

# Nechako White Sturgeon

...An Endangered Species



## QUICK FACTS

### White Sturgeon...

- ...live in the Nechako and Stuart watershed.
- ...are North America's largest freshwater fish.
- ...can be 6 metres (19 feet) long and weigh up to 800 kilograms (1,800 pounds).
- ...can live to be over 100 years old.

- ...have existed for over 175 million years, since dinosaurs roamed the planet.
- ...eat live fish and fish carcasses.
- ...have no teeth.
- ...have four whiskers (barbels) that help them detect food.
- ...like slow-moving, deep dark water.

...ARE AN ENDANGERED SPECIES!

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Exploration Place in Prince George has a live white sturgeon in their fish tank. Check it out – very cool!

## ON THE VERGE OF EXTINCTION



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

(COSEWIC). White sturgeon, which occur locally in the Nechako and Fraser rivers are North America's largest and longest-lived freshwater fish. This species has survived 175 million years, including

ice ages, volcanic eruptions, flooding and eras of mass extinction. The causes of the white sturgeon's decline are not fully understood. However, human development, construction of dams, changes in river flow patterns and water temperature, loss of habitat and harvesting are some of the factors that may be affecting the white sturgeon. In the spring of 2004, for the first time, sturgeon were observed spawning in the Nechako River. While this was a very important observation, young sturgeon are seldom found in the Nechako River, indicating these fish are not reproducing successfully or young fish are not surviving. Most recent estimates put the Nechako white sturgeon population at approximately 570 fish.

## POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON WHITE STURGEON

- ...dams altering river flow and river temperature
- ...changes in river geomorphology.
- ...over fishing and incidental catches.
- ...pollution from industrial and urban sources.
- ...predation from other fish on white sturgeon eggs and larvae.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- ...report all sturgeon sightings. This information will help biologists to better understand the species.
- ...report all sturgeon fishing. Fishing white sturgeon in the Nechako/Stuart watersheds is illegal and has been completely closed since 2000.
- ...when fishing other species use 15 lb. line or less, only single barbless hooks and artificial baits.
- ...avoid bottom fishing in areas where sturgeon frequent (deep pool areas).
- ...avoid polluting rivers in any way.



## WHAT IS BEING DONE?

In 1999, after five years of research, it was determined that the white sturgeon in the Nechako River system were in serious trouble. In 2000 the Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative (NWSRI) was established.

This Initiative consists of two committees, the Recovery Team and the Action Planning Group (APG). These two groups are made up of individuals that represent First Nations, non-government environmental organizations, industry, local and regional governments and affected public stakeholders. The overall objective of these two committees is to implement a Recovery Plan to restore and protect the Nechako white sturgeon population.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[www.nechakowhitesturgeon.org](http://www.nechakowhitesturgeon.org)

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### REPORT WHITE STURGEON OBSERVATIONS TO:

Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection.  
Fisheries branch: (250) 565-6135



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