

AUWERX, Johan

Unknown and still unloved: the story of the crucian carp (*Carassius carassius*) in Flanders

AUWERX, Johan; VAN WICHELEN, Jeroen

Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO), team Monitoring and Restoration of Aquatic Fauna, Dwersbos 28, 1630 Linkebeek, Belgium

Crucian carp, conservation, Flanders

The crucian carp is a family member of the Cyprinidae. It used to be widespread in northern European areas and have only a few, isolated populations remaining in Flanders (Northern part of Belgium). For unclear reasons, the species receives relatively little attention in spite of its indicative value for healthy stagnant, shallow water systems. Population trends as indicated in the Belgian national Red List of rare species are concordantly classified as unknown.

Given its pronounced preference for richly vegetated waters, this phytophile (plant-loving) fish has certainly opportunities in Flemish nature reserves through appropriate pond management aiming at improving water quality and restoring a natural, stable clearwater state. Crucian carp can also be easily reproduced in large numbers within captive breeding programmes, as such contributing to population recovery by the establishment of new populations in (newly established) suitable habitat.

To create sustainable populations, also outside protected areas, it is however necessary to develop a conservation plan. This should include a thorough investigation of habitat requirements, a European-scale genetic characterisation and a breeding program with a strong genetic basis. Raising awareness of the ecological niche among water managers and the general public will undoubtedly be the main challenge to protect this native carp species in our areas.

BAJINSKIS, Jānis

Contribution by the LIFE FOR SPECIES project to the protection of threatened fish species in Latvia

BAJINSKIS, Jānis¹; ČEKSTERE, Gunta¹; GRUDULS, Jānis¹

¹ University of Latvia, Institute of Biology, Raina blvd. 19, Riga, LV-1586 Latvia

threatened fish species, data quality and quantity, national legislation, dissemination of knowledge

The National Regulations in Latvia, which determine the list of the specially protected species and micro-reserve species, were issued several years ago. Knowledge has improved to date, scientific information on species occurrence and factors threatening their populations has been gathered, as well as changes have taken place in Latvian economy. Thereby the project LIFE FOR SPECIES was initiated and its main tasks, activities and results to protect Europe's threatened fish species in Latvia are linked to: (a) assessment of extinction risk and category for fish species based on IUCN criteria; (b) development of species data sheets and Red Data Book for threatened species; (c) compiling a new national list of protected species and micro-reserve species; (d) development of criteria for including threatened species in the National Regulations on legally protected/micro-reserve species and a flexible system for updating the list; (e) drawing a draft legislative amendment for improving the national legislation; (f) improvements of the quality and quantity of data in the National Biodiversity Data System OZOLS; (g) increase of capacity of governmental institutions, experts, stakeholder involvement and awareness of the general public. Within the project, 6 fish species have been assessed as endangered or critically endangered in Latvian waters. The project LIFE FOR SPECIES (LIFE19 GIE/LV/000857) is being implemented by Institute of Biology of University of Latvia, Nature Conservation Agency, Daugavpils University and Latvian Ornithological Society (2020-2024) with financial support of EU LIFE program and the State Regional Development Agency.