



**The Initiative** brings together the combined interests of over 25 partners, including government, aboriginal, industry, environmental groups and others to the challenge of building a healthy future for the white sturgeon in the upper Columbia River in British Columbia and across the border in the United States.

*"...helping hands for ancients of the deep"*

### Funding Support

Funding Support for the Angler Awareness Program was provided by the following Initiative partners:

**Government of Canada's  
Habitat Stewardship Program  
for Species at Risk  
Columbia Basin Trust**



# WHITE STURGEON ANGLER AWARENESS PROGRAM

**Specific questions** Specific questions about the angler awareness program can be directed to:

**Kenton Andreashuk** at **250-421-0753** or **info@uppercolumbiasturgeon.org**

**For more information** about the UCWSRI view the Initiative Web site at **www.uppercolumbiasturgeon.org**

## Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative

The goal of the recovery program is to build stable populations of white sturgeon in the upper Columbia River. Over the long term, program objectives include restoring opportunities for beneficial uses, such as angling, if feasible.

Community participation and local support are key for success in the Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative.



PHOTOS: David R. Gluns and Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative  
DESIGN: Kathy Verigin Printed on Recycled Paper ♻️

## Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative

The upper Columbia white sturgeon is found in Canadian and U.S. portions of the Columbia River, from Hugh L. Keenleyside Dam south to Grand Coulee Dam, as well as in Arrow Lakes Reservoir, Revelstoke Reservoir, and possibly Kinbasket Reservoir.

Available population estimates show that within the upper Canadian Columbia River basin the white sturgeon population is approximately 1,100 wild fish. From the Canada-US border to the Grand Coulee Dam in the U.S. there are an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 white sturgeon. The majority of these white sturgeon are more than 30 years old, suggesting a population of aging fish with relatively few young to replace the old.

The reasons for decline of sturgeon in the upper Columbia are complex and not yet fully understood. Since 2002, over 60,000 juvenile hatchery reared sturgeon have been stocked as an interim measure to prevent the population from disappearing. In the first year following release, survival is close to 30% and increases to about 75% in following years. Older juveniles are large enough they may be captured by anglers targeting other species.

**Technicians** will be providing information to and surveying anglers at randomly-selected shore fishing areas and boat launches in 2006 and 2007. The information that is collected from surveys will document encounters with white sturgeon and provide some basic information on the sport fishery in general. All information provided is anonymous.

### Information from angler interviews

will be used to assess the recommendations on avoiding incidental captures and promoting safe handling techniques provided through this outreach program. Information on locations and timing of capture will help improve the understanding of this sturgeon population.



## Anglers Are Requested to Follow Safe Handling

techniques for white sturgeon while fishing in areas where sturgeon may be encountered:

- If you have hooked a large sturgeon (>1 m in length), avoid "playing the fish". Break your line immediately to reduce injury to the fish.
- Avoid having a long piece of line trailing from the fish by using a short leader with low-breaking strength. A small section of 8 lb test leader on 15 lb test mainline will leave a small piece of the leader when the fish is broken off.
- If you have hooked a juvenile or sub-adult (<1 m in length), land and release it as quickly as possible. If the fish is landed, keep it in the water, remove the hook and avoid touching the gills. Returning the fish to the water as quickly as possible is critical to its survival.

## To Avoid White Sturgeon Incidental Catches

While fishing, anglers can assist the future development and survival of white sturgeon in the Columbia River system by employing some simple techniques:

- Use non-stainless, single barbless hooks. Stainless steel hooks are slow to corrode if the fish happens to keep it.
- Avoid bottom fishing in known high sturgeon use areas, such as Waneta, Hugh Keenleyside, Kootenay and Fort Shepherd eddies.
- Use artificial lures.



## Accidental Catches of White Sturgeon in the Columbia River

Anglers wishing to provide additional information regarding white sturgeon incidental catches can complete the tear off portion of this brochure and forward to:

UCWSRI c/o Box 2008 Revelstoke, BC V0E 2S0

## White Sturgeon Incidental Catch Information

Date (exact or approximate) \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

### Angling Gear

bait  lure  fly

Approximate depth of hook (metres) \_\_\_\_\_

surface  mid level  bottom

### White Sturgeon Size (in metres)

<1 m  1 – 2 m  >2 m

Comments (if there are better techniques to avoid contact and release of larger fish, we would welcome your input on how to address the problem)

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Thank you for participating in this survey.

Web site: [www.uppercolumbiasturgeon.org](http://www.uppercolumbiasturgeon.org)