

How You Can Help

Report All Poachers and Polluters!

Any angling for white sturgeon in the Nechako watershed is illegal.

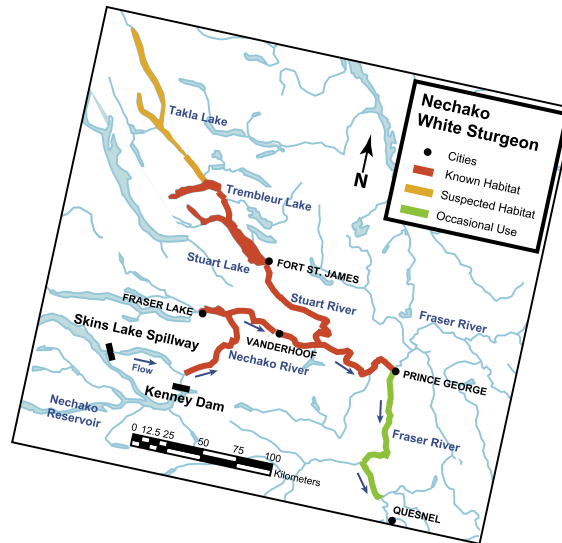
Report any captures to:

- Conservation Officer Service
1-877-952-7277
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
1-800-465-4336
- or your local RCMP detachment

Report any incidental captures, information from tagged sturgeon, or sturgeon sightings to:

- Ministry of Water Land and Air Protection,
Prince George
(250) 565-6135

help save the nechako white sturgeon!



Visit our web site

For complete newsletter articles, reports & publications, facts about sturgeon, kid's activities, and much more!

www.nechakowhitesturgeon.org

For more information, contact:

NWSRI Coordinator
(250) 612-4129

NECHAKO WHITE STURGEON



RECOVERY INITIATIVE

Cover photos: Larry Hildebrand - Golder Associates, Ministry of Water Land and Air Protection and Malaspina University - College
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Returning a
caught fish to
the water
quickly is
critical to its survival.

Please, do not pollute the water
in any way.

Photos: Ted Zimmerman, Ministry of Water Land and Air Protection,
Larry Hildebrand, Golder Associates

NECHAKO WHITE STURGEON



RECOVERY INITIATIVE



help save the nechako
white sturgeon

About the Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative

The Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative was launched in 2000, after a five-year study determined that white sturgeon in the Nechako watershed were in serious trouble.

The NWSRI is composed of two committees: the Recovery Team and the Action Planning Group. These two groups represent First Nations, affected public stakeholders, non-government environmental organizations, industry and local and regional governments. Their objective is to implement a Recovery Plan that will restore and protect the Nechako white sturgeon.



Protecting the White Sturgeon

In November 2003, the white sturgeon was listed as an Endangered Species by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC).

In 1994, the British Columbia Government declared all commercial and sport harvesting of sturgeon illegal and sport fishing for sturgeon was designated catch and release only. Most First Nations people have also voluntarily stopped sustenance harvesting of sturgeon. In 2000, **all** sport fishing was closed for white sturgeon in the Nechako watershed due to conservation concerns.

In order to protect the white sturgeon, it is important all concerned parties come together, to work towards the recovery of this magnificent fish.



Possible Impacts on White Sturgeon

The causes of the white sturgeon's decline are not fully understood. But some of the possible factors include:

Changes to the Nechako River: Since it was dammed for power generation in 1952, there have been dramatic changes in the amount of water in the river and seasonal flow patterns.

River Bed Substrates: Historic substrate alterations in the vicinity of the spawning site may limit larval and juvenile survival by a variety of means.

Predators and Food Resources: There may be more predators feeding on white sturgeon eggs and other vulnerable life stages, and less of the food preferred by young sturgeon.

Harvest and Incidental Catches: Fishing for Nechako white sturgeon is now illegal. Ongoing poaching and incidental harvests may impair the success of recovery efforts.

Pollution: Industrial and urban pollution cause changes, such as an increase in rooted aquatic plants, which affect the river's ecology.

If the decline is not stopped, the Nechako White Sturgeon will go extinct.

What is a Sturgeon?

The white sturgeon is a survivor from before the time of the dinosaurs. Dwelling in deep pools in rivers and large lakes, this mysterious creature is the largest freshwater fish in North America

In the last 50 years, the Nechako white sturgeon population has dropped to less than 600 fish. And the vast majority of those fish are more than 30 years old. As sturgeon do not begin spawning until they are 15 to 30 years old, the lack of young sturgeon in the Nechako means that an entire generation is already missing.

Photos: Golder Associates

A large Nechako white sturgeon generally reaches about 3 meters in length. Instead of scales, the long, streamlined body has bony plates, called scutes, arranged in five rows down its body. It also has a broad, flattened head, tiny eyes and shark-like tail. Its toothless mouth is on the underside of its head, and extends out of its body in order to suck up food. Barbels, or whiskers, located between the snout and the mouth, help it find edible objects.

Adult white sturgeon live entirely on animal matter. They primarily use touch and taste, rather than eyesight, to find food. Young sturgeon may snack on

larval insects, freshwater clams and snails, while older sturgeon feed primarily on fish, including live adult salmon and even smaller sturgeon.

