In a preferred example, such a method for obtaining an oil composition suitable for use in storing extracted sturgeon roe sacks still containing roe, comprises

(1) processing membrane of sturgeon roe sacks following roe extraction to obtain a liquid mixture;

(2) heating said mixture whereby proteins are denatured and an oil composition accumulates (visible as a golden–coloured fluid) and

(3) separating said oil composition.

Such separation may conveniently be carried out using a sieve to separate the oil from visible clumps of matter. Alternatively, such separation may be achieved by centrifugation. The separated fluid will generally be refrigerated for storage and subsequent use.

In another aspect, the present invention provides an oil composition obtainable by the method disclosed herein.

In yet another aspect, the present invention provides a method for preserving extracted sturgeon roe sacks with retained roe comprising:

(i) submerging one or more roe sacks in oil derived from sturgeon roe sack membrane as disclosed herein, preferably at refrigerated temperature, in a container suitable for vacuum packing such that the roe sacks are completely covered by said oil;

(ii) sealing the container and

(iii) vacuum-packing the roe sack(s) in the container.

In yet another aspect, the present invention provides extracted sturgeon roe sacks with retained roe and packaged for storage and /or transport by a method disclosed herein.

In yet another aspect, the present invention provides a method of caviar production wherein sturgeon roe sacks disclosed herein are used for harvesting roe following removal from the container

In yet another aspect, the present invention provides a dietary composition comprising an oil composition as disclosed herein.

In yet another aspect, the present invention provides a caviar preparation comprising harvested sturgeon roe to which an oil composition as disclosed herein, or a fatty acid-containing fraction thereof, has been added as a supplement so as to influence taste

The oil composition thus obtained (Biobengeon oil) can be employed in the preservation of newly-extracted sturgeon roe sacks containing roe as further detailed below. It is envisaged that other sturgeon–derived oils may be similarly employed, either derived from roe sack membrane by different methods or derived from sturgeon muscle. However, Biobengeon oil prepared as discussed above is preferred since the method can be carried out very conveniently without any complex equipment or need for additional reagents.

Detailed description of the invention

Processing of sturgeon ovary membrane for obtaining therefrom the desired oil composition may be achieved using simply a food blender, although a larger blender may be employed for larger scale production. Heating may be at any temperature whereby proteins are denatured and clump and the required oil accumulates. Generally a temperature of at least about 70° C will be employed, e.g. at least about 80-85°C or at least about 90°C-95 °C or at least about 100°C. A temperature of about 120°C has, for example, been found suitable by the inventors.

Once separated from the mixture, e.g. for convenience using a sieve, the resulting fluid (Biobengeon oil) may be employed in a protocol for preserving extracted sturgeon roe sacks with retained roe comprising:

(1) submerging one or more roe sacks in said fluid, preferably at refrigerated temperature, e. g. about 2-4° C, in a container suitable for vacuum packing such that they are completely covered by said fluid;

(2) sealing the container

(3) and applying a vacuum whereby the roe sacks are vacuum-packed.

Claims:

1. A method of obtaining a sturgeon-derived oil wherein the oil is extracted from membrane of sturgeon roe sacks following separation of the roe from the roe sacks.

2. A method of obtaining an oil as claimed in claim 1, which comprises
   (i) processing membrane of sturgeon roe sacks following roe extraction to obtain a liquid mixture;
   (ii) heating said mixture whereby proteins are denatured and an oil accumulates and
   (iii) separating said oil.

3. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein said heating is at at least 100° C.

4. A method of obtaining an oil as claimed in claim 1 wherein said oil is extracted by an enzymatic extraction method employing a protease.

5. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4 which further comprises obtaining from said oil a fatty acid-containing fraction.

6. An oil composition obtainable by a method of any one of claims 1 to 4.

7. A method for preserving extracted sturgeon roe sacks with retained roe comprising:
   (i) submerging one or more roe sacks in oil derived from sturgeon roe sack membrane in accordance with any of claims 1 to 4, preferably at refrigerated temperature, in a container suitable for vacuum packing such that the roe sacks are completely covered by said oil;
   (ii) sealing the container and
   (iii) vacuum-packing the roe sack(s) in the container

8. A method as claimed in claim 7 which further comprises refrigerating the container for storage.

9. Extracted sturgeon roe sacks with retained roe and packaged for storage and /or transport by a method according to claim 7 or claim 8.

10. A method of caviar production wherein sturgeon roe sacks according to claim 9 are used for harvesting roe following removal from the container.

11. A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the harvested roe is combined with an oil composition according to claim 6, or a fatty- acid containing fraction thereof, to influence taste.

12. A method as claimed in claim 10 or claim 11 which further comprises packing the caviar in a sealed container, preferably under vacuum.

13. A method as claimed in claim 12 which further comprises re-packaging the caviar in smaller quantities per container.

14. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5 which further comprises incorporating said oil, or a fatty-acid containing fraction thereof, into a dietary composition for human or non–human animal consumption.

15. A method as claimed in claim 14 wherein said dietary composition is a pet food, wherein the pet food is a canine or cat pet food, optionally additionally including other sturgeon- derived product.

16. A dietary composition comprising an oil composition according to claim 6.

17. A dietary composition according to claim 16 which is a pet food, wherein the pet food is a canine or cat pet food, optionally additionally including other sturgeon-derived product.

18. A caviar preparation comprising harvested sturgeon roe to which an oil composition according to claim 6, or a fatty acid containing fraction thereof, has been added as a supplement so as to influence taste.