

Summary of Stakeholder Team and Public Input:

This list reflects the top ten most common comments received during meetings with the stakeholder team and public.

- Sea lion predation on sturgeon of all sizes, but especially on oversize fish is a significant problem and not just in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers viewing area.
- Recent declines in the status of the smelt population may be seriously impacting current sturgeon population numbers and distribution.
- White sturgeon spawning and rearing habitat must be protected, including off-channel habitats (e.g., inside of Sand Island) in the Columbia River Gorge.
- Need a better understanding of the status of, and importance to, white sturgeon of non-smelt food resources, including freshwater aquatic invertebrates and anchovies.
- Need a better understanding of the full effects and magnitude of fishing and harvest on the white sturgeon population, including things such as catch and release mortality, poaching, improper adherence to fishing regulations, and improper management and guideline setting by fisheries managers.
- Need a better understanding of the effects of flow and flow variability in the Bonneville Dam tailrace on white sturgeon productivity, especially during load following or power peaking operations.
- Need to formally assess the potential benefits/costs associated with using a lower Columbia River white sturgeon hatchery as a management tool.
- Need a better understanding of whether catch rate data in the sport fishery truly reflects the relative abundance in the population of sub-legal sized sturgeon. If the number of sub-legal sturgeon is really depressed, need to understand why and what needs to be done to rectify the situation because it could have serious implications on future re-building efforts.
- Need a better understanding of the status of abundance, density, growth and distribution in coastal white sturgeon populations both north and south of the mouth of the Columbia.
- Need to formally assess the long term effects of dredging on lower Columbia River white sturgeon survival (directly, i.e. acute mortality, and indirectly, i.e. stress/loss of habitat).