

Danube Day 2013 in Hungary

Sturgeons are the stars of the show as 11,000 people attend events

With 11,000 Hungarians joining-in, plus thousands interacting on Facebook and an estimated 250,000 reached via media coverage, Danube Day was big! The undisputable stars of the show were the sturgeon. National & local government, business and NGOs pulled out all the stops to highlight the plight of the species, considered the most endangered in the world. With a huge variety of activities, festivities lasted all summer. It was a sturgeon-tickling, riverside-relaxing, tango-flashmobbing, mystery-solving, Art Master creating, passport stamping, dragon boat-drumming extravaganza!

2500 people congregated on Budapest's **Children's Island** for a **Danube Day sturgeon celebration**. State Secretary for Water, Péter Kovács, opened a day of family-fun with the chance to meet some very special guests: live sturgeon! With much excitement, children aided by the Minister released 600 of the smallest sturgeon species, Sterlets, destined to become international Danube travellers. Children thoroughly enjoyed their own traveling passport game. On completion of each eco activity, visitors received a stamp in their 'Danube passport'. Completing the fish jigsaw or counting the ever-moving sturgeon gained an all-important stamp. Achieve a full set and dedication was rewarded with a Danube goody bag! The event was led by the Rural Development Ministry, Danube Museum and partners.

The **Danube Flow–Danube Calling festival** gave Budapest residents 7 months of river entertainment and inspiration, attracting 7500 visitors! Along the Heart of Budapest Trail, bi-monthly events provided a change of pace, reminding city residents of the value of their river. The climax was **Danube Day at Kopaszi Dam**. Topping the bill were sturgeon: stroking a relic of the dinosaur era was a big thrill. Other highlights included river excursions, comedy, eco games, craft workshops, quizzes and crime and mystery games: visitors turned detective to solve river crime! Drumming, one-man shows, tango flashmob, folk singing and jazz in the evening sun made for a great atmosphere. Organised by Coca-Cola HBC & MindSpace, a press conference was held with the Rural Development Ministry.

The river came to **Győr's** streets for Danube Day. Hundreds enjoyed a colourful family afternoon of entertainment and education at the Baross pedestrian mall. Being held in the city centre didn't stop the sturgeon joining in, who were on hand for stroking duty! Dance performances, eco activities, hands-on science, folk-music and diving demos were among activities laid on for city shoppers. The event was a cooperation between Győr city, North Transdanubian Regional Office of the National Institute for Environment, local NGOs & 'Danube Flow–Danube Calling' organisers.

Dragonboat races returned to Danube Day with 10 teams battling it out to the rhythm of the drums in **Adony**. 400 people crowded into the Rowing Club for a great afternoon, with dance, song, horse-riding & river zorbing!

The finale of the 2013 **Danube Art Master** contest took place aboard MS Rákóczi in Budapest. Creators of the 10 best artworks received prizes from

State Secretary Kovács and were treated to a guided VIP tour of coastal landmarks. Winners from Petőfi Sándor Lutheran College, Mezőberényi, took control of the ship's helm. Photographs of their magnificent sturgeon sculpture will be exhibited with other winners on-board a Mahart Passnave ship. During the tour, the annual **Greet the Danube Horn Blast** sounded out across the river at 14:00 as ships saluted their river.

The climax of the ICPDR-Global Water Partnership's contest saw Hungarian President János Áder award the 2013 **International Danube Art Master** prize to Croatian teenagers from Semeljci. Held as part of the **Budapest Water Summit**, teenagers also participated in a youth forum. The global conference was hosted by the Hungarian Government, in cooperation with the UN system and the World Water Council, aimed at assessing and progressing development towards post-2015 goals.

The **Danube Box Contest** inspires children through the Danube Box education kit, well-established in Hungarian schools. A much looked-forward to event in the school calendar, the 7th contest held finals at the Institute for Geology and Geophysics in Budapest, following 5 months work by 400 pupils from 100 schools. The top three teams won weeklong summer camps. The contest is organised by GWP Hungary, Coca-Cola HBC Hungary and Ministries for Rural Development & Human Resources.

Led by the IAD (International Association for Danube Research), 30 young researchers from 14 countries came together to promote international cooperation at **The Danube Camp in Dunasziget Ecopark**, Hungary. Landscape assessment, soil science and presentation skills were key topics, along with training for Danube Soil Strategy Network Soil Ambassadors. Students took time-off for outdoor cooking, swimming and canoeing!

Danube Day Partners

Rural Development Ministry-State Secretariat for Water; Danube Museum; National Institute of Environment; GWP Hungary; MindSpace Nonprofit Ltd; Coca-Cola Hellenic Hungary; Mahart Passnave Passenger Shipping; Valyo Group; Budapest Waterworks; Duna-Ipoly, Duna-Dráva & Fertő-Hanság National Parks; Dunasziget Ecopark; Danube Research Institute (Hungarian Academy of Sciences); IAD; Ministry of Human Resources; Budapest Chamber of Commerce & Industry; Győr Municipality & Mayor's office; North-Transdanubian Regional Office of National Institute of Environment; North-Transdanubian Water Directorate; *Pannon-Víz Zrt*; Győr-Moson-Sopron County State Public Health & Medical Services and Chamber of Engineers; North-Transdanubian Inspectorate for Environmental Protection; House of Children; Győr Diving Sports Club; Győr Photo Club; Hydrological Society-Győr; Adony Rowing Club; Hungarian Kayak-Canoe Assoc.; *Kirmiestek.hu*; Danube Cultural Cluster; Ethnosound Musical Instrument Store; *Öböl XI*; *kultúrAktív* NGO; Microsec; other NGOs & schools.

Danube Day 2013: Get active for the sturgeon!

For general information 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.