

In 1953, a 154 year old sturgeon was caught in Lake of the Woods, Ontario. It weighed 94 kg. According to the Alberta Fish and Game Association the largest sturgeon recorded in Alberta weighed 48 kg.

1895 – FISH & GAME REGULATIONS in what is now Alberta. Season was open July 15 to May 15 for Sturgeon.

Today, in Alberta, it's "catch and release" only, when fishing for sturgeon.

How To Pickle a Sturgeon

from *The Virginia Housewife*, by Mary Randolph 1860

The best sturgeons are the small ones, about four feet long without the head, and the best part is the one near the tail.

After the sturgeon is split through the back bone, take a piece with the skin on, which is essential to its appearance and goodness. Cut off the gristle, scrape the skin well, wash it, and salt it. Let it lie twenty-four hours.

Wipe off the salt, roll it and tie it around with twine. Put in a good deal of cold water, let it boil till you can run a straw easily into the skin. Take it up and when cold, put it in a pot and cover it with one part vinegar and two of salt and water.

Keep it closely stoppered. Garnish with green fennel.



Sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*)

The Genesee Sturgeon Hole

It is an area of the North Saskatchewan River from the mouth of Wabamun Creek, downstream to approximately the Highway 770 River crossing. That area is critical for the continued viability of lake sturgeon in the North Saskatchewan River. Backwaters provide low flow plus sand and gravel deposits suitable for rearing lake sturgeon. Upstream, the river meanders. It has multiple side channels, oxbows, islands, and sand bars. Downstream, the river is sinuous with a narrow flood plain. This varied habitat is ideal for rearing baby sturgeon. See a map of the sturgeon hole on page 94 in *Living in the SHED*



There are two populations of sturgeon in Alberta.
The South Saskatchewan River has about 5000 fish.
The North Saskatchewan River has less than 1000 fish.



Why Sturgeon are 'At Risk'

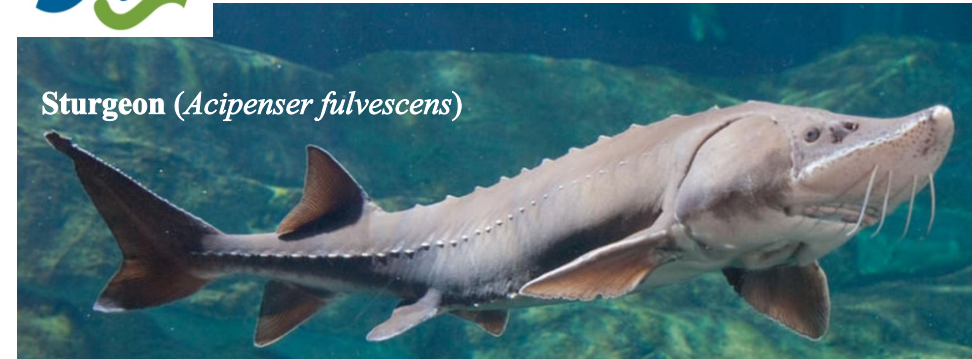
Sturgeon were over-fished in the past, because the meat, oil & eggs (known as caviar) were considered delicacies. Lining from sturgeon air bladders was used to make a clear, edible jelly; an excellent glue and "isinglass" windows used in early cars. Habitat degradation resulting from poor land use had an adverse impact on sturgeon populations. Young sturgeon are dependant on benthic invertebrates (water bugs) as food. In order to thrive, these bugs depend on healthy aquatic ecosystems.



- ⓪ Female sturgeon don't lay eggs until they are 20 to 25 years old. Then they only lay eggs every four to six years, which makes a depleted sturgeon population very slow to increase.
- ⓪ Male sturgeon don't produce sperm until they are at least 15 years old.
- ⓪ Spawning occurs in late spring when eggs are deposited at a depth of about .6 m in a slow river current over sand and gravel.
- ⓪ The number of eggs may range from 50,000 to over 1,000,000 depending on the size of the fish. Incubation takes from 7 to 10 days in water of 13 to 15° C

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Sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*)

- ⓪ The largest fresh water fish in the northern hemisphere are members of the sturgeon family.
- ⓪ Fresh water sturgeon are also called Lake Sturgeon even though they are only found in rivers in Alberta.
- ⓪ "Living dinosaurs" of the fish world, sturgeon have a fossil record going back 100 million years.
- ⓪ Sturgeon don't have scales. Instead, they have tough, leather-like skin & five rows of "scutes". The boney plates are sharp when the fish are young. As the fish grow larger, the scutes smooth out.
- ⓪ Sturgeon don't have teeth. They are bottom feeders, eating water insect larvae, plant material, snails, small fish and fish eggs.
- ⓪ Sturgeon have an extendable mouth on the underside of their heads. It extends out like a vacuum tube when they find food.