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# Ilwaco Charter Association

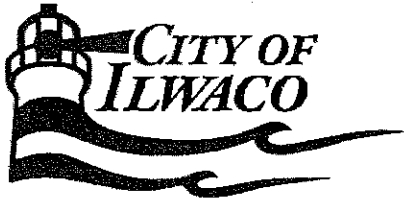
P. O. Box 9  
Ilwaco, WA 98624

April 20, 2015

ODF&W Commission  
Director Melcher

I thank you for this opportunity and for taking my testimony. The Ilwaco Charter Association is the biggest and oldest Charter Association on the Columbia River. We have members from both sides of the river. Our coastal communities have suffered a 90% loss in angler trips due to the loss of sturgeon retention in 2014. Our coastal towns are losing businesses at an alarming rate. The past 3 years the sturgeon population has had a positive growth rising from 60,000 in 2011 to 140,000 in 2015. We have also had for the past 5 years great smelt runs, with these changes the Washington staff feels the sturgeon population has rebounded enough for a small conservation minded retention season. The Washington commission has given the director of WDF&W the authority to talk to your Director on a small retention season. There have been public meetings where both Oregon and Washington have been involved in this process. The proposed season would be from May 15 to Mid June while other parts of the river have had a great spring Chinook season and will have what appears to be a very good summer Chinooks seasons. The Ports of Astoria, Hammond, Warrenton, Chinook, and Ilwaco don't have that same fishery so without sturgeon these ports and towns are ghost towns until fall salmon seasons start. We are asking the you to give director Melcher the authority to have an emergency opener for a small conservation sturgeon retention season in the lower river as the Washington commission did from May 15<sup>th</sup> to Mid June. Thank you for you consideration.

Butch Smith Pres.  
Ilwaco Charter Association.



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PO Box 548 • Ilwaco, WA 98624  
Phone: 360.642.3145  
Fax: 360.642.3155  
info@ilwaco-wa.gov  
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Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Natural Resources Building  
1111 Washington St. SE  
Olympia, WA 98501  
360-902-2200

March 23, 2015

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing today on behalf of City of Ilwaco to ask for your reconsideration to reopen the sturgeon fishing season for this spring/summer 2015. In short, river conditions are better, smelt runs are way up, and the shad have come roaring back. All this equals to sturgeon making a comeback into the system. When the season was called off the decision was made based on a 2 year-old stock assessment and it showed a keeper sturgeon population of 65,000 to 70,000 not the best, but not bad overall. The new stock assessment, recently released shows a population size of 140,000. This is substantially higher than the assessment used in the earlier decision making process. Therefore, if we fish at last year's level on this year's abundance that would equal a 7% harvest rate. The harvest rate we have been using under the Oregon Conservation Plan is 13 to 15%. You have an Adaptive Management Policy that if used in this case will allow us to fish in 2015. I ask you to reconsider your previous decision on sturgeon fishing in the lower Columbia River. Losing this upcoming fishing season would be detrimental to the local economy here in Ilwaco. Not only does the fishing season directly affect the fishermen and their lively-hood; but it also affects many other business owners and community members. This fishing season is imperative to the health and growth of the towns along the lower Columbia River.

Thank you for your time,

Mayor, Mike Cassinelli

**Subject: Sturgeon**

Mr Melcher, my name is Robert Moxley of Dundee Oregon. Im writing you this email on behalf of myself and my constituents. I would like to address our current Sturgeon fishery in the lower Columbia river. Last season we had our first non retention season on the lower Columbia river. This catch and release fishery had a dramatic effect on angler participation in 2014. I am under the impression we experienced a 90 percent decline in angler effort during the 2014 lower Columbia Sturgeon season. This proves to me that what I have been telling staff for years is true, "retention is the main incentive for participation." I feel we could have a restricted retention season on the lower Columbia river in 2015, and still continue our recovery goals. I personally would not support a Willamette or upper Columbia river retention season. The lower Columbia stock assessment indicated healthy stock status of harvestable fish, with a population trend moving in the right direction. I understand this is a difficult decision and we should always air on the side of caution, however the sport angler user group is facing a serious downward trend within angler participation and new recruitment, with the most alarming being the youth anglers. I grew up in a time when we had no TV, Cell Phone, or Internet. I find most Youths and some adults are what I refer to as "plugged in" and no longer look to the outdoor recreation opportunity for entertainment. I feel if we continue to raise fees and reduce retention opportunity we will only continue to push away those that are as important as our Sturgeon.

Bottom line is that a ninety percent decline in angler effort is unacceptable and must be addressed before we lose any more existing and new recruits. I urge you to consider a lower Columbia river only Sturgeon retention season, even if it is highly restrictive it will still give us sport anglers hope in the way of a future.

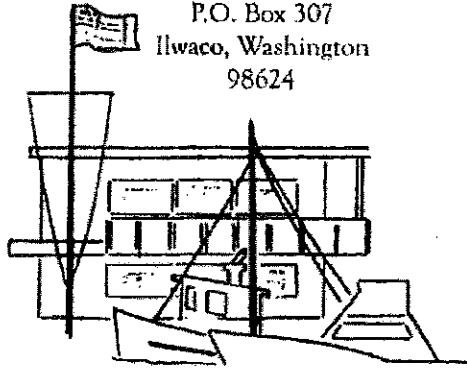
Robert Moxley  
Columbia River Advisor  
971-409-5429  
[northriverscout139@gmail.com](mailto:northriverscout139@gmail.com)

Commissioners

Dave Nichols  
Butch Smith  
Bob Hamilton

# PORT OF ILWACO

P.O. Box 307  
Ilwaco, Washington  
98624



Guy Glenn, Jr.  
Manager

Area Code 360  
Phone 642-3143  
FAX 642-3148  
[www.portofilwaco.org](http://www.portofilwaco.org)

March 19, 2015

Guy Norman  
WDFW - Regional Director  
2108 Grand Boulevard  
Vancouver, WA 98661

Director Norman:

The Port of Ilwaco supports a limited take sturgeon season this year (2015). The economy of our rural coastal community is highly dependent on fisheries, such as the sturgeon fishery. We understand this fishery needs to be sustainable. Our local businesses rely on revenue generated from fisheries and tourism. A limited take season would allow fishermen to participate while providing for a sustainable fishery long term.

We join the Ilwaco Charter Association in their shared support of this season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Guy Glenn, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Guy Glenn, Jr.  
Manager, Port of Ilwaco

# Ilwaco Charter Association

P. O. Box 9  
Ilwaco, WA 98624

March 16, 2015

The Ilwaco Charters Assoc. is in full support of a limited take sturgeon season in 2015 starting Mid-May and lasting until quota. The coastal communities are dependent on all fishing seasons and with the closer of sturgeon in 2014 the lower coastal communities lost approx. 10 million dollars in revenue to our towns on the lower river. When I testified before the commission in December 2014 I showed them a picture of the Port of Ilwaco on Memorial Weekend Saturday of last year (2014) there were three sport boats where there should have been 200. This port and others cannot continue without raising our relatively low rates that all of you like when you fish down here, as well as the other amenities. With Coastal towns dependent on fish dollars this kind of loss has started to cost supporting businesses their ability to keep their doors open. We have already lost all but one of our 4 restaurants at the port from last year, and our live bait business that is so vital to everyone for salmon, sturgeon, and tuna has had to now rethink his business plans and might have to be looking to have frozen bait only in the future and fish for other species because it is hard for anyone raising a family and making payments to have just 2 ½ month seasons. I can tell from many years of experience there is no one waiting in line to step into this business which is a thankless job where you work about 19 hrs a day 7 days a week. So as you can see things that everyone likes about using the coastal ports are already disappearing, one more year of no retention will be devastating. We are asking for a small harvest, conservation minded season that will help all us make it to the summer salmon season. We are glad there will be a robust spring Chinook season followed by a pretty good run of summer Chinook , but as you all know these fishery's don't contribute in any meaningful way to the estuary like it does in other parts of the river. So we are in full support of a small harvest rate of the 140,000 sturgeons in the keep able size range. We realize the guideline will be small that's why we need to start the season in mid-may to get the most fishing days a small quota will provide.

Thank you,

Butch Smith

Pres. ICA,



March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Kelly Short Outdoors is in full support of a limited keeper retention season on lower Columbia River white sturgeon.

Lower coastal communities in Oregon and Washington depend on tourism dollars during summer months starting in May of each year.

With the closure in 2014 rural communities lost large amounts of revenue to restaurant, bait tackle shops, camp grounds, hotels, harbors and ports with launch & Moorage fees, these revenue are a must and a big part of their income. They can't not make it on just a three week to four week salmon season. The revenues lost were in the 9.2 to 13.7 million dollars last year in 2014.

With the 140,000 keeper size white sturgeon available in the lower Columbia River we are hoping you will see the importance this is to these rural communities for revenue they depend on local and out of state tourism dollars.

And with the large numbers of legal size fish available we are seeking and asking for a small percentage of the amount above out of the 140,000 available size for a season in May and June of this year 2015

They can't not go through 2 years of loss revenue business rely on tourism a two year closer will crush some of these business and revenue lost to the states will more than likely double.

We realize the guidelines will be small but the communities depend on this revenue in May and June to get to late July and August summer season for their revenue for the year they strongly rely on and need a 4 month summer season.

We also strongly support and agree with the Ilwaco Charter Association recommendations in this matter as well.

Kelly Short Outdoors  
Pres./owner Kelly R Short

## CLANCYS GUIDED SPORTFISHING

CLANCY & RON HOLT

Clancysfishing.com

[clancysfishing@localaccess.com](mailto:clancysfishing@localaccess.com)

Clancy Holt 360-880-0409

Ron Holt 360-520-3107

Ron and I believe according to the research done by WDFW and ODFG there are reasonable numbers of keeper size sturgeon to allow a restricted retention season in 2015 in the estuary of the Columbia River. Something like one fish per angler for the year 2015. Our clients would participate in a season structured something like this. They will not participate in a fishery totally catch and release. We have the month of June totally reserved, clients from all over the USA for two boats, if the clients can keep one sturgeon a year. If this does not happen **All, yes I mean every one** of these clients are going to cancel their fishing and motel reservations. They will not be eating in the restaurants or spending the other money associated with a fishing outing. The town of Naselle where we base our sturgeon season will flourish during a limited sturgeon retention season. If not the motels, restaurants, bars and all the other businesses will suffer. We will not move our fifth wheel trailers down. Our customers are not interested in a catch and release season. Under last years rules I did not fish sturgeon in the estuary at all. Ron fished four clients one day. This really hurt us financially. According to your research the numbers show a limited retention season is possible. **We feel it is your responsibility to provide the fishing public a limited retention season in the estuary in 2015.**

Thank You

Clancys Guided Sportfishing

Clancy & Ron Holt

Dated March 19, 2015

March 19<sup>th</sup> 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I've been avid fisherman my whole life, but in 1990 I got introduced to sturgeon fishing in the estuary. Since then we've made so many cut backs in fishing for sturgeon to last year catch and release.

I've seen what has happened to the small coastal towns with no sturgeon fishing. Its been divesting. Business's closing up and or moving to a different location. These small towns cannot survive another year of catch and release sturgeon. A small well-managed sturgeon season would keep that small family business open for another year.

There is so many people that rely on this early fishery to kick start their year. Whether it is the Bait dock, or the cannery that processes the catch.

Please do not make choices for these people that they wouldn't otherwise make. These are people that I've done business with for years and want to continue doing business with. Consider their business before you make it another catch and release year of sturgeon.

Thank you for you time and consideration.

Lorrie Watts  
18485 SW Pacific Dr. 132  
Tualatin, Or 97062  
503-625-4740



**sturgeon**

Steve Watrous [branchoffice96@gmail.com]

Sent: Sunday, April 19, 2015 8:53 AM

To: Curt Melcher [curt.melcher@state.or.us]

Curt,

I hope this finds you well and fully settled in your new position. Congratulations on becoming the "big shot"! I've been meaning to call or write and the sturgeon issue gave me the push I needed to do so. Thank you for attending the PSMFC meeting and participating in the presentation of my award.

I would like you to know what a great staff you have covering the river and ocean. Chris Kern is doing a fantastic job as are John North and Jeff Whisler. It is important that staff not only do a good job but do it in a way that provides constituents with a feeling they are being listened to and their concerns addressed. I assure you that is the case and these three individuals should be commended for their work.

Regarding the sturgeon issue. I fully support a limited catch and keep fishery in the estuary for 2015. As you are aware, I interact with "a cast of thousands" and the over whelming majority favor a conservative approach to this resource but endorse a fishery if it falls within what staff feels is consistent with a reasonable rebuilding plan. There are three reasons I feel we should attempt to move forward with this fishery in 2015.

The economic impact to the coastal communities is vital. I won't bore you with all the benefits as I am sure you have heard it all before.

The benefit of obtaining much needed data on the status of the stock. I have spoken to Brad James about the possibility of using the commercial 20% share to prosecute limited additional tagging in concert with the commercial catch and keep portion of the proposed fishery. He indicated a willingness to pursue the suggestion. And, of course, there will be the recreational sampling data that will be obtained.

The value of staff input needs to be restored to the process. We have reached a point where politics and flawed amateur biology are determining our fisheries instead of the best available science. During our Columbia River Advisory Group meeting I asked Brad James to answer one simple question. Do you believe the science shows that the resource is healthy enough to support a limited conservative catch and keep season and continue to rebuild? His answer was yes. This should trump the amateur biologists who are members of vocal fishing groups that "cherry pick" data supporting their preconceived position while ignoring the full body of science that refutes their position. In many cases both of our Fish and Wildlife Commissions have ignored staff and favored those who do not let the facts or truth get in the way of their preconceived positions. Adopting the proposed limited conservative sturgeon catch and keep season would be a positive step in reversing this trend.

I am asking for your help. Anything you can do to influence your Commission to consider this proposal would be greatly appreciated. Time is of the essence as the proposal is to open the fishery May 15th. A simple request for a not so simple task.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Steve Watrous

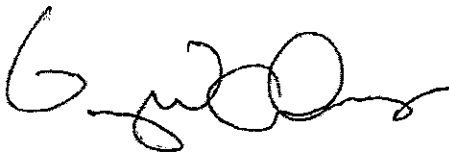
March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2015

Gary W. Abramson  
E-Z Tackle Company, Inc.  
PO Box 1451  
Clackamas, OR. 97015

To whom it may concern;

I am writing in support of a limited retention Sturgeon fishery in the lower Columbia River. I own a small tackle manufacturing company that has felt the financial impact of catch and release only Sturgeon fishery in the Columbia River estuary in 2014. More important I come from a family of sportsman that have moored a boat and fished out of the Port of Ilwaco since the early 70's. I currently reside in a suburb of Portland Oregon but have a vacation home in Ocean Park Washington. I have seen the good and the bad and there is no question the elimination of Sturgeon retention in the estuary last year was devastating to the local economy and communities that rely on sports fishing dollars to sustain their businesses. Everyone supports proper fisheries management but the question becomes why the Columbia Sturgeon management plan cannot allow for retention opportunities in all regions and not just a select few? I am confident data would support the financial impact allowing Sturgeon harvest in the Columbia estuary, regardless of the duration, has an overwhelming positive financial impact to this region more than any other. The lower Columbia River is a destination fishery like none other in the world. There are no other sports fishing draws to this area prior to the start of the ocean Salmon season which typically has been mid to late June. A mid-May Sturgeon limited retention fishery makes the most sense to give sportsman motivation to travel to this northwest favorite fishery. A Sturgeon fishery in 2015 would no doubt be a huge boost towards the loss recovery from last year's decision to be catch and-release only. Thank you for considering my comments concerning this matter.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Abramson', written in a cursive style.

Gary Abramson  
President

March 19<sup>th</sup> 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I've been avid fisherman my whole life, but in 1990 I got introduced to sturgeon fishing in the estuary. Since then we've made so many cut backs in fishing for sturgeon to last year catch and release.

I've seen what has happened to the small coastal towns with no sturgeon fishing. It's been divesting. Business's closing up and or moving to a different location. These small towns cannot survive another year of catch and release sturgeon. A small well-managed sturgeon season would keep that small family business open for another year.

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lorrie Watts  
18485 SW Pacific Dr. 132  
Tualatin, Or  
97062  
503-625-4740

I am writing on behalf of the over 9000 members of Puget Sound Anglers and the 60 members of PSA Ocean Anglers to express our support for and ask for your support for a Lower Columbia River retention fishery for white sturgeon this year. The sturgeon population has increased 3 years in a row and all indications are that it is healthy and viable stock. Many of communities along the lower river rely on this fishery for many reasons and all support it. All scientific evidence supports the ability to reopen this fishery because the conservation objectives are being met

Thank you

--

Kevin Lanier  
President PSA Ocean Anglers and Puget Sound Anglers State Board Vice  
Westport, Wa  
425-328-8558 C

April 3, 2015

To: ODFW & WDFW

Hello,

My name is Thomas Kaffun and I live in Salem Oregon. I'm an avid angler in the State of Oregon and have been fishing for Sturgeon and Salmon for the past 45 years. I'm also a member of the Northwest Steelheaders for the past 20 years and also a member of the Coastal Conservation Association for the past 4 years.

I am in support of a retention season for the lower Columbia River for keeper Sturgeon season. I spend several trips a year in the lower Columbia River Sturgeon and Salmon fishing with fellow friends and anglers like myself supporting those in the local communities by purchasing fuel for my boat and truck, buying tackle, food and lodging.

I hope you will take a strong consideration in allowing a keeper Sturgeon season this year in May/June 2015.

Your consideration is greatly appreciated

Sincerely,

*Thomas Kaffun*

