**European sea sturgeon** 

*Acipenser sturio*

Order: *Acipenseriformes*

Family: *Acipenseridae*

External appearance

In Latvia, the fish is thought to reach up to 20 years of age and to grow up to 2 m long with a weight of 245 kg.

Distribution

Historically found throughout Europe, along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean basin, and in the Mediterranean, Black and Baltic Seas. Today, the only naturally breeding population is found in the Garonne river basin in France.

Diet

In the sea, it feeds along the seabed on various molluscs, worms, crustaceans and small fish.

Development

Spawning migration takes place from the sea to rivers. Sturgeon spawn every second year in summer, when water temperatures are above 20° C. Spawning takes place in the swift currents of large and deep rivers, on rocky or gravelly riverbeds.

Fishing

Due to the poor state of the population, the species is currently of no importance to either commercial fishing or angling.

Interesting facts

Today sturgeon populations in Europe are critically threatened by overfishing, river damming, pollution and climate change. As part of the reintroduction programme, fishermen in Latvian marine waters catch small tagged sturgeon.