

New Brunswick News

BY IAN R. ROSS

Back to the Baltic

Sturgeon thrive in New Brunswick rivers and thanks to local efforts, they may do so in Europe as well. Recently Acadian Sturgeon and Caviar, a hatchery at Carter's Point, on the Kingston Peninsula near Saint John, sent 1000 juvenile sturgeon to repopulate rivers in Germany, after a request by the German Society to Save the Sturgeon. The eggs had come from wild Atlantic Sturgeon caught by local fishermen in the Saint John River.

At one time, European rivers flowing into the Baltic Sea were host to two species of sturgeon - European and Baltic sturgeon. The Atlantic Sturgeon, sent by Acadian, are genetically identical to Baltic sturgeon, species that died out in Europe as far back as 800-1200 years ago. "My sturgeon juveniles arrived OK to Germany," says Dr. Cor-

nel Ceapa, owner and operator of Acadian, reporting that they experienced no losses of fish in transit. "Although there was a ten-hour delay over the planned shipping duration because of the German customs in the Frankfurt airport," he adds.

These sturgeon will now help to restore the Baltic "Atlantic" Sturgeon population Germany, following similar projects in Poland over the previous two years.

Acadian Sturgeon and Caviar Inc. was founded in 2004. They raise both shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon, taken from wild stock. "They are used by researchers, state agencies or farmers in different countries for aquaculture, restocking or research," says Dr. Ceapa. Their facility, the Carter's Point Sturgeon Farm and Gene Bank, began to be developed last summer on a 2.5-

hectare parcel of land along the Saint John River. When fully operational, it is designed to have a production capacity of 165 tonnes of Sturgeon meat and 15 tonnes of caviar.

Shortnose sturgeon, along with European sturgeon, are on the red list in the United States and on the CITES Appendix 1, which means they are prohibited from being used in aquaculture (though they are the only two sturgeon species with such a distinction.) "In Canada, the only place where it is permitted to grow them in aquaculture in Saint John River catchment, as they are only found in this river," says Dr. Ceapa. "This is the reason why this species is not developed up to now for aquaculture by other companies."

Acadian Sturgeon and Caviar Inc., captures broodstock under a special permit by DFO and are registering as a "captive breeding operation" under

CITES regulations, which allows them to export shortnose sturgeon.

"Our final business is hard to finance because of the long time until you get to the final product - caviar... [so] our business strategy involves also selling stocking material," says Dr. Ceapa. "We are also developing a market for meat using the sturgeon males that we can separate from females at a very early age," he adds. The separation is accomplished through a blood-screening process developed by Dr. Ceapa who holds a PhD in Sturgeon Biology and Ecology from the universities of Lower Danube and Bordeaux I.

The company also catches shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon broodstock for the purpose of creating a gene bank that will be used both to develop a sturgeon aquaculture business for meat and caviar and supplying other growers and researchers from Canada and all over the world

A look at Sturgeon in N.B.



Dr. Cornel Ceapa and Dr. Ryszard Kolman, a client from the Fisheries Research Institute in Olsztyn, who has obtained juvenile sturgeon from Dr. Ceapa's company for the past two years, for restocking projects in Polish rivers flowing into the Baltic Sea. (Dorina Ceapa / Acadian Sturgeon & Caviar Inc. photo)

with live fish for aquaculture, research and restocking.

"Worldwide there are 27 species of sturgeon and all are threatened or endangered. It makes more and more sense that aquaculture can and will play an important role in saving sturgeon from extinction, both by offering stocking ma-

terial for restocking and by reducing the commercial pressure on the wild resources using the meat and caviar produced in sustainable aquaculture farms." said Dr. Ceapa

The hatchery can be reached at (506) 763-3202 or via the web at <http://acadian-sturgeon.com>.

