



**STATEMENT FROM CAVIAR EMPTOR:
EXTENSION OF GLOBAL BAN ON MOST WILD CAVIAR**

Environmentalists commend trade officials for move to protect imperiled wild sturgeon

(April 13, 2006) Caviar Emptor applauds the UN's Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) for its decision to extend the international trade ban on most wild sturgeon caviar for at least the remainder of 2006. It is the first time that CITES has not approved annual caviar export quotas since it began monitoring the trade of threatened wild sturgeon in 1998.

This extension of the temporary trade ban announced by CITES in January means the most popular caviars from the Caspian Sea – beluga, osetra and sevruga – are forbidden from international trade this year, with Iran receiving an export quota for only one species, Persian sturgeon, according to the CITES website and an April 11, 2006 memorandum to its 169 member nations. The Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan are banned from exporting all caviars to countries that are parties to the Convention.

The trade ban is good news for sturgeon that are on the brink of extinction, especially the Caspian Sea beluga sturgeon, which has lost 90% of its population in just 20 years due to overfishing for beluga caviar. Other wild sturgeon populations around the world have suffered from overfishing, illegal trade, habitat loss and pollution, making it one of the most endangered fishes on the planet. The ban also applies to sturgeon found in the Amur River in China and Russia.

Caviar Emptor, a coalition of environmentalists and scientists from three leading organizations, is pleased with the tough stance CITES has taken this week. The ban will provide Caspian sturgeon with much-needed relief from global trade pressure, and give this remarkable species a chance for survival.

Caspian nations now must develop a recovery plan for sturgeon. For the most imperiled species, such as beluga sturgeon, a long-term trade ban and fishing moratorium may be its only hope. We salute the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for its decision to ban beluga caviar imports last year, which led the way in saving this magnificent species.

Signed by Caviar Emptor partners:

Dawn Martin, Executive Director, SeaWeb, Washington, DC

Dr. Ellen Pikitch, Executive Director, Pew Institute for Ocean Science, New York

Lisa Speer, Senior Policy Analyst, Natural Resources Defense Council, New York

Note to Editors:

For more than five years, the Caviar Emptor coalition of SeaWeb, Pew Institute for Ocean Science, and the Natural Resources Defense Council has called for a halt to the international trade in beluga caviar and has supported the long-term reduction of export quotas for other Caspian sturgeon. We have encouraged international funding for improved management and enforcement, and have helped start scientific research programs in the Caspian region. Caviar Emptor successfully petitioned the U.S. government to list beluga sturgeon under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, resulting in the U.S. ban on beluga caviar that has been in place since Fall 2005. Caviar Emptor has pointed consumers toward environmentally friendly, farmed caviars as a better choice than eating the eggs of an endangered species.

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