

ISS7 Report

The **7th international Symposium on Sturgeons** took place 21 -25 July 2013 in Nanaimo, BC, Canada.

The Symposium was run under the auspices of WSCS by Vancouver Island University (VIU) and the City of Nanaimo. Don Tillapaugh and his team comprising some 40 volunteers delivered a great job in organizing a very memorable and family-like meeting under the motto **“Sturgeon, Science and Society – at the Crossroads: Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century”**

A total of approx. 330 participants from 22 Nations attended the conference despite the fact that a large number of participants from Russia, Iran, China, Turkey and other countries were not able to participate due to continuous visa problems.

Most naturally the vast majority of participants originated from the host country and from the US, but more than 60 contributors originated from the EU.

ISS7 in accordance with the current problems observed with natural populations, put a strong focus on *sturgeon conservation in natural habitats; while a second major topic was associated to sturgeon culture as a conservation tool and the commercial production of sturgeon and by-products*. The program was structured in 4 parallel sessions to give room for the 170 contributions that were selected by the Scientific Advisory Committee for oral presentations in the fields of:

1. General Biology and Ecology
2. Status and Management of Populations
3. Sturgeon – a Heritage Fish. The local, regional and global importance of sturgeons in human history
4. Human Impacts on Sturgeons Stocks and Mitigation Measures
5. Aquaculture
6. Caviar, Processing and Marketing
7. Regulations for Conservation and International Trade (monitoring and enforcement, traceability)

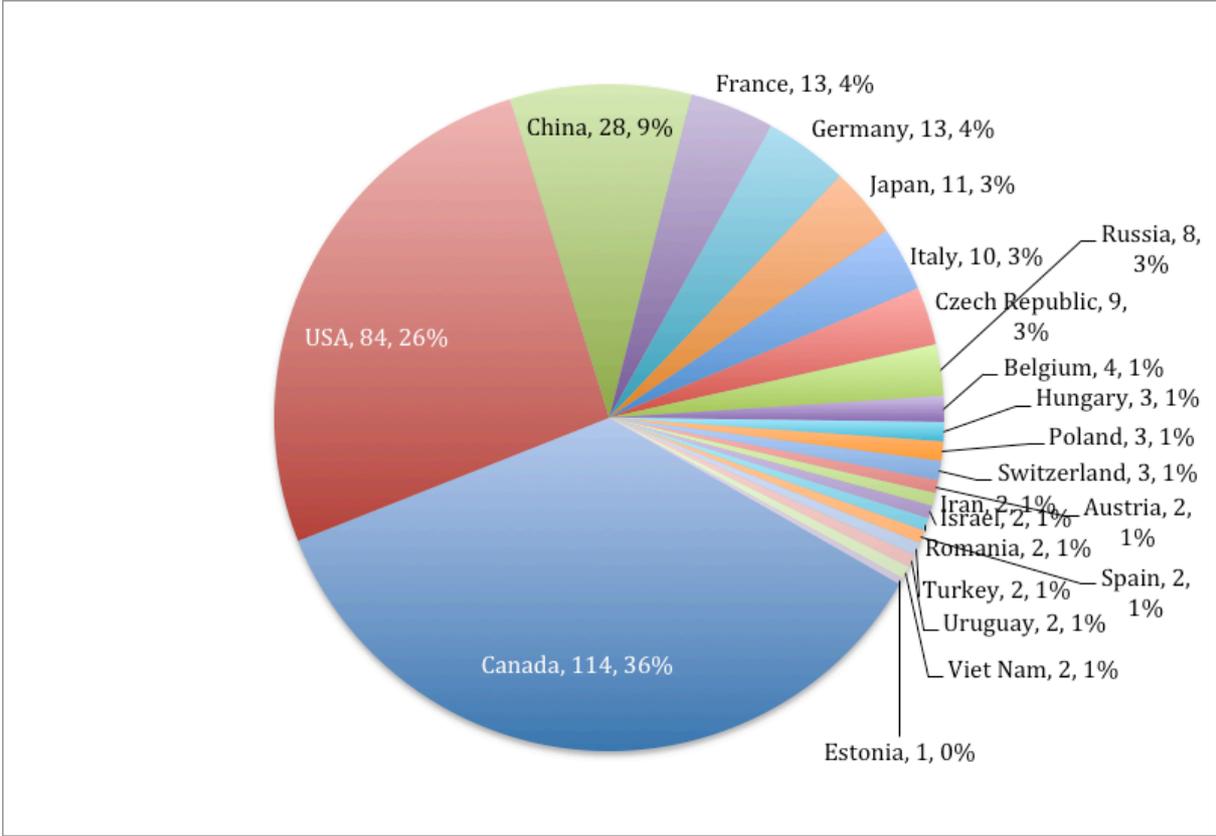
While the conference took place in the Nanaimo Conference Centre, several Workshops were carried out on the premises of the VIU.

Workshops were held in a variety of fields and at different levels on Sturgeon Health; Stock Assessment, Data Collection, Analysis and Management; Progress in Application of Acoustics; Public Involvement Strategies; Techniques to Determine Sex and Stage of Maturity in Sturgeons and Paddlefish; Training in Surgical Procedures.

Plenary sessions by Rick Hansen on Public engagement, Peter Redmayne on marketing, and Shawn Atleo on First Nation interest in sturgeon and conservation opened the three main days of presentations.

Discussion fora and an IUCN assessment workshop took place as side events to the regular conference program. Participants to the conference carried out an industry-associated workshop on sturgeon marketing while a second group initiated under the lead of BC Environment ran a workshop on restoration of sturgeon spawning habitats. Both workshops resulted in the intention to carry on the activities started during the meetings either in form of a producer's organization and a permanent working group on habitat restoration, respectively.

The participants originated from 22 Nations. A total of approx. 350 people made to the conference despite the fact that a large number of participants from Russia, Iran, China, Turkey and other countries were not able to participate due to continuous visa problems that were caused by embassy employees being on strike).



Most naturally the vast majority of participants originated from the host country and from the US, but more than 60 participants from the EU were in for a close third rank.

Next ISS8

Next venue site was elected to be Vienna in 2017 with an all European team of organizers being led by the BOKU (University of Earth Sciences) *see announcement (link)*



Side events included the welcome reception and the dinner at the Conference Centre in the vicinity of the Harbour and waterfront. A seafood banquet that was held at VIU’s Deep Bay Marine Station an hour drive up the coast overlooking the Salish Sea, and a First Nation Longhouse Dinner with the [Snuneymuxw](#) First Nations that historically inhabited the area of Greater Nanaimo created memorable events besides the conference program.

Overlooking the mussel rafts and longlines from Deep Bay Marine Station



Deep Bay dinner event event



During the closing ceremony First nation chief Shawn Atleo presented a cedar-made talking stick to WSCS President Harald Rosenthal. The talking stick will in the future be handed over from ISS to ISS as a sign of the legitimate successor of the Nanaimo gathering. President Rosenthal in his closing speech thanked the principal organizers (Ralph Nielson, Don Tillapaugh and Simah Dodd) as well as the volunteers that were the key to provide a wonderful atmosphere and a super friendly environment for the participants. This expression of gratitude, we would like to repeat here: Thank you all that helped to make this memorable event happen!



Shawn Atleo (National Chief at the Assembly of First Nations) handing over the talking stick to WSCS President Harald Rosenthal (now we will not be able to stop him from talking until somebody steals the stick from him).



The talking stick

See you at the next ISS!

