



Joint State Accord on 2006-2009 Columbia River Sturgeon Fishery Management



The Oregon and Washington Departments of Fish and Wildlife agree on the following management measures for sturgeon fisheries in the Columbia River and in coastal streams. These fishery regulations shall be in effect in Oregon and Washington boundary waters upstream from McNary Dam, in the lower Columbia River and tributaries, in marine areas, and in coastal basins. Sturgeon fisheries between Bonneville and McNary dams will be managed under agreements negotiated by *U.S. v Oregon* parties. This document is a revision to the original 2006-2008 Accord which is extended through 2009. This version reflects management and regulatory changes that have become effective since January 2009.

I. Management Policies

- A. Provide regulatory protection to safeguard the current broodstock population and ensure adequate recruitment of broodstock sturgeon in subsequent years.
- B. Manage for optimal sustainable yield (OSY), by regulating the combined sport and commercial harvest rate for the legal sized population.
- C. Maintain concurrent Washington and Oregon regulations in the Columbia River.
- D. Maintain viable and diverse recreational and commercial fishing opportunities.
- E. Manage the harvest of sturgeon in fisheries outside the mainstem lower Columbia River consistent with lower Columbia River sturgeon conservation and management needs.
- F. Limit incidental impacts of other species needing conservation protection during fisheries directed at white sturgeon.

II. White Sturgeon

A. *Harvestable Number Below Bonneville Dam*

The annual average harvestable number of white sturgeon for 2006-2009 will be 40,000 legal-sized individuals. This number is based on current stock assessments and is intended to provide population growth towards OSY. This number may be changed based on new biological information or analyses/theory.

B. *Fishery Allocation Below Bonneville Dam*

The harvestable number of white sturgeon in the Columbia River downstream from Bonneville Dam will be allocated 20% to commercial fisheries and 80% to recreational fisheries.

C. *Sport Fishery Regulations*

Sport fishery regulations will be consistent with the following objectives:

- Minimize emergency in-season action
 - Balance catch between the estuary and non-estuary fisheries and maintain a diverse array of sturgeon fishing opportunity
 - Maintain fishery monitoring and management capabilities
 - Reduce fishing-related mortality of “oversize” sturgeon
1. Size limit: 38 inches – 54 inches fork length (new length measurement effective January 2009). May use more restrictive size limits to manage within specific areas (e.g. the size limit for the summer (post-April) fishery below the Wauna power lines is 41-54 inches fork length.)
 2. Catch limits: 1 per day and 5 per year. Allow catch and release fishing after retention of the daily or annual catch limit, except in the sturgeon spawning sanctuary downstream from Bonneville Dam where no fishing is allowed from May 1 through July 31.
 3. Hook requirement: Require one single-point barbless hook.
 4. Areas: Manage recreational fisheries downstream from Bonneville to annually provide 60% of the harvest to the area downstream of the Wauna powerlines, and 40% to the area upstream.
 5. Retention Seasons: Modify as necessary so that average harvest for the 4-year period of this agreement is no greater than the prescribed sport harvestable number. May use different season structures for areas upstream and downstream from the Wauna power lines to accomplish the catch-by-area objectives.
 6. Miscellaneous regulations: Maintain in effect the miscellaneous sturgeon fishery regulations as described in Oregon and Washington sport regulation pamphlets.
 7. Spawning Sanctuary: Close the Columbia River, from Navigation Marker 85 on the Washington shore upstream to Bonneville Dam, to angling for sturgeon from May 1 through July 31 to protect broodstock.
 8. Oversize Catch and Release Fishery Downstream from Bonneville Dam: Manage the oversize catch and release fishery in this area to safeguard sturgeon broodstock, because this fishery has a higher impact on the broodstock population than other segments of the fishery. Specifically encourage participants in this fishery to follow “Best Fishing Practices” protocols including, but not limited to the following measures:

- Limit catch to one oversize sturgeon per angler per day
- Minimize the amount of handling time per oversize fish
- Keep the fish in the water while being photographed and released
- Use and maintain proper gear to minimize break-offs, limit handling stress, improve reproductive success and reduce mortality

Best Fishing Practices protocols and the purpose of the program shall be posted on informational signs at boat launches used by participants in the fishery.

D. *Commercial Fishery Regulations*

Commercial fishery regulations will optimize economic value and spread harvest opportunity throughout the year.

1. Size limit: 43 inches – 54 inches fork length (effective January 1, 2009).
2. Landing limits: May implement landing limits per vessel per fishing period as necessary to spread harvest opportunity and optimize economic value.
3. Seasons: Allow sturgeon fishing outside salmon fishing seasons as necessary to access allocation and optimize economic benefit, consistent with conservation objectives for other species. Allocate the commercial share of white sturgeon among seasons annually in coordination with the Columbia River Commercial Fishery Advisory Group.
4. Miscellaneous regulations: Maintain the miscellaneous sturgeon fishery regulations in effect since 1996.

E. *Fishery and Population Monitoring Measures*

The following programs will be continued and/or modified:

1. The Mainstem Sport Fishery Statistical Sampling Program
2. Expansion of the Willamette Creel Program (to include January-February, 2009)
3. The Tagging Program to Estimate Abundance of Legal-Sized Sturgeon (including the additional measure for 2009 of evaluating setlines as an alternative sampling gear).
4. ODFW's Young-of-the-Year Sturgeon Surveys
5. WDFW's Sturgeon Carcass Surveys and Autopsies
6. WDFW and MSU's Sturgeon Maturation Study (including continued encouragement of the fishing-guide community to cooperate with investigators)
7. Monitoring of Marine Mammal Predation (incidental to other field activities)

With respect to monitoring broodstock, continue efforts to assess and quantify impacts of commercial and recreational fisheries on broodstock abundance, including conducting research as necessary and practical.

III. Green Sturgeon

A. *Sport Fisheries*

Retention of green sturgeon is prohibited in Washington recreational fisheries and by Oregon in Columbia River recreational fisheries.

B. *Commercial Fisheries*

Retention of green sturgeon is prohibited in Washington commercial fisheries and by Oregon in Columbia River commercial fisheries.

C. *Stock Status*

Stock status and management of green sturgeon will continue to be reviewed with regional co-managers and NOAA Fisheries consistent with the 2006 listing of the Southern Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of green sturgeon as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

IV. Ocean and Coastal Fisheries

Harvest in sturgeon fisheries outside the mainstem Columbia River will be managed consistent with lower Columbia River sturgeon conservation and management needs.

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Date

Date