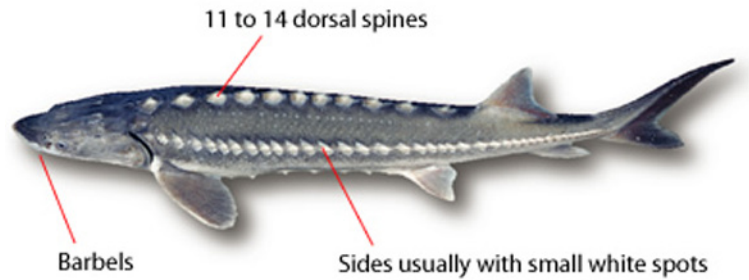


WHITE STURGEON HANDLING REQUIREMENTS

The majority of white sturgeon populations in British Columbia are listed under the federal Species at Risk Act & are not open to angling. Since populations in the lower & middle Fraser River are relatively healthy, they are able to support catch & release fisheries. However, these populations are still vulnerable & are still provincially & nationally designated as endangered. White sturgeon mature at about 17 to 20 years of age & can live for more than 100 years, so impacts or injuries can be long lasting. A mark-recapture monitoring program is currently being undertaken by the Fraser River Sturgeon Conservation Society in partnership with others to better understand the sturgeon populations in the lower Fraser River. Capture methods in the program include angling & juvenile tangle nets, or incidental salmon gillnet, seine net or fish-wheel catches. Extra care & attention must be taken during sturgeon capture & handling to minimize harm, & to support recovery of the population. Monitoring program or other study participants must abide by the following sturgeon capture & handling requirements to ensure minimum impact or harm to sturgeon:



1. When angling, tackle must be heavy enough to handle these potentially large fish. Use heavy rods & reels, & at least 100 lb. test line. Play & release fish as rapidly as possible. A fish played for too long may not recover. .

2. When sturgeon are encountered in gillnets, beach seines or fish—wheels, care must be taken to remove them as quickly as possible with minimal harm. Be quick, but gentle. Mesh should be cut away from the fish whenever necessary, & especially if it is tightly wrapped around the fish, is squeezing their body, or is wrapped around their head, mouth, gills or gill plates: Death or injury associated with gillnet encounters can be reduced by shorter soak times & by frequent net checks.

3. Only single barbless hooks are permitted while sturgeon angling. As such hooks are usually easily removed. Be quick, but gentle. Long needle-nose pliers, or hook removers should be used to remove hooks that are embedded well. A fish that is deeply hooked, hooked on or near the gills, or bleeding profusely has

a much lower chance of survival. You can improve its chances by cutting the leader & releasing the fish with the hook left in.

4. Leave the fish in the water wherever possible. A fish suffocates when it's out of water, & is more at risk of internal injuries due to its own weight, especially if it's larger than 1.5m in length. Sturgeon are a precious resource. Handle them with respect & extra care. Keep your fingers away from the gills & out of the gill plates, & don't hug or squeeze them. No ropes, tailers, nooses or any other device are ever to be used on any part of any fish.

5. Land larger fish only in shallow water near the shore. Do not drag any fish out of the water onto shore. Don't land a large fish at the boat & then tow it by the tail to shore. Towing a fish backwards to shore is very damaging & will lessen its' chances of survival or even kill it. If you land a large fish at the boat, then release it at the boat. Do your best to check for a tag & measure its' fork length. If a larger fish is foul hooked, then consider cutting the line as they

are difficult to land. Remember, the survival of an individual large fish takes priority over the gathering of capture data.

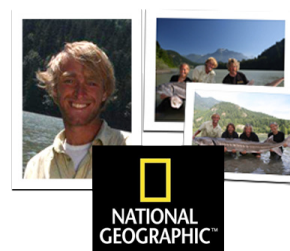
6. Smaller fish can be landed at the boat & lifted into a wetted sling by cradling it underneath & behind the front fins & just forward of the tail with gloved hands. Be gentle, & use as many people to cradle the fish while bringing the fish into the boat as is necessary to not cause harm. A fish must never be pulled into a boat using a rope or by its' gill plates, mouth or pectoral fins. Do not hug a fish by its body.

7. Fish must be scanned/tagged & measured as quickly as possible to minimize disturbance & its time out of the water. Have your tagging kit & camera ready & be gentle & quick so the fish is only briefly disturbed.

8. Take the time to hold the fish in the water to recover. Do not just toss the fish back in the water. Point the fish upstream into the current while reviving it, & when the fish begins to struggle & swim normally, let it go.

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