

Danube Day 2013 in Romania

Sturgeon extravaganza celebrated in all 11 Danube regions

High-level officials, regional and local authorities, NGOs, schools and the public joined the annual river tribute. 128 organisations energised the Danube spirit through kayaking, singing, dancing, rubbish-collecting, discussing and creating for rivers and the all-important sturgeon! Highlights included the Ministry-organised Danube Environmental Forum and sturgeon fun in Galati.

“Danube Day reinforces solidarity between people, culture and history; in spite of some differences, it converges to a common desire and responsibility to protect the precious resources nature provides.”

Professor Petruța Moisi, ECCG President

Galati went sturgeon crazy in 2013! Coming face-to-face with the 4 sturgeon species surviving in the Danube was one of many popular sturgeon activities in 5 days of fun and learning. Eco Counselling Centre Galati (ECCG) coordinated many events: 200 students, teachers and parents packed into Rasvan Angheluta Museum for a day of free activities. Seeing living Danube specimens and hearing about Siberian visitors fascinated many. Viewing archive and environmental documentary and testing out interactive games also deepened students' interest and concern for these relics of the dinosaur era.

“The importance of sturgeons - having unique value in European biodiversity terms as indicators of habitat quality and in social, economic and ecological heritage - is indisputable.”

Lucia Ana Varga, Delegate Minister for Water, Fisheries and Forests.

At Galati's riverside, a Braila-Galati kayak contest, outdoor cinema and flash-mob dance attracted crowds late into the evening. Local 6-year-old, Ioan Luca Prodrom, was announced winner of the ECCG-organised **Danube Art Master** contest. The thought that he put into his floating model was impressive for such a young age. Also in Galati, creators of 270 intricate model ships competed at the Lower Danube University to win places at the European finals.

“We need to care more - to be more responsible in our daily actions - so we better protect our very dear Danube rivers and lakes.”

Professor Petruța Moisi, ECCG President.

Across the country, Water Basin Administrations (WBA), local authorities and NGOs held events, supported by the Ministry of Environment & Climate Change, Apele Române National Administration and the Coca-Cola Company.

In the NW, intrepid volunteers took to the water at **Vadul Crisului, Crisuri WBA** for a 14km raft of the Crisul Repede. Staying on dry land, children had a fun day at Traian Vuia, learning about the wonderful world of sturgeon!

Healthy rivers - healthy bodies was a theme in **Mures WBA**. 12 schools and colleges competed in a 'Keep the Waters Clean' art contest led by Arad Water Management System (WMS); **Mures** primary got active in sporting contests.

In the far west, sport, creativity and awareness-raising were central to festivities led by **Banat WBA** and local authorities. The Proiectantul Sports Centre held a Danube Sports Day, while infants were engrossed in covering the street with chalk sturgeons. Banat Basin Committee in **Timisoara** discussed the Banat River Basin Flood Plan and sturgeon conservation.

A major river clean-up was organised from the Bulgarian border to **Moldova Noua** with actions in **Bazias, Divici** and the city. EcoStuff Romania volunteers joined employees from Caras Severin Environment Protection Agency, the WMS and Iron Gate Natural Park. In the city, young people took part in fishing, chess and mini football, receiving Danube Day goodies. Bazias' held a press conference and celebration marking restoration of the St. Sava monastery.

South to **Jiu WBA** and Dolj and Mehedinti WMS, sturgeons were in the spotlight at numerous events. Young people debated the importance of the Danube in their lives and the need to protect sturgeon species.

Danube solidarity was celebrated through the arts and sport in the **3rd Blue Danube Week**, led by the Danube Competence Centre and local authorities. Hosted in **Mehedinti County** and cities in Bulgaria and Serbia, highlights included a 'Dancing on the Danube' 3-country festival, children's workshops and concerts. Environmental concerns were highlighted at a 'Danube-Home for sturgeons!' discussion, wildlife surveys and waterfront activities at Orsova.

Children from **Craiova** analysed water samples with WBA staff, who also highlighted the importance of clean rivers at the Jiu waterfront in the city.

Within **Olt WBA**, the WMS and Coca-Cola Romania teamed up on 'Danube Get Active for the Sturgeon', engaging children in valuing clean rivers for healthy people and environments. The educational workshop and art show provided the impetus to get everyone out cleaning-up their local area; after which the children proudly donned their new Danube Day T-shirts, caps and bags.

Moving east to the central southern area of the **Arges-Vedea WBA**, young children made their mark. Decorating cards with images of Danube Day and healthy rivers, each stamped their handprint as signature and presented them to Basin Committee members. 100 children of all ages took part in environmental games, art, songs and badminton tournament.

A plethora of actions took place in **Teleorman county**: workshops, debates, riverside walks, sport and competitions all increased awareness of sturgeon and river basin issues; whilst craft, recycling, music and folklore events e.g. the 'Dance of the Danube Wave' celebrated regional traditions - old and new!

Turnu-Magurele debated action for the Danube at workshops and got active on the Danube, kayaking in the 2nd annual Danube Cup.

In **Giurgui**, children carried out water quality testing in the lab and on-board a Slatina boat. A flash-mob, Border Police river display, martial arts demo, workshops and art events highlighted the Danube Day message. The day also

saw progress in a joint EU-level scheme to revitalise Giurgui and Ruse. Focussed on their function as ports, the event was coordinated by EUROLINK–Europe House with support from the Austrian Embassy and Chamber of Deputies. Also in Giurgui, a Basin Committee saw presentation of the Arges-Vedea River Basin Flood Plan and transboundary biodiversity projects.

Further east, in the **Buzau Ialomita WBA**, river trips, guided walks, storytelling, art activities, competitions and eco films were on the bill in **Brăila county**. Spending the summer holidays in Brăila was the theme of a writing contest, while 80 students took part in a **Small Wetland of Brăila Natural Park** contest. River issues were also in the spotlight at a well-attended public meeting in **Slobozia** organised by **Buzau Ialomita WBA** and Ialomita WMS.

At Romania's SE tip, 'Call for a Living **Danube Delta**' saw Save the Danube and Delta Association join forces with Ivan Patzaichin-Mila 23, the Romanian Ecotourism Association and WWF Romania to petition high level state officials attending an Environment Ministry-organised Danube Forum. It called for adoption of specified principles for sustainable development.

Within **Dobrogea Litoral WBA**, 1000 baby sturgeons marked Danube Day in **Tulcea county**! In their 'I'm a new man for the Earth!' event, Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve restocked the river with support from Apa Nova Bucuresti and Veolia Water Company. Sturgeon were also the subject of their own movie: 'Black Gold of the Danube'. Produced by Save Danube and Delta NGO (with Ministerial and Coca-Cola HBC support), it premiered at the Environment Ministry's **Danube Environmental Forum** in Tulcea. Other highlights included the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve and George Georgescu School of Art 14th 'A Chance for the Blue Danube' competition ('Danube Parks Step 2.0' project). Now international, pupils from Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Austria entered 200 works in 2013, to be featured in a Danube countries' touring exhibition.

This year's annual Danube Day message to Danube WBAs was made by Lucia Ana Varga, Delegate Minister of Water, Forests and Fisheries, and Vasile Pintilie, General Director of Apele Române National Administration.

“Ensuring fishing is sustainable, and alternative economical activities are developed, as well as promoting research... and public awareness, has to be taken into account so that future generations can enjoy the precious resource that is sturgeon... It falls on all of us to meet these goals; this celebration day offers us the opportunity to reflect on this.”
Ministerial Danube Day Message to Basin Committees and WBAs.

Danube Day Partners

Ministry of Environment & Climate Change - Department for Waters, Forests & Fishery; Apele Române (Romanian Waters) National Administration; Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Administration, Tulcea; Save the Danube & Danube Delta Association; Coca-Cola HBC Romania; The Coca Cola Company; EUROLINK-House of Europe; Eco Counselling Centre Galati (ECCG); Global Water Partnership Romania (GWP Ro); Water Basin Administrations: Banat,

Arges-Vedea, Mures, Crisuri, Jiu, Olt, Buzău-Ialomița, Dobrogea-Litoral & Somes-Tisza; Environmental Protection Agencies: Caras-Severin, Teleorman & Braila; Natural Park Administrations: Iron Gate & Small Wetland of Braila; Water Management Systems: Caras-Severin, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Arad, Mures, Mehedinți, Dolj, Olt-Slatina, Ialomița & Tulcea; County Prefectures: Caras-Severin, Giurgiu, Teleorman, Mehedinti, Ialomita, Tulcea & Braila; Mehedinti County Council; City Halls: Moldova Noua, Giurgiu, Turnu Magurele, Rosiorii de Vede, Videle, Drobeta Turnu Severin & Braila; Gura Padinii Village; Mayoral Offices: Surdila Greci & Victoria Communes; Local Council of Victoria Commune; Rasvan Angheluta Museum Complex of Natural Sciences (MCNS), Galati; County School Inspectorates: Caras-Severin, Teleorman, Mehedinti & Braila; Schools & Colleges: General David Praporgescu Technical College N. Simonide General School (Pitesti), Zinca Golescu National College, School no.1 Videle, School no.1 Blejesti, Ioan Slavici Secondary (Șiria), Șimand Secondary, Livada Secondary, Arad City Secondary No.5, Adea Secondary, Iosif Moldovan Secondary (Arad City), Aurel Vlaicu Secondary (Arad City), Moise Nicoara National College (Arad City), Sabin Drăgoi School of Art (Arad City), Alexa Popovici Theological school (Arad City), Piticot Kindergarden No.19 (Arad City), Traian Vuia Technical College (Oradea City), Secondary No.5 & 10 (Craiova City), St. Paulin School of Art I, Dudesti Secondary, Mihai Eminescu Secondary, Constantin Sandu Aldea Secondary (Braila), Ana Aslan National College, Gheorghe Munteanu Murgoci National College, Nicolae Balcescu National College, Edmond Nicolau Technical College, Dumitru Panaitescu Perpessicius Teaching High School, Giurgeni Secondary, Magureni Secondary, Marasu Secondary, Tacau Secondary, I.L. Caragiale Secondary, Nicolae Iorga High School (Braila City), Hariclea Darclee School of Art (Braila), Surdila Greci Secondary & Victoria Commune Secondary; Children's Palaces of Giurgiu & Alexandria; Children's Clubs of Rosiorii de Vede, Turnu Magurele & Zimnicea; Romanian Scouts National Association; EcoStuff Romania; County Directorates for Sport & Youth: Caras-Severin & Mehedinti County; Caras-Severin County Culture Directorate; Rosiorii de Vede Directorate for Culture, Education, Creation & Sport; Nichita Stanescu Cultural Centre; Castle Arts of Drobeta Turnu Severin Municipality; Municipal House of Culture of Drobeta Turnu Severin Municipality; Ion Vinea Cultural Centre; Sport Fishing Association-Timisoara; Weekend Sport Complex (Târgu Mureș City); Municipal Sports Club of Drobeta Turnu Severin; Orsova Sport Complex; Giurgiu Maritime Danube Ports Administration; SC Eco Bios SRL; ARACIP; Giurgiu Aquila Club; 'Let's do it Romania!' Team; Canoe-Kayak Sport Club of Turnu Magurele; Master Adventure Bihor; Doina Dunarii Folklore Ensemble; Valahia Blowers Orchestra; Giurgiu Border Police; Salvamont Rescue Service Bihor; Romanian Academy; Council of Danube Cities & Regions; ApaNova Bucharest; Veolia Water; Lumina Foundation; and the Independent Journalists' Association of Galati.

Danube Day 2013: Get active for the sturgeon!

For more about the 14-country Danube Day celebrations, view www.danubeday.org or email the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR): benedikt.mandl@unvienna.org.