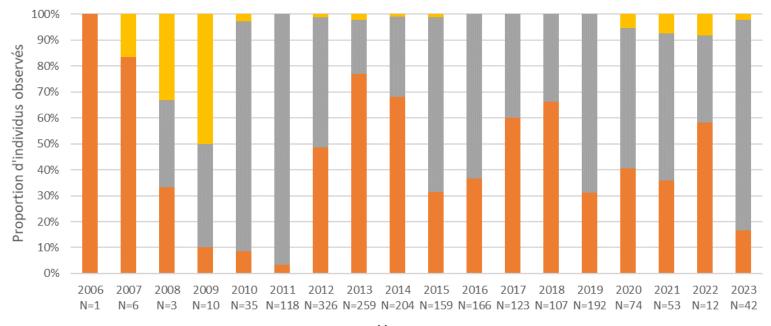
> Observations in different environments







Proportion of individuals observed in the different environment



■ Sea ■ Estuary ■ Rivers

- Sea and Gironde estuary
 - Based Life cycle more fish at sea during the last years but fisheries for Meager in the Gironde estuary explaining the highest proportion of *A. sturio* observed in the estuary
- Observations in the rivers
 Dordogne and Garonne
 - Large fish since 2020

Years
N=Number of *A. sturio* observed



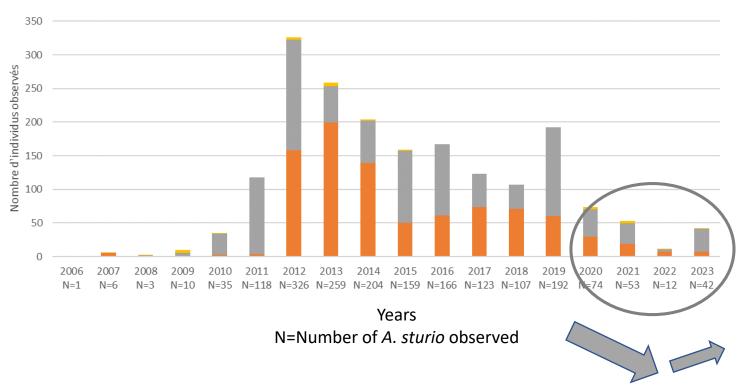
> Variations in numbers of observations







Number of individuals observed in the different environment

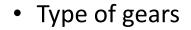


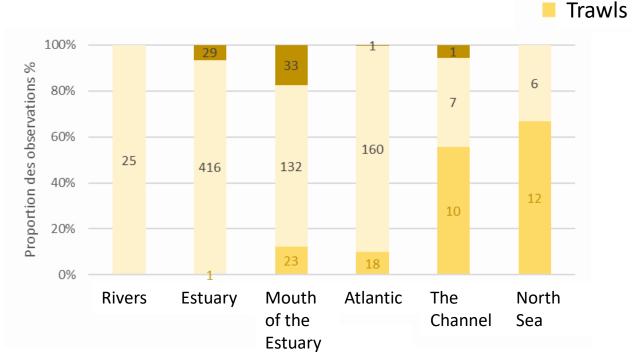
- Sea Estuary Rivers
- Increase of the number of declaration from 2011
 - Linked to the awareness campaign within the NAP and to the stocking action
- Decrease of the number of observation since 2020
 - Difficult to disentangle the behaviour of the fishermen declaration and the presence of the fish



Observers and gears

• Ab. 95% of the observations correspond to bycatch from professional fishermen : declared directly by the fishermen, by their representatives or observers or through press article













Nets Lines

Mortality observations







	Wild population Fishing ban 1982	Sustained population
	1980-1994 (Rochard et al. 1997)	2006-2017 (Sturwild database)
Number of bycatch declared	179	1282
Mortality declaration rate	ab. 57 %	ab. 2%

> Fishing ban and awareness campaign benefit ?

-Last landing of a A. sturio in 2013 in France (North in the Channel): species identified once landed

-Some individuals found stranding or dead at the surface



Analysis of bycatch data

- Descriptive information presented to interpret with caution that need to be completed by specific monitoring to be able to make some quantitative assessment
- Modelling habitat preference at sea feasible with bycatch data + Mars 3D environmental variables

Habitat suitability

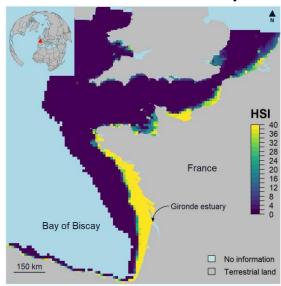


Fig. 5. Final habitat suitability map summing binary predictions of both final ensemble models I and II using the basic method. Values of this map ranged from 0 (i.e. the 40 binary predictions of both final ensemble models I and II agreed that the HSI of the cells were low) to 40 (i.e. the 40 binary predictions of both final ensemble models I and II agreed that the HSI of the cells were high) while intermediate values indicated variability between predictions.

Charbonnel et al. 2023

Gap analysis for protected marine area

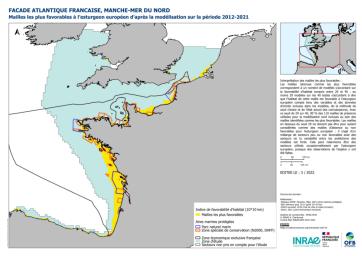


Figure 31 : Représentation des mailles avec les habitats les plus favorables à l'esturgeon européen, du réseau des aires marines protégées et de l'étendue (zone économique exclusive française) utilisés pour réaliser les «conservation gap analyses ». Les mailles retenues comme les plus favorables correspondent à un nombre de modèles s'accordant sur la d'avorabitié d'habitat tompris entailles retenues comme dels sur les 40 testés s'accordent à dire que l'habitat de cette maille est favorable à l'esturgeon européen compte tenu des variables, des données d'entrée incluses dans les modèles, de la méthode de seuil choisie et de l'état actuel des connaissances. Avec ce seuil de 29 sur 40, 90 % des 110 mailles de présence utilisées pour la modélisation sont incluses au sein des mailles identifiées comme les plus favorables. Les mailles en dessous du seuil 29 ne doivent pas être pour autant considérées comme des mailles d'absence ou non favorables pour l'esturgeon européen : il s'agit d'un mélange de secteurs peu/non favorables avec des secteurs où la variabilité entre les prédictions des modèles est forte. Cela peut néanmoins être des secteurs utilisés occasionnellement par l'esturgeon européen, puisque des observations de l'espèce y ont été faites.

MOMIE project







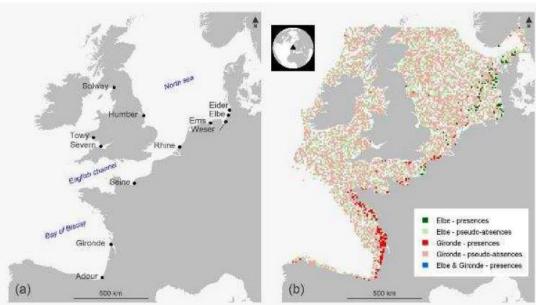


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Bycatch Mitigation Workshop 4th September 2024 Bordeaux

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- Analysis of bycatch data: habitat preference at sea at the European level, projection under future climatic conditions and stocking scenarios
- At sea (Atlantic, The Channel, North Sea), European scale thanks to French, German, Dutch and English bycatch data + Environmental variables (Polcom Esrem oceanic model)
- Climatic projection and stocking scenarios



Studied area and localisation of potential rivers to simulate stocking (Lassalle et al. 2010; Colclough et al. 2020)



Presence and pseudo-absence of A. sturio originated from Gironde or/and Elbe to analyse habitat preferences

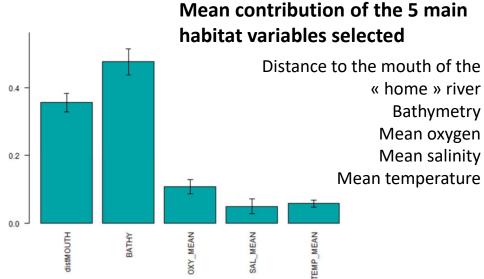


Figure 37 : Contributions moyennes relatives des 5 variables retenues dans le modèle d'ensemble final. Plus la barre est haute et plus la variable est importante pour expliquer les prédictions moyennes du modèle par rapport aux autres variables. Les barres verticales représentent l'écart type.

Charbonnel et al. 2024

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Bycatch Mitigation Workshop

- ➤ Habitat preference at sea at the European level, projection of future climatic conditions and stocking scenarios
 - Climatic projection for sea habitat and different stocking location











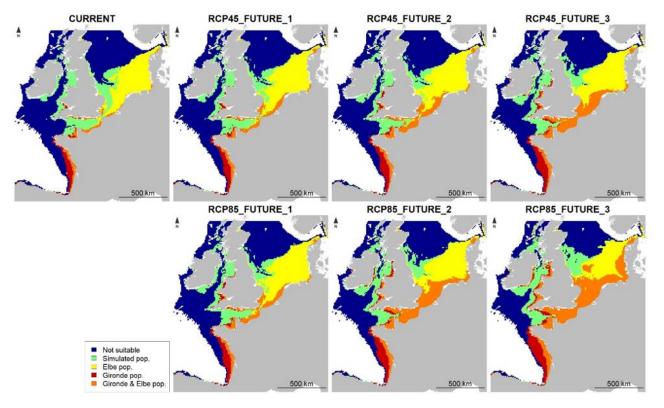


Figure 5: Maps overlapping the marine habitat accessible to Elbe and/or Gironde population(s) (yellow, orange and red colors indicate an overlap) and the remaining marine habitat accessible to the 10 hypothetical populations but not to Elbe and/or Gironde population(s) (green color). Overlaps are displayed under current and future (FUTURE_1, 2023-2052; FUTURE_2, 2047-2076; FUTURE 3, 2070-2099) marine conditions.

Not suitable
 Simulated pop.
 Elbe pop.
 Gironde pop.

Increase of suitable habitat surface at sea with climate change: Be careful not taking in account river suitability

Gironde & Elbe pop.

Large surface of suitable sea habitat reachable by the two current sustained population

Thank you to people involved, funding and Thank you for your attention



• In France within the national action plan: V. Lonni and previous people in charge at CNPMEM N. Michelet, M. Lecomte, F. Volage, J. Souben; L. Mas CAPENA



Fishermen and citizen who declared their observations



Funding















- Colleagues and student at INRAE : E. Quinton E. Rochard, A. Charbonnel, P. Lambert, G. Lassalle, P. Chèvre and scientific collaborations at Lausanne University A. Guisan
- International collaboration for proving bycatch data for the habitat modelling at the European scale: J. Gessner, N. Breve, E. Schrijver, S. Colclough ...