

Sturgeon Sport Rules Update - Decision

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Long-term Vision

Conservation of the White Sturgeon population:

- Improve abundance of spawning adult sturgeon.
- Enhance future fisheries.
- Ensure long-term viability of the population.



Recommended Rule Proposals

1. Expand Columbia River sturgeon spawning sanctuaries.
 - Extend time of spawning sanctuaries through August 31.
 - Full closed period would be May 1-August 31.
 - Aligned with sanctuary rules below Bonneville.
 - Expand area of sanctuaries below McNary Dam and Priest Rapids Dam.
 - Below McNary Dam – Extends to Grain Elevators at Patterson Ferry Road (+12 miles).
 - Below Priest Rapids Dam – Extend to Vernita Bridge (+7 miles).



JOHN DAY RESERVOIR STURGEON SANCTUARY BOUNDARY
CURRENT BOUNDARY AND PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES



WASHINGTON

Alternative 2: Grain Elevators (RM 278)

~~Alternative 1: Irrigon Hatchery (RM 279)~~

Current Boundary: Hwy 82/395 Bridge (RM 290)

McNary Dam

Umatilla

COLUMBIA RIVER

Irrigon

OREGON



**JOHN DAY STURGEON SANCTUARY BOUNDARY
ALTERNATIVE 2: HOGUE-WARNER GRAIN ELEVATORS (RM 278)**

"From the grain elevators at Patterson Ferry Road on the Oregon shore, straight across to a marker on the Washington shore at the West end of the old concrete foundations"

Sign on WA Shore
Northeasterly of Grain
Elevators at West End of
Old Concrete Foundations

Grain Elevators

Hogue-Warner Grain Elevators
(Patterson Ferry Road)

WASHINGTON

OREGON

COLUMBIA RIVER

Recommended Rule Proposals

1. Expand Columbia River sturgeon spawning sanctuaries.
 - Extend time of spawning sanctuaries through August 31.
 - Expand area of sanctuaries below McNary Dam and Priest Rapids Dam.

Public Comments (online and at public meetings): :

- Few objections raised regarding extending the time of the sanctuaries.
- Several objections raised regarding extending the area of the sanctuaries
- Concern over lost fishing opportunity – popular catch and release oversize sturgeon fishery below McNary Dam.
- Frustration over lack of recent data in McNary Pool.
- Concern of impact of tribal fishing in John Day Pool.



Recommended Rule Proposals

2. Move to catch & release fisheries only upstream of McNary Dam.
 - Precautionary approach, consistent with policy guidelines.

Public Comments (online and at public meetings):

- Disagreement over whether there is a conservation issue.
- Concern over lost fishing opportunity.
- Frustration over lack of recent data in McNary Pool.
- Strong support for establishing a volunteer program.
- Recommendation for electronic catch-report-cards to improve monitoring.



Recommended Rule Proposals

3. Statewide night closure for White Sturgeon fishing.
 - Closes night fishing in the Chehalis River – currently only area open to night fishing for sturgeon in WA.
 - Meets conservation objectives outlined in F&W Commission Policy.

Public Comments (online and at public meetings): :

- Concern over lost fishing opportunity.
- Concern with the impact of tribal gillnet fisheries.
- Petition received—129 signatures opposing closing night fishing.



Recommended Rule Proposals

4. Improve clarity on sturgeon catch-and-release regulations.
 - “Any sturgeon that cannot lawfully be retained must be released immediately.”
 - Goal to provide clarity of what fish must be released in both areas where a slot-limit is or is not in effect.



Recommended Rule Proposals



5. Define oversize sturgeon—greater than 55" Fork Length.
 - Aligns with definition for take of an illegal-size sturgeon in RCW 77.15.370.
 - Goal to improve clarity on the definition of "Oversize Sturgeon" for anglers, fishery managers, and enforcement personnel.



Recommended Rule Proposals

6. Simplify and clarify statewide sturgeon regulations—WAC 220-316-010.
 - Aligns with state rule simplification standards.
 - Directionality, rules read in the upstream direction.
 - Section breaks align with GIS layers associated with the Fish Washington App.
 - Organization, improving readability and clarity.



Questions?



Draft Motion Language

Please refer to draft motion language as listed in summary sheet.

