2026 JOINT STAFF REPORT CONCERNING STOCK STATUS AND FISHERIES FOR WHITE STURGEON

Joint Columbia River Management Staff

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Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Joint Staff Report provides an overview of the status of Columbia River white sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*), summarizes recent stock assessment results, and outlines management expectations for the 2026 season. The report includes a review of stock status, monitoring results, fishery performance, and application of current management frameworks.

Regulatory Context

Columbia River white sturgeon populations, as described in this report, are not a federally listed entity and are subject to the management authority of the states of Washington and Oregon. Columbia River white sturgeon fisheries are managed through the Columbia River Compact and Joint State hearing process. The Columbia River treaty tribes have authority to regulate treaty fisheries.

Sturgeon Fisheries Downstream of Bonneville Dam

Stock Status and Monitoring

In 2025, white sturgeon abundance in the lower Columbia River (LCR) remained depressed, with legal-size fish (38–54 inches fork length [FL]) declining to about 90,100 fish, continuing a multi-year low trend. The decline in legal-size abundance is primarily driven by reduced recruitment into the smaller portion of the legal-size range, with the lower sub-class (38–43 inches FL) now comprising only about one-third of legal-size fish. Juvenile sturgeon abundance reached its lowest level on record in 2025, representing less than 23% of the population and remaining well below conservation thresholds, indicating severe recruitment concern. Young-of-year monitoring in 2025 detected no recruitment in either the LCR or lower Willamette rivers (LWR), raising concerns about further declines in population productivity. While adult (spawning-size) sturgeon abundance remains above desired conservation thresholds in recent years, the current overall population structure reflects an aging population with limited near-term potential to rebuild legal-size abundance without improved recruitment.

2025 Fisheries and Management Performance

Based on the conservation concerns identified in the 2024 stock assessment, recreational and commercial advisory group input, and the reduced feasibility of providing meaningful retention fisheries, no white sturgeon retention fisheries were adopted for 2025. Recreational catch-and-release sturgeon fishing was monitored incidentally during creel surveys for salmon and steelhead fisheries in 2025. Sturgeon anglers made 2,503 total trips on the LCR, releasing 7,241 white sturgeon, and 1,599 trips in the LWR, releasing 3,034 white sturgeon.

2026 Fishery Expectations

Under permanent regulations, recreational white sturgeon fisheries in the LCR and LWR are restricted to catch-and-release only unless retention seasons are specifically adopted. No recreational or non-treaty commercial retention fisheries will be recommended for 2026, based

on current stock status.

Sturgeon Fisheries Upstream of Bonneville Dam

Stock Status and Monitoring

The 2025 white sturgeon stock assessment in John Day Pool provided an estimated total population of 31,159 fish. Legal-size sturgeon (43–54 inches FL) increased to the highest level in recent history. In contrast, sublegal fish declined sharply, with an 84% decrease in fish less than 38 inches FL. Young-of-year surveys indicate that recruitment in John Day Pool remains extremely poor, with only one year of detectable recruitment since 2012. This recruitment pattern reflects broader system-wide trends, as recruitment in Bonneville and The Dalles pools has also been depressed in recent years, with the 2025 Age-0 index in Bonneville at its lowest since 2015 and similarly low levels observed in The Dalles.

2025 Fisheries and Management Performance

- **Treaty Fisheries:** In 2025, winter setline fisheries with slot limits of 38–54 inches FL in Bonneville Pool and 43–54 inches FL in The Dalles and John Day pools produced a total commercial harvest of about 1,600 sturgeon; no summer or late-fall fisheries were prosecuted due to limited balances of fish remaining from the harvest guidelines. Commercial harvest reached 79% of the guideline in Bonneville Pool, 67% in The Dalles Pool, and 34% in John Day Pool.

- **Non-Treaty Recreational Fisheries:** In 2025, recreational sturgeon retention fisheries in the three sequential reservoirs upstream of Bonneville Dam began January 1, with Bonneville and The Dalles pools operating under two-days-per-week fishery structure to manage high effort, while John Day Pool remained open seven days per week. In Bonneville Pool, extremely high effort and catch rates resulted in 1,365 fish harvested on opening day, exceeding the 1,250 fish guideline and prompting immediate closure. The Dalles Pool experienced lower but still high opening-day harvest, leading to a closure after one-day followed by limited February openings that resulted in a season total of 260 fish, or 95% of the guideline. In John Day Pool, effort and catch rates were similar to recent years, with retention closing March 13 after 94 fish, or 90% of the guideline, were harvested over a 72-day season.

2026 Fishery Expectations

- **Treaty Fisheries:** The tribes took action in December 2025 to modify the January fishery for the coming year, opting for a later start, reducing the number of days open, and delaying the start of the Bonneville Pool fishery until after The Dalles and John Day pools are scheduled to close. Setline fisheries are more likely to occur than gillnet fisheries in February and March. Openings will likely be staggered in the winter season so that actual and projected catches can be assessed.

- **Non-Treaty Recreational Fisheries:** The states adopted rule changes in November 2025 that will close retention fisheries by default in Bonneville and The Dalles pools starting in

2026, with the intent to consider limited winter fisheries when effort and catch rates are lower. John Day Pool has shown more stable harvest patterns and lower risk of exceeding guidelines, so regulations there were aligned between Washington and Oregon to open seven days per week, starting January 1, with updated guidelines to be reviewed in 2026.

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the stock status of white sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*) in the mainstem Columbia River and includes a review of fisheries, current management plan, and past management actions and strategies. This report is part of an annual series produced by the joint Columbia River Management staff of the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW), Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW), the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission (CRITFC), and CRITFC's member tribes: the Nez Perce Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. The *U.S. v. Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has reviewed this report.

Previously, eulachon smelt (*Thaleichthys pacificus*) and white sturgeon stock status and fishery information were presented in a single report. Beginning this year, these materials have been separated, and eulachon information is now provided in a dedicated report. For eulachon information, please refer to the 2026 Joint Staff Report Concerning Eulachon Smelt Stock Status and Fisheries, distributed December 22, 2025.

THE COMPACT/JOINT STATE PROCESS

The Columbia River Compact is an agreement between the states of Oregon and Washington through which the two states set commercial fishing regulations for concurrent jurisdiction waters of the Columbia River. The Columbia River Compact was established in 1915 by the respective state legislatures to resolve the difficulties which arose from the states unilaterally establishing commercial fishing seasons and regulations. The Compact provides that neither state may make, change, alter, or amend its fishing regulations without the consent and approbation of the other. Congress ratified the Compact in 1918.

The Compact is interpreted as being applicable only to commercial fisheries; however, in practice, the states also apply the principle of joint state management to regulation of recreational fisheries occurring in concurrent jurisdiction waters of the Columbia River.

Typically, public hearings are convened to provide a forum in which the states may discuss, negotiate, and reach agreement on specific fishing regulations. The states are typically represented by delegates of the Oregon and Washington agency directors, acting on behalf of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (OFWC) and the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission (WFWC). The Columbia River treaty tribes have authority to regulate treaty fisheries.

When addressing regulations for Columbia River fisheries, the states consider the effect on escapement, treaty rights, and the impact on species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Working together under the principles of the Columbia River Compact, the states have the responsibility to address the allocation of limited resources between recreational, commercial, and treaty fishers. This responsibility has become increasingly demanding in recent years. The states maintain a conservative management approach when considering Columbia River fisheries that will affect species listed under the ESA.

SEASONS CONSIDERED

Consideration of recreational and non-treaty commercial fisheries for white sturgeon in the Columbia River and tributaries downstream of Bonneville Dam during 2025 will be based on the most current stock status information.

The Sturgeon Management Task Force (SMTF) will meet in January 2026 to review results of the 2025 stock assessment in John Day Pool and to discuss management options for 2026, including harvest guidelines for Zone 6 sturgeon fisheries.

Recreational retention fisheries in the pools between Bonneville Dam and McNary Dam (Zone 6) historically opened January 1; however, as of January 1, 2026, ODFW has closed the retention of sturgeon in this area year-round in permanent rules. Washington regulations still allow for this fishery to open as of January 1; therefore, temporary season modifications to 2026 fisheries were adopted at a Joint State hearing in November 2025, to make regulations concurrent between states.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT (ESA)

Salmon and Steelhead

The majority of Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead stocks are listed under the federal ESA as shown in the table below. The *U.S. v. Oregon* TAC has prepared Biological Assessments (BAs) for combined fisheries based on relevant *U.S. v. Oregon* management plans and agreements since 1992.

The current BA addresses Columbia River treaty and non-treaty fisheries for upriver Chinook, upriver coho, sockeye, steelhead, and white sturgeon, as described in the 2018–2027 *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement (MA; TAC 2017). The BA was submitted in June 2017, and a Biological Opinion (BO) was subsequently issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in February 2018 (NMFS 2018). Impacts on listed salmonid species from sturgeon fisheries described in this report are expected to be zero.

Eulachon

In March 2010, the NMFS published a rule (75 FR 13012) to list the southern distinct population segment (DPS) of eulachon as threatened under the ESA, which became effective May 17, 2010. This DPS encompasses all populations within the states of Washington, Oregon, and California and extends from the Skeena River in British Columbia (inclusive) south to the Mad River in northern California (inclusive). In December 2011, NMFS designated critical habitat which, in the Columbia basin, encompasses the mainstem Columbia River from the mouth upstream to Bonneville Dam as well as the Grays River, Skamokawa Creek, Elochoman River, Cowlitz and lower Toutle rivers, Kalama River, Lewis River, and Sandy River (76 FR 65323). The 2018–2027 *U.S. v. Oregon* BO addresses the incidental take of ESA-listed eulachon in 2018–2027 Columbia River salmon/steelhead and sturgeon target fisheries.

Federally-Listed Fish Species Found in Columbia River Fishery Management Areas			
Species – *ESU/DPS*	Current Designation	Listing Date	Effective Date
Chinook			
Snake River Fall	Threatened	April 22, 1992	May 22, 1992
Snake River Spring/Summer	Threatened	April 22, 1992	May 22, 1992
Upper Columbia River Spring	Endangered	March 24, 1999	May 24, 1999
Upper Columbia Summer/Fall	Not warranted	--	--
Middle Columbia Spring	Not warranted	--	--
Lower Columbia River	Threatened	March 24, 1999	May 24, 1999
Upper Willamette River Spring	Threatened	March 24, 1999	May 24, 1999
Deschutes River Summer/Fall	Not warranted	--	--
Steelhead			
Snake River Basin	Threatened	August 18, 1997	October 17, 1997
Upper Columbia River	Threatened[1]	August 18, 1997	October 17, 1997
Lower Columbia River	Threatened	March 19, 1998	May 18, 1998
Middle Columbia River	Threatened	March 25, 1999	May 24, 1999
Southwest Washington	Not warranted	--	--
Upper Willamette	Threatened	March 25, 1999	May 24, 1999
Sockeye			
Snake River	Endangered	November 20, 1991	Dec. 20, 1991
Okanogan River	Not warranted	--	--
Lake Wenatchee	Not warranted	--	--
Chum – Columbia River	Threatened	March 25, 1999	May 24, 1999
Coho – Columbia River	Threatened	June 28, 2005	August 26, 2005
Green Sturgeon – Southern DPS	Threatened	April 7, 2006	July 7, 2006
Eulachon – Southern DPS	Threatened	March 18, 2010	May 17, 2010

1. *Status downgraded to threatened per U.S. District Court order in June 2009.*

Green Sturgeon

In April 2006, the NMFS published a rule (71 FR 17757) to list the southern DPS of the North American green sturgeon (those spawning in the Sacramento River, California) as threatened, which became effective June 6, 2006. Effective November 9, 2009, the Columbia River below river mile (RM) 46 was designated as critical habitat of the southern DPS (74 FR 52299). The BO covering non-treaty fisheries described in the 2018–2027 *U.S. v. Oregon* MA also addresses impacts on green sturgeon. Given that (1) the sale of green sturgeon from Columbia River commercial fisheries was prohibited effective July 6, 2006 and (2) the retention of green sturgeon in Columbia River recreational fisheries was prohibited effective January 1, 2007, impacts on green sturgeon from fisheries described in this report are expected to be very low.

Marbled Murrelet

The threatened status of the marbled murrelet has not changed since these seabirds were initially listed under the federal ESA on October 1, 1992 (57 FR 45328). On September 24, 1997, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) released a recovery plan for the threatened marbled murrelet covering the states of Washington, Oregon, and California (USFWS 1997). On October 5, 2011,

revised critical habitat was designated for the marbled murrelet (76 FR 61599). In July 2021, the OFWC reclassified the status of the marbled murrelet from threatened (as initially designated in May 1995) to endangered under the Oregon Endangered Species Act, aligning the species' state status with that of both Washington and California. Fisheries described in this report are unlikely to adversely affect this species.

STURGEON MANAGEMENT AND FISHERIES DOWNSTREAM OF BONNEVILLE DAM

Stock Status

White sturgeon abundance in the lower Columbia River (LCR) collapsed at the end of the 19th century due to overfishing and remained depressed through the first half of the 20th century. The population began to rebound only after the adoption of management actions aimed at reducing overall harvest and protecting broodstock, particularly the 6-foot maximum size limit regulation enacted in 1950. White sturgeon abundance subsequently increased significantly through the 1990s and supported robust recreational and commercial fisheries. Abundance of sub-adult fish began declining in the mid-2000s, prompting changes in harvest quotas and retention seasons.

Legal-Size (38–54 inches FL) Abundance

Tagging and recovery programs were initiated by Oregon and Washington in 1986 to estimate the annual abundance of white sturgeon in the LCR with a goal of informing sustainable harvest opportunity. Legal-size sturgeon (the harvestable size category of fish that are monitored to evaluate harvest potential; 38–54 inches fork length [FL]) abundance estimates, based on tagging conducted in one year and mark sampling extending into the following year, were produced from 1987 through 2012, except for 1994 and 2004 (Table 1). The actual size of legally harvestable fish in an open fishery has varied through time (please see the "LCR Sturgeon Management History" section of this report for more information); however, the abundance of 38–54 inches FL fish is tracked as the "legal-size" class for continuity and comparability through time.

In 2011, ODFW finalized the Oregon Lower Columbia River and Oregon Coast White Sturgeon Conservation Plan (WCP; ODFW 2011). In response to uncertainties identified in the WCP, ODFW initiated an additional survey in 2010 using research setlines during July, August, and September to recover white sturgeon tagged in May and June. This "in-year" approach allows researchers to estimate current abundance and to project an estimate of the next year's abundance.

Concurrent abundance estimates for the historic legal-size sturgeon resulting from the "traditional" approach using mark-recoveries through fishery sampling and the newer approach using mark-recoveries from setline sampling are available for 2010–2012 and produced comparable results (Table 1). The current mark-recapture survey uses a closed population model and is therefore susceptible to sampling bias because we cannot guarantee that the data meets all the assumptions of that model type. This model assumes that fish tagged during the marking period have fully mixed with unmarked fish, meaning both marked and unmarked fish have an equal probability of capture during the recapture period, and that the marked fish have not left the sampling area prior to the recapture period.

The abundance of legal-size fish has continued a downward trend from 110,134 in 2021 to 90,100 in 2025 (Table 1; Figure 1). These results are consistent with ongoing low catch rates in the setline and gillnet sampling surveys and may be a result of low survival and recruitment of juvenile sturgeon over the past decade.

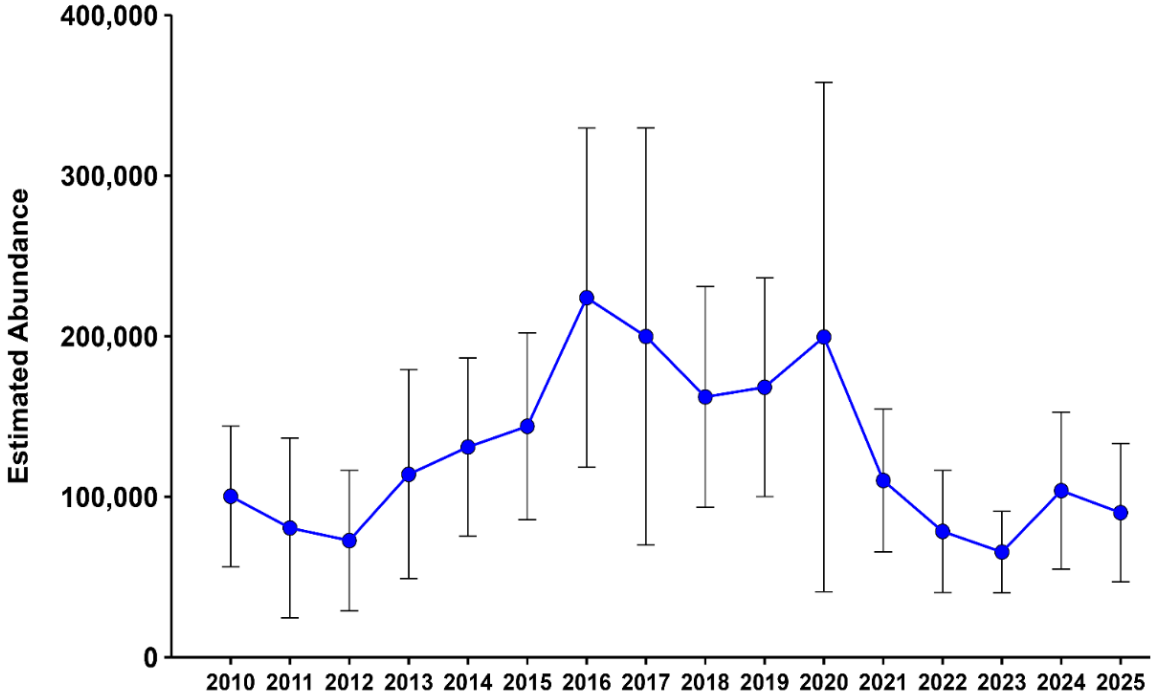

Figure 1. Estimated abundance for legal-size white sturgeon (38–54 in. FL) from the LCR, 2010–2025, using a Lincoln-Peterson mark-recapture model. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

The traditional legal-size slot can also be split into two sub-classes (lower sub-class: 38–43 inches FL and upper size-class: 43–54 inches FL) to evaluate trends in size class distribution within the legal-size range through time (Table 1; Figure 2). Reduced recruitment to the lower sub-class of the legal-size slot appears to be driving the decline of the overall legal-size abundance. The proportion of fish in the lower sub-class has declined from an average of 81% in 1995–2000 to an average of 33% of the overall legal-size abundance in 2020–2025.

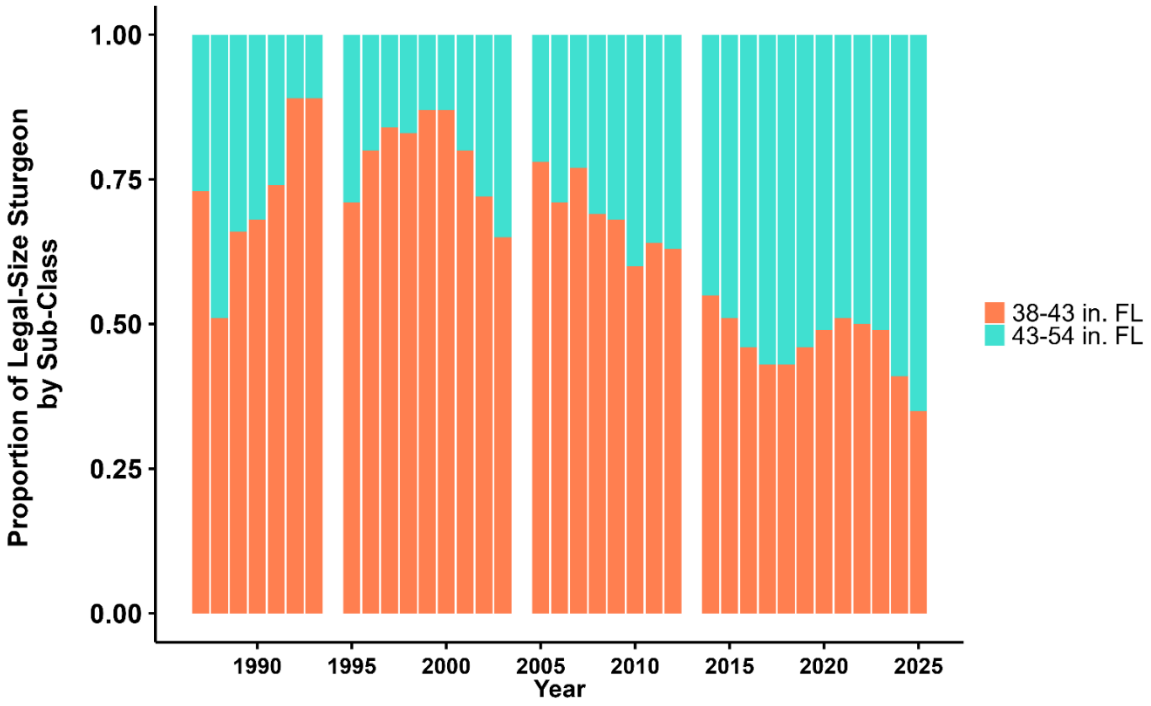

Figure 2. White sturgeon legal-size abundance proportions in the LCR, split into two sub-classes (RED: lower sub-class: 38–43 in. FL and BLUE: upper size-class: 43–54 in. FL), 1987–2025.

Juvenile (21–37 inches FL) Abundance

The sampling gear used for the stock assessment is designed to target fish within the legal-size slot; however, when juvenile fish are abundant in the system, they can be effectively sampled in the annual stock assessment. The WCP identifies a desired status population target to be made up of 95% juvenile fish, to indicate healthy recruitment and a positive outlook for sustainable fishing opportunity into the future. Additionally, the WCP identifies a conservation status of less than 60% juveniles, to indicate poor recruitment and concern for the future of sustainable fishing opportunities. However, a continuous decline in juvenile fish has been observed in the stock assessment since 2010, which indicates the population has been below the conservation status every year since 2019 (Figure 3). The 2025 juvenile estimate was the lowest on record, making up less than 23% of the overall population.

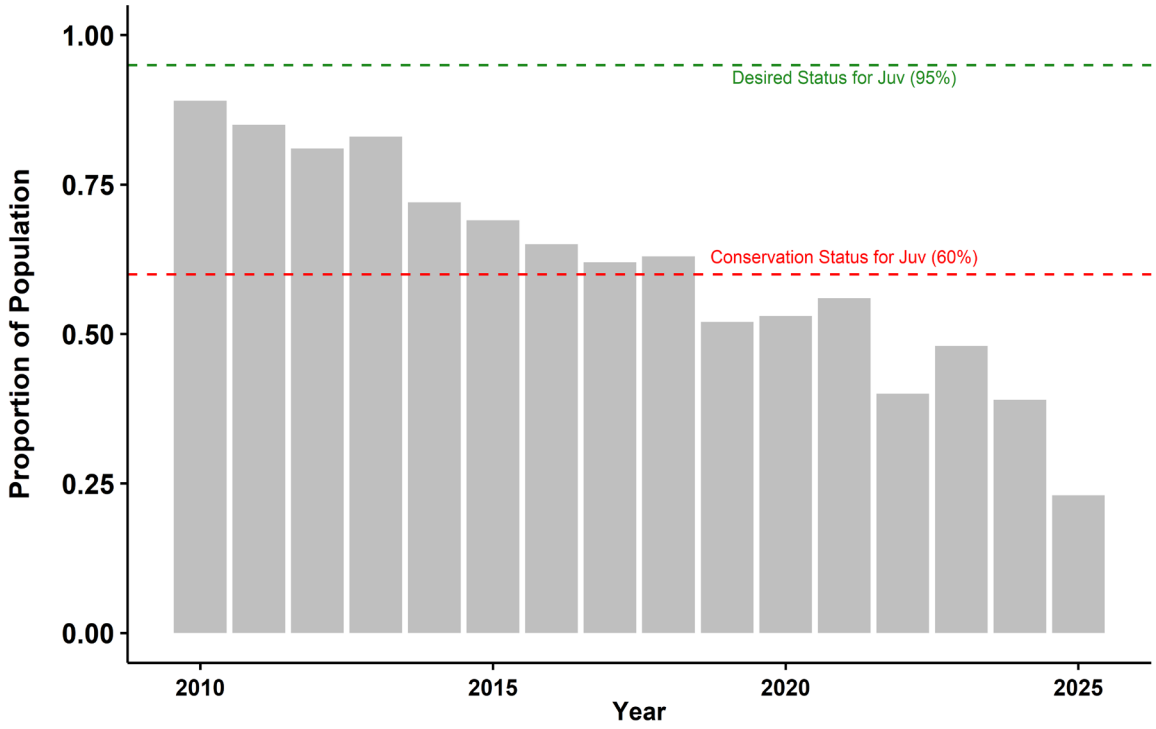

Figure 3. The proportion of juvenile sturgeon (21–37 in. FL) within the LCR white sturgeon population, 2010–2025. Conservation (red line) and desired status (green line) metrics are from the Lower Columbia River and Oregon Coast White Sturgeon Conservation Plan (2011).

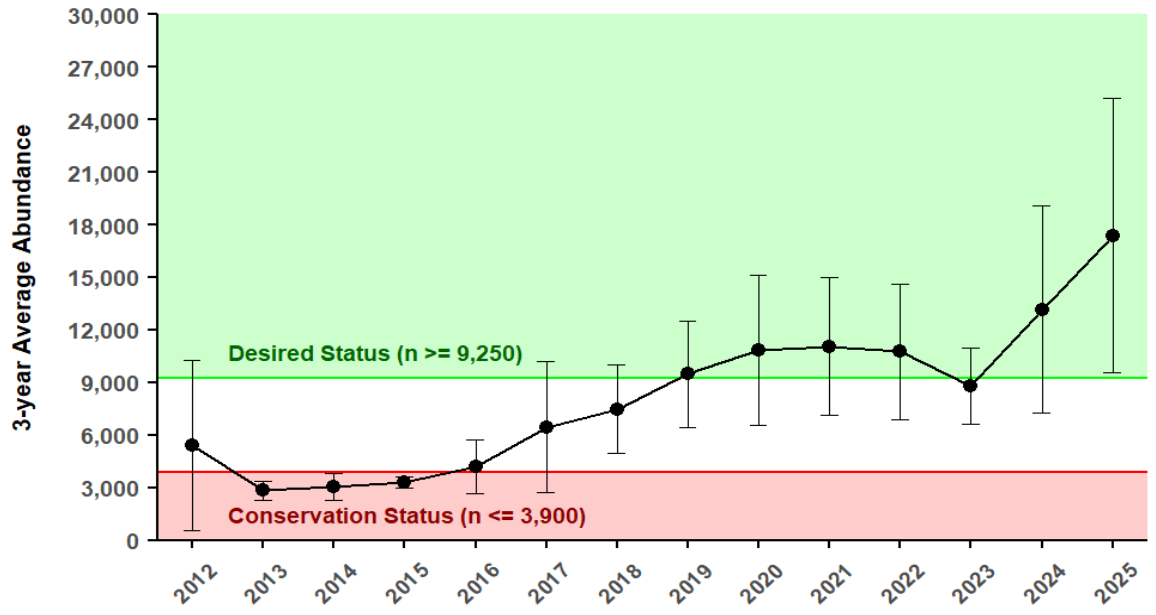

Figure 4. Three-year running average estimated abundance of mature adult white sturgeon (66+ in. FL) from the LCR, 2012–2025. Fewer than three years of data were available prior to 2012 so averages are not available. Error bars represent one standard deviation.

Adult (66 + inches FL) Abundance

The sampling gear used for the stock assessment is designed to target fish within the legal-size slot, therefore we observe low catch rates of spawner-size adult white sturgeon (66+ inches FL). To evaluate trends in adult abundance, we use a three-year running average to help smooth year-to-year variability. In 2011–2013, the mean abundance was depressed, averaging about 2,840 fish (Figure 4). Annual abundance estimates since 2016 have steadily increased, which may indicate that some management strategies, such as the closure of LCR sturgeon retention fisheries in 2014–2017 and the implementation of a more restrictive slot size and lower harvest guideline upon re-opening fisheries in 2017–2022, successfully escaped more adults into the spawning size range. The 2023–2025 average adult abundance is about 17,380 fish, which is more than the desired status threshold of 9,250 adult fish identified in the WCP. It is important to note that due to the considerable overlap in the confidence intervals for the spawner-size abundance estimates, it can be difficult to discern a clear difference in abundance between years.

Young-of-year Monitoring

Since 2004, annual monitoring of young-of-year (YOY) white sturgeon recruitment in the LCR is conducted in the late fall, targeting juvenile sturgeon that were spawned earlier the same year. Staff deploy small-mesh gillnets at standard index sites throughout the LCR and the LWR. The recruitment index (E_p), calculated as the proportion of sets capturing at least one YOY sturgeon, are used as indices to monitor trends in recruitment (Table 2; Figure 5).

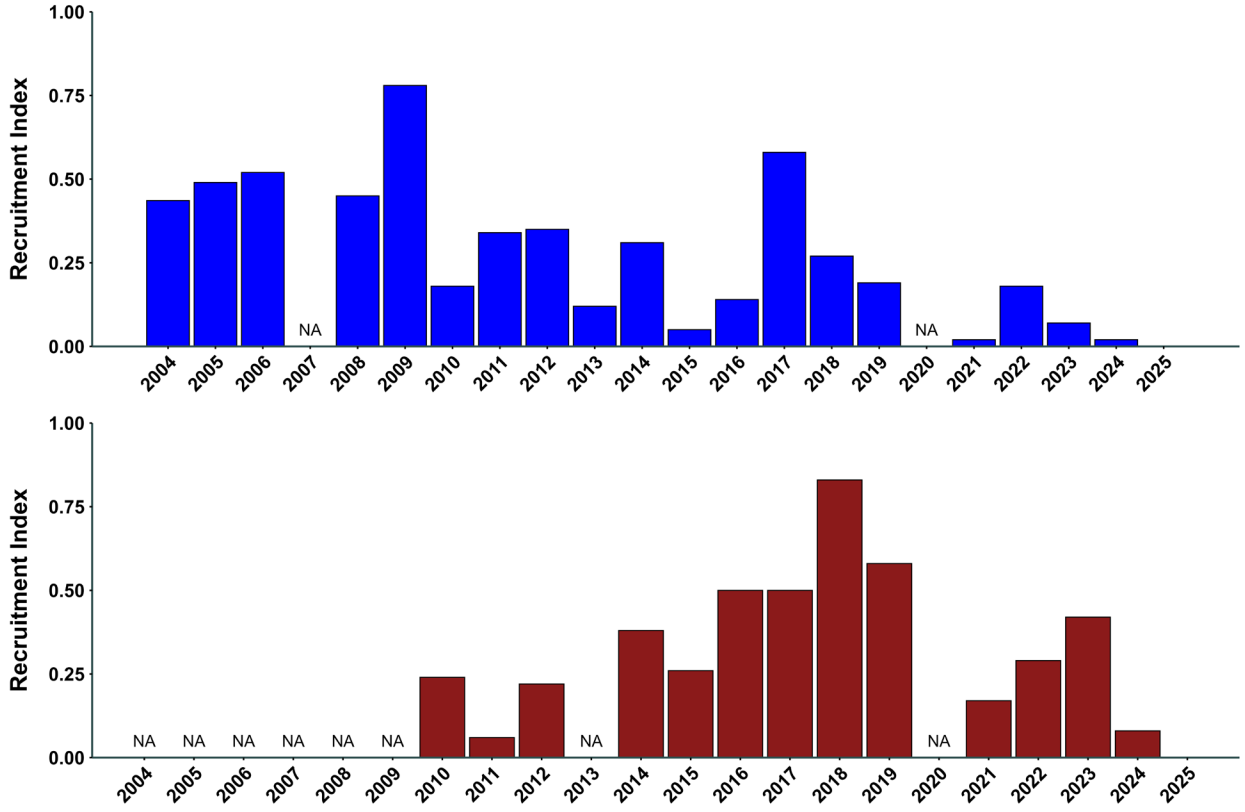

Figure 5. Recruitment index values for age-0 white sturgeon from the LCR (blue) and the LWR (red), 2004–2025.

Until 2025, young-of-year sampling results during all years sampled indicated at least a low level of recruitment occurring annually in both the LCR and the LWR. However, the 2025 sampling effort observed no detectable recruitment in either river. A lack of detectable recruitment within a single year does not indicate a population-level recruitment failure, since it's possible that (1) we just did not encounter young-of-year, and (2) sturgeon are a long-lived species that reproduce multiple times over the course of their lifetime, with the ability to weather a few poor years of environmental conditions to spawn again later. However, since we have also observed a significant decline in juvenile sturgeon in the annual stock assessment, the lack of detectable recruitment in 2025 may indicate even more dramatic declines in population productivity than previously noted. Additional years of paired recruitment and detailed stock assessment data are needed to infer absolute levels of recruitment from these data.

Pinniped Predation

Pinniped predation is considered a substantial threat to the white sturgeon population, especially for adult-size fish taken by Steller sea lions (SSL; *Eumetopias jubatus*).

In 2008, the states received limited removal authority under Section 120 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act to remove individual California sea lions (CSL; *Zalophus californianus*) that repeatedly target fish at the dam (prioritizing relocation to zoos/aquariums, with lethal removal used under strict criteria). For years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has employed the use of non-lethal hazing but with limited long-term effectiveness on some animals. Removal programs expanded or shifted over time, and a new removal permit framework was established around 2020, after legal and policy developments.

Predation of adult-size fish observed by ODFW and WDFW employees in the vicinity of Beacon Rock (RM 142) peaked during December 2005 through March 2006, with over 50 kills reported. Activity then declined following initiation of a state and tribal hazing program in March 2006 that successfully moved the SSL out of the area by early April. Hazing activity was conducted again in February 2007, December 2007–May 2008, and February–May in 2009 and 2010; however, these efforts grew steadily less effective each year. Crews were often able to distract individuals from feeding but were unsuccessful in driving them out of the area (the Columbia River Gorge).

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) monitoring program documents daily counts of aggregating SSL, CSL, and harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*) and their respective predation activities on Pacific salmon, steelhead, and white sturgeon at the base of Bonneville Dam. The spring USACE monitoring program at Bonneville Dam (primarily January–May) documented a steady increase in total predation of all sizes of white sturgeon through 2011 (Table 3). Even though California sea lions are also present in high numbers, most of the observed take of sturgeon is by SSL, with very few incidences of sturgeon predation attributed to CSL.

In 2011, ODFW and WDFW staff expanded the area of observation from Tanner Creek (~RM 144; lower boundary of USACE observation area) downstream to Rooster Rock State Park (~RM 129), to document rates of predation in this area. Results of this work, combined with USACE observations, indicate significant predation of white sturgeon occurs throughout the 16-mile stretch immediately downstream of Bonneville Dam, with most activity confined to the upper 10 miles. The ODFW and WDFW observations near Beacon Rock suggest SSL diet in this downstream location is comprised of a higher proportion of adult-size white sturgeon than has been documented by the USACE monitoring program.

In 2017, the USACE expanded their monitoring program to include the late fall and winter (mid-August through December). This sampling effort observed a peak in fall-time predation in 2021, when an estimated 1,119 white sturgeon were preyed upon. USACE observer data indicates that a majority of the spring predation events appear to be focused on adult sturgeon, whereas fall predation events appear to be focused on smaller juvenile sturgeon (M. Braun, personal communication, 2023). Their most recent report summarizing the observations and methodology used to estimate sturgeon consumption by pinnipeds is found online here: 2024 USACE Pinniped Report.

In recent years, fewer predation events are observed at the dam. It is unlikely that sea lion feeding preference has changed so the reduced predation observed in the Bonneville Dam tailrace is likely the result of (1) white sturgeon avoiding this area in winter and spring and instead seeking out other areas of the Columbia River and tributaries with lower predation potential, (2) a reduced presence of SSL as a result of the removal program, and (3) fewer than average observation periods, as this number is limited by the 20-animal trigger.

Predation on smaller white sturgeon throughout the river continues based on observations by staff and reports from anglers and commercial fishers. Predation on sturgeon also appears to be increasing in other parts of the LCR and the LWR as well. In 2009, ODFW generated estimates of total annual predation impacts on sturgeon by SSL and CSL in the LCR and the LWR as an element of a population-viability analysis. The modeled losses increased from 6,700 fish in 2009 to a presumed maximum of 10,600 fish by 2014. During the 2018–2022 spring monitoring, annual predation estimates ranged 40-187 white sturgeon (mean = 108), and during the 2017–2021 fall monitoring annual predation estimates ranged 238-1,119 white sturgeon (mean = 613). Loss of juvenile fish to predation may be impacting sublegal abundance and recruitment to fisheries. Loss of adult fish is contributing to lower population productivity and reduced recruitment to fisheries.

Monitoring of pinniped predation at Willamette Falls by ODFW over the last decade indicates that white sturgeon losses are occurring in this area, almost exclusively by SSL. During the 2014–2025 monitoring efforts, annual predation estimates ranged from 0 to 194 white sturgeon (mean = 55). In addition, over a dozen SSL are regularly observed during boat-based surveys in the Willamette River downstream of the Falls during the winter months, with frequent anecdotal observations of predation on white sturgeon. Estimates are considered a minimum given the spatial and temporal limitations of the monitoring program.

Population Summary

Overall, the LCR sturgeon population composition has shifted over the course of the past 15 years from predominately smaller juvenile fish to predominately larger sub-adult or adult fish, indicating an aging population and chronically poor recruitment (Table 4; Figure 6). The year-over-year declining proportion of young-of-year, juvenile, and legal-sized sturgeon is indicative of long-term productivity issues in the population. Though a notoriously difficult sub-section of the population to sample, the adult portion of the population appears to be increasing, indicating positive results from the management actions taken to escape more fish from the fishery and protect broodstock sturgeon. Therefore, if the recruitment issues can be identified and addressed, the population maintains a healthy adult population to reproduce and rebuild. The current metrics indicate it is unlikely an increase in available legal-size sturgeon will be observed within the near future.

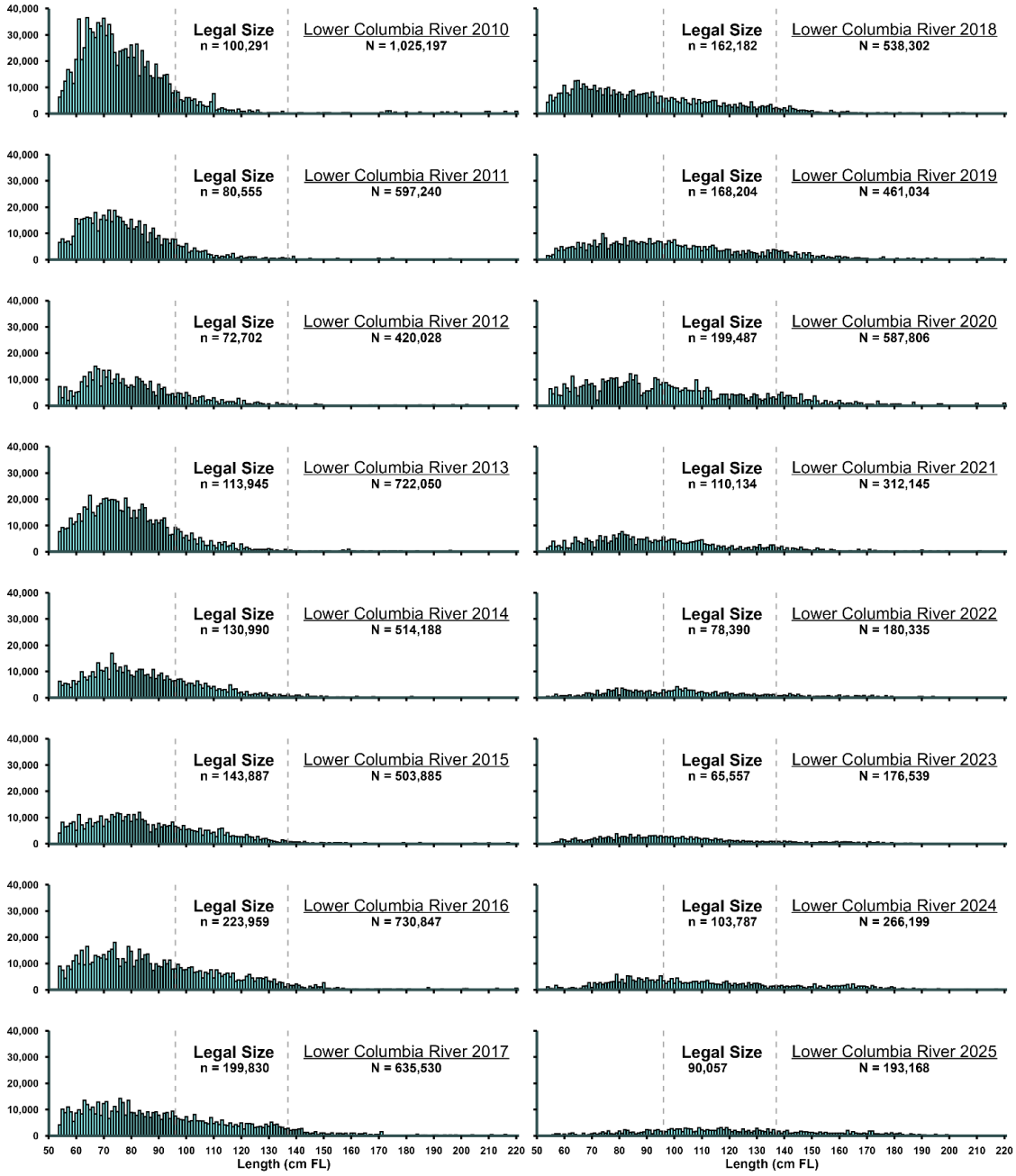

Figure 6. Estimated abundance and size distribution by 1-cm length increments of white sturgeon ≥ 21 inches FL from the LCR, 2010–2025. Sizes included in the traditional legal-size class (38–54 inches FL) are denoted by vertical dashed lines.

Management of LCR Sturgeon Fisheries

Sturgeon fishery management focused on the commercial fishery during the early 1900s and expanded to encompass recreational fisheries beginning in 1940. Regulations for recreational and non-treaty commercial fisheries became increasingly restrictive and complex as the popularity and importance of sturgeon as a target species increased for both fisheries. In recent years, issues with productivity in the LCR population have made it very difficult to prosecute orderly and meaningful harvest fisheries resulting in several years without retention.

Past Management Actions and Fishery Timeline

- **1897:** Due to concerns of overharvest and a significant decrease in stock size, sturgeon management actions were initiated by Washington in 1897 with the adoption of a November to February season and a 48 inch total length (TL) minimum size limit for commercially landed sturgeon.
- **1897–1939:** Sturgeon fishery management focused on the commercial fishery.
- **1899:** Oregon adopted concurrent season-length and minimum-size regulations to align with Washington. Oregon also enacted a ban on Chinese-type long lines due to concerns of an indiscriminate wastage problem associated with this fishing method.
- **1899–1908:** Commercial sale of sturgeon was not allowed.
- **1909:** Commercial sturgeon sales were allowed during salmon fisheries only.
- **1938–Present:** Beacon Rock is the upper boundary for the non-treaty commercial fishery.
- **1940:** Sturgeon fishery management expanded to encompass recreational fisheries. Daily bag limit set at no more than three fish under 48 inches TL.
- **1940–1989:** Fishery management actions primarily consisted of modifying harvest limits for the recreational fishery and size restrictions for recreational and commercial fisheries.
- **1942:** Daily bag limit changed to no more than three fish under, or two fish over, 48 inches TL for recreational fisheries.
- **1950:** A 72 inch TL maximum size limit regulation adopted for all non-treaty fisheries to protect broodstock and aid rebuilding of the sturgeon population. Additionally, a 30 inch TL minimum size limit was adopted for recreational fisheries.
- **1951**: Daily bag limit modified to three fish in total.
- **1957:** The removal of the head and/or tail of sturgeon in the field was prohibited to better enforce size limits.
- **1958:** Minimum size increased to 36 inches TL for recreational fisheries.
- **1962:** Possession limit set at three fish total for recreational fisheries to decrease harvest and better enforce daily bag limits.
- **1975:** Non-treaty commercial sturgeon setline fisheries initiated.

- **1980:** Nighttime angling closures were implemented by Washington to align with Oregon regulations (established many years prior).
- **1983–1985:** Non-treaty commercial sturgeon setline fisheries phased out.
- **1986:** The recreational daily bag limit was reduced from three fish to two fish. Oregon adopted an annual harvest limit of 30 fish for recreational fisheries.
- **1989–1990:**
    - Regulations enacted for the recreational fishery included a 15 fish annual harvest limit, a 40 inch minimum-length limit, use of barbless single-point hooks only, no gaffing of sturgeon, and a "one and one" regulation where one fish less than 48 inches TL plus one fish greater than or equal to 48 inches TL were allowed in the daily bag.
    - Sturgeon-target non-treaty commercial fisheries using gillnets were eliminated, which were originally designed to replace lost opportunity when set line gears were phased out. However, sale of sturgeon caught incidentally during salmon-target fisheries was still allowed. Maximum-mesh-size restrictions were enacted for non-treaty commercial gillnet fisheries to prevent the use nets constructed to target sturgeon.
- **1993**: The maximum white sturgeon size limit for recreational and non-treaty commercial fisheries was reduced from 72 inches to 60 inches TL.
- **1996:**
    - A daily harvest limit of one fish between 42–66 inches TL was enacted for recreational fisheries.
    - Oregon and Washington adopted a seasonal (May-June) sturgeon spawning sanctuary for boat-based recreational fisheries extending from Bonneville Dam downstream to Beacon Rock, to protect spawning white sturgeon. A catch-and-release fishery targeting sturgeon larger than the legal-size limit had been intensifying in this area since 1990.
- **1997:**
    - The maximum size limit for recreational and non-treaty commercial white sturgeon harvest was reduced to 60 inches TL.
    - The WFWC policy C-3001 on Lower Columbia Sturgeon Management was adopted.
- **1997–2009:** The states of Oregon and Washington adopted use of a three-year average harvestable number of sturgeon to guide fishery management, designed to reduce the risk of exceeding what were deemed sustainable levels.
- **1997–2013**:
    - Sturgeon fishery management was based on a series of one-to-three-year Joint State Management Agreements (Accords) between Oregon and Washington. The Accords contained a variety of fishery regulations including: (1) size limits for

recreational and commercial fisheries, (2) daily and annual harvest limits for recreational anglers, (3) gear restrictions for recreational and commercial fisheries, (4) the allowance of target sturgeon seasons in the commercial fishery, and (5) protective measures for adult-size sturgeon. The tenets of the Accords also allowed for modifications if new information suggested that a change was warranted. Since adoption of the first Accord, additional management actions were necessary.

- **1997–present**: The harvestable number of sturgeon was allocated 80% for recreational fisheries and 20% for commercial fisheries as initially established in the Accords and, in the post-Accord era, affirmed by state rule/policy.
- **1999:** The abundance of legal-size fish did not increase as expected during the initial two years of the first Accord, therefore the annual harvestable number was reduced from 67,300 to 50,000 fish.
- **2000:** The annual harvest limit was set at 10 fish, even if an angler held both a Washington and Oregon license. Additional restrictions were put in place to protect broodstock sturgeon, prohibiting the removal (totally or in part) of over-legal sturgeon from the water by anglers. Additionally, the spawning sanctuary area closure described above was extended through mid-July to provide additional protection to the adult population.
- **2003–2005:** In December 2002, the OFWC and WFWC (Commissions) established sturgeon management protocol to help guide the development of recreational and non-treaty commercial fisheries during 2003–2005. Due to a declining trend in abundance, the Commissions reduced the annual total harvestable number to 40,000 fish. This action created a conflict in season-shaping preferences among recreational anglers for the areas downstream (estuary) and upstream of the Wauna powerline crossing at RM 40 (above Wauna). The Commissions ultimately established sub-allocations, providing 60% of the recreational fishery share to the estuary fishery and 40% to the above Wauna fishery.
- **2004:**
    - The annual harvest limit was reduced from ten fish to five fish for recreational anglers.
    - The sanctuary was extended through the end of July, and the bank fishery was incorporated into the angling closure. The Accord was modified to include a "Best Fishing Practices" program that identified angling practices designed to maximize post-release survival rates in the oversize catch-and-release fishery.
    - Work with the Columbia River Recreational Advisory Group (CRRAG) established that fishery preferences differed for anglers participating in the estuary fishery compared to those who participated in the above Wauna fishery:
        - For the above Wauna fishery, anglers preferred retention opportunity throughout as much of the year as possible but particularly preferred the spring and fall timeframes. A days-per-week approach was adopted to achieve this goal, with retention allowed on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Retention was not allowed during August and September to help ensure that the sub-area harvest guideline lasted through the fall timeframe.

        - For the estuary fishery, anglers preferred retention opportunity seven days per week, and a retention fishery that lasted at least through July 4. To achieve these goals, the minimum size limit for this area was raised to 45 inches TL beginning in May 2004 to reduce retention rates and prolong the retention season. This change required the annual sub-area harvest guideline for the estuary be reduced from 19,200 fish to 16,000 fish to maintain a comparable overall harvest rate on the legal-sized population.

- **2006–2008:**
    - The fourth Accord maintained the same major tenets from the prior Accord; however, it also called for the basic monitoring of marine mammal predation of white sturgeon and extended the sanctuary boundary an additional 1.6 miles downstream to USCG Navigation Marker 85.
    - The maximum size limit for green sturgeon in the commercial fishery was lowered from 66 in TL to 60 in TL to provide additional protection. However, when the southern DPS of the North American green sturgeon was ESA-listed as threatened (effective July 6, 2006) the states subsequently prohibited sales (and therefore retention) of green sturgeon from Columbia River commercial fisheries effective July 6, 2006, and retention of green sturgeon in Columbia River recreational fisheries effective January 1, 2007.
- **2008–2011:** The WCP was developed during these years and adopted by the OFWC in August 2011. WDFW staff was integrally involved in development of the WCP. The WCP examines factors and threats that may be limiting the abundance and productivity of LCR white sturgeon and identified critical unknowns and data gaps pursuant to these factors and threats. Population goals and objectives were developed, and strategies and actions identified to address the limiting factors and threats.
- **2009:**
    - The 2006–2008 Accord was renewed for 2009 fisheries to allow for development of the WCP and to refine a strategy for long-term management of the LCR white sturgeon population.
    - In January 2009, Oregon and Washington converted from a TL to a FL measurement standard for all fisheries. The conversions for slot measurements are as follows:
        - 42 in. TL = 38 in. FL
        - 45 in. TL = 41 in. FL
        - 48 in. TL = 43 in. FL
        - 60 in. TL = 54 in. FL
- **2010**:
    - Due in part to the quickly changing status of the LCR population, the Accord was renewed for an additional year. The updated WFWC policy C-3001 called for a reduction in harvest of no less than 45% from the previous level, to address the declines in abundance and uncertainties surrounding the impact of predation. Negotiations between the Directors of the ODFW and WDFW resulted in a

harvestable number of 24,000 fish for 2010 fisheries, a 40% reduction from the previous guideline.

- The sanctuary boundary was moved downstream again, this time down to USCG Navigation Marker 82, adjacent to the upper end of Skamania Island, closing about nine miles of river to sturgeon angling. The closure period was extended an additional month, covering May 1 through August 31.
- The state of Oregon established a one-mile-long sanctuary in the LWR from Willamette Falls downstream to the I-205 Bridge during May 1–August 31, following documentation of successful white sturgeon spawning in this area.

- **2011:** A new three-year Accord was adopted by the Commissions in February of 2011 for 2011–2013 fisheries. No changes were made to allocations among fisheries or areas. However, harvest guidelines during the period were established as a 22.5% annual harvest rate or a cap of 17,000 total harvested fish, whichever was lower. This harvest level was to be derived annually from projected abundance in the coming year, based on in-year abundance estimates. This resulted in an overall harvest guideline for 2011 that was 29% below the 2010 level.
- **2012:**
  - The 2011–2013 Accord was amended for 2012 fisheries to reflect revised policy guidance based on continued concern for the status of the population. The 2012 Amendment specified that the 2012 harvest guideline be based on a 16% harvest rate of the legal-size segment of the population, or 10,400 white sturgeon. The Amendment resulted in a 39% reduction in the guideline, which was allocated as follows for 2012: 2,080 commercial, 4,992 below Wauna (adjusted to 4,160 to reflect the change in the minimum size slot limit), 2,080 mainstem above Wauna, and 1,248 for the LWR. Since this 2012 Amendment, no new or modified Accords have been adopted.
  - A Columbia River Fishery Management Workgroup, formed in 2012 to develop strategies and recommendations for restructuring Columbia River fisheries, developed two specific recommendations for LCR sturgeon fisheries: (1) to allocate only 90% of the harvest guideline derived from the 16% harvest rate, holding 10% in reserve as a conservation buffer, and (2) to consider implementing rules prohibiting retention of LCR-origin white sturgeon if the forecasted decline in the 2012 legal-size abundance was realized.
- **2013:**
  - The 16% allowable harvest rate was reduced to 13.6%, resulting in a 10,105 fish guideline for 2013 fisheries. This resulted in allocations of 8,084 fish to recreational fisheries and 2,021 fish to commercial fisheries. The recreational guideline was sub-allocated as follows: 4,850 below Wauna (adjusted to 4,042 to reflect the change in the size slot), 2,021 above Wauna, and 1,213 for the LWR (1,733 with 520 fish baseline included).
  - In response to the reduced harvest guideline, each Commission adopted reduced statewide annual recreational bag limits, from five fish to two fish, effective April

2013. In addition, the Directors negotiated a 15% hold-back in the harvest guideline for combined 2013 fisheries.

  - The LWR spawning sanctuary was expanded an additional 5.3 miles downstream to the Lake Oswego-Oak Grove Railroad Bridge.

- **2014–2016:**
  - Effective January 1, 2014, retention of white sturgeon was not allowed in fisheries occurring in the LCR, LWR, Oregon coast, Washington coast, Puget Sound, and their respective tributaries due to the continued decline in legal-sized fish abundance.

- **2017–2022:**
  - In response to an increase in the estimated legal-size abundance over the three-year closure period, white sturgeon harvest fisheries were re-opened in the LCR and LWR. The target harvest rate of 3–5% was significantly reduced compared to the fisheries prosecuted prior to the retention closure and the legal-size slot limit was narrowed to 44–50 in FL to enable more fish to escape the harvest fishery and grow into mature adults.

- **2023–present:**
  - The non-treaty commercial and recreational fisheries were again closed to retention of white sturgeon. This closure is still in effect as of the date of this report.

Adjustments for Harvest outside the Mainstem Columbia River

Past harvest guidelines and allocations identified in the Joint State management agreements pertained specifically to harvest in the mainstem Columbia River (and Select Areas) downstream of Bonneville Dam. However, white sturgeon from the LCR migrate into and have been harvested in various Columbia River tributaries and coastal estuaries. Harvest outside the Columbia was generally low, averaging 2.6% of the legal abundance based on 1996–2007 tag recovery data but can be higher, as observed in 1996 when tag recoveries from fisheries outside the Columbia River increased to 5.3%. During that year, harvest of white sturgeon along the coast correspondingly peaked at a level more than double the average harvest for the previous decade. This phenomenon was recognized as a concern, so the Columbia River harvest guideline identified in the original 1997–1999 Joint State Accord was adopted with the contingency that it could change with a substantial increase in harvest outside the Columbia River system. To assure that future harvest guidelines and allocations remained equitable, the Commissions adopted policy provisions in the 2000–2002 and subsequent Joint State Accords, calling for management of sturgeon harvest outside the mainstem Columbia River to be consistent with Columbia River conservation and management needs.

<u>Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor</u>

The 2000 Willapa Bay Fishery Management Framework was developed to address the Joint State Accord policy. The Willapa Framework incorporated white sturgeon harvest guidelines for commercial and recreational fisheries based on the historic relationship between Willapa Bay and Columbia River harvest levels. The Willapa Bay guideline was adjusted by the same (20%)

reduction made to the Columbia River guideline in 2003, resulting in a 1,769 fish guideline. Following adoption of the plan, non-treaty commercial harvest in Willapa Bay declined; however, treaty harvest in Grays Harbor and tributaries generally increased. Collectively, the combined harvest remained fairly consistent from 1997–2013. The Willapa guideline was adjusted downward by 40% in 2010, by 29% in 2011, and by 39% in 2012 to keep in step with the reductions adopted for the LCR.

Puget Sound

In 2012, Washington implemented restrictions to Puget Sound recreational sturgeon fisheries. The year-round retention season was reduced to two retention periods, June 1–30 and September 1–October 15. Effective January 1, 2014, retention of white sturgeon was not allowed along the Washington coast, including Puget Sound, and all coastal bays and tributaries. These rules remain in effect as of the release date of this report.

Willamette River

During 2004–2012, there was a significant shift in the winter and early spring recreational sturgeon harvest from the mainstem Columbia River into the Willamette River. This shift may have been due to warmer winter water temperatures (2–5°F higher) in the Willamette and generally poor eulachon returns to the Columbia River through 2012 that appeared to attract more sturgeon (and recreational fishers) to the Willamette River during January–May. Due to this increasing trend, staff re-calculated harvest estimates (and adjusted guidelines) for the Willamette recreational fishery to account for harvest in excess of the 1986–1996 baseline level (or adjusted baseline in more recent years). The adjusted estimates for the Willamette River were added to harvest estimates for the fishery in the mainstem Columbia above Wauna to reflect the total recreational harvest more accurately for this river section.

The harvest adjustments (increases) for the Willamette River fishery were based on information available from the ODFW creel survey and angler catch record card data during 2004–2009 (Table 5). Prior to 2009, the Willamette River creel program had been focused on estimating harvest of spring Chinook salmon. Accordingly, the creel program typically only operated from March through June of each year. To derive full-year catch estimates, including timeframes not included during creel surveys, staff used adjusted catch-record-card estimates. Catch record card catch estimates for the creel survey period were compared with creel survey catch estimates to derive a ratio of creel- to catch-record-card estimates harvest. This ratio was then applied to catch-record-card harvest estimates for time periods outside the creel survey period.

In 2009, the Willamette creel program was expanded to include the January–February timeframe but catches in the remainder of the year were still generated by the catch card/creel survey ratio method. During 2010–2013, the creel survey was conducted during all timeframes in which sturgeon retention was allowed, therefore expansions to account for non-sampled periods were not needed. Annual white sturgeon harvest in the LWR averaged 1,531 fish (range 989–2,206) during 1986–1996, 1,871 fish (range 1,263–2,811) during 1997–2003, and 5,193 fish (range 2,327–9,148) during 2004–2010. During 2010–2014, the LWR recreational sturgeon fishery was managed under a separate harvest guideline. The Amendment to the Accord described earlier specified a 1,768 fish guideline for the Willamette River in 2012, including the baseline harvest of 520 sturgeon. The guideline for 2013, including the 520 fish baseline, was 1,733 fish. When retention fisheries

were reinstated in 2017, the baseline harvest concept for the Willamette River was eliminated to improve harvest rate accounting.

Cowlitz River

During 2018–2022, the Cowlitz River was included as part of the above Wauna sturgeon retention fishery, based on feedback received from local anglers. A monitoring program was initiated to collect catch per unit effort (CPUE) information and gain a qualitative understanding of sturgeon fishing effort within the Cowlitz. In 2018, only one kept fish was encountered by samplers, and in 2019 no kept fish were encountered by samplers. In 2019, a conservative harvest estimate of 50 fish was agreed upon to account for poor sampler coverage. In 2020, the monitoring program was revised to include a quantitative estimate of effort. Based on information that suggested nearly all of the sturgeon fishing effort occurred out of or near two boat launch locations between Olequa Creek and the confluence with the Columbia River, an access-access monitoring design was employed. On all open weekend dates, staff monitored both locations and interviewed sturgeon anglers for catch and trip length. Average number of anglers per boat, the ratio of sturgeon to salmon anglers, and average CPUE of that day were applied to any boat trailers or bank anglers that remained when staff finished their survey. On all weekend openers it was estimated that greater than 90% of anglers were interviewed by staff.

2025 Management Actions

ODFW and WDFW staff met with the CRRAG and the Columbia River Commercial Advisory Group (CRCAG) in January 2025 to provide an update on the population status of LCR white sturgeon based on the 2024 stock assessment. Estimates generated from the 2024 population survey indicated the abundance of 38–54-inch FL fish and the proportion of juveniles in the population continued to decline.

Based on this information, conservation concerns expressed by CRRAG and CRCAG members, and the increasing difficulty in prosecuting orderly retention fisheries with meaningful harvest opportunity, the states did not adopt any commercial or recreational retention fisheries for LCR white sturgeon in 2025.

Sturgeon Fisheries

Reduced salmon fishing opportunities during the mid-1970s through the late 1990s greatly increased the popularity and importance of sturgeon for both commercial and recreational fisheries. The healthy white sturgeon population allowed the commercial industry to develop fisheries and markets in a time when commercial salmon fishing opportunities had been drastically reduced. A similar lack of stable recreational salmon fisheries resulted in increased popularity of sturgeon angling since the mid-1980s. Over time, reduced white sturgeon harvest guidelines impacted the stability of all Columbia River sturgeon fisheries. Based on Commission guidance, retention of white sturgeon in Columbia River commercial and recreational fisheries downstream of Bonneville Dam was not allowed during 2014–2016. These retention fisheries were closed again beginning in 2023. Columbia River non-treaty commercial season structures and regulations are described in Table 5 and Table 6 summarizes annual recreational fishery regulations.

Past Non-Treaty Commercial Sturgeon Fisheries

Since the late 19th century, commercial harvest of sturgeon remained very low until the mid-1940s. Through 1968, annual landings only occasionally exceeded 5,000 fish. During 1969–2009, landings exceeded 5,000 fish annually except in 1991. Since 2010, landings have been less than 4,400 fish annually. Harvest peaked in the late 1970s through the early 1980s with annual landings ranging from 9,400 to 22,800 fish. During the 1990s, catches ranged from a low of 3,800 fish in 1991 to a high of 13,900 fish in 1998. During 1997–2013, commercial sturgeon fisheries were managed to remain within harvest guidelines while maximizing economic benefit and achieving conservation objectives for other species. Harvest guidelines and landings estimates are provided in Table 7.

Plans for distributing commercial allocation among the various fisheries were developed annually with input from the CRCAG to provide harvest opportunities throughout the year and maintain optimum market value. Weekly landing limits became an important tool in maintaining consistent commercial fisheries since first used in 2002.

As noted earlier in this report, the retention and sale of green sturgeon has been prohibited in commercial fisheries since July 2006. Based on guidance from both Commissions, white sturgeon retention and sales in non-treaty commercial fisheries was not allowed from January 2014 through May 2017. Retention fisheries were reinstated in 2017 with annual commercial harvest guidelines of less than 1,245 fish. Harvest in commercial fisheries was again closed beginning in 2023.

2025 Non-Treaty Commercial Fishery

Commercial harvest of white sturgeon was not allowed in 2025 non-treaty commercial fisheries.

Past Recreational Sturgeon Fisheries

Mainstem Columbia River recreational harvest guidelines for white sturgeon decreased steadily from approximately 54,000 fish in 1997 to about 6,000 fish in 2013 in response to declining abundance of legal-sized white sturgeon (Table 1). During this time, sturgeon angler trips declined from over 200,000 trips per year to just over 33,000 trips in 2013. Based on guidance from the OFWC and WFWC in December 2013, LCR recreational sturgeon fisheries closed to retention effective January 1, 2014. Sturgeon retention fisheries remained closed through 2016 downstream of Bonneville Dam and in the LWR downstream of Willamette Falls. Catch-and-release angling remained open during the retention closure; however, sturgeon angler trips in each of those years decreased by about 90% from 2013 levels.

During this retention closure, the estimated abundance of both legal and over-legal white sturgeon increased, and the states approved the resumption of limited retention fisheries for white sturgeon in the LCR and LWR beginning in 2017. For that year, an overall recreational catch guideline of 4,990 white sturgeon was established based on a 3.8% harvest rate on the abundance of 44–50 inches TL fish in the legal-size population and harvest was allocated to the Columbia River estuary (60%), Columbia River between Wauna and Bonneville Dam (25%), and LWR (15%). Despite the conservative harvest guidelines and restrictive daily and annual bag limits, the 2017 retention fisheries were very popular and produced a total harvest of 3,665 legal-sized white sturgeon from 23,700 angler trips. Anglers in the estuary made 13,700 trips and kept 3,235 legal size sturgeon during five retention days in June and anglers in the Columbia upstream of Wauna made 10,000 trips and kept 430 legal size sturgeon during three open retention days in October. ODFW did not

adopt a retention fishery in the LWR in 2017 given the potential to exceed the 700 fish guideline in a one-day fishery.

The states approved similar recreational sturgeon retention fisheries for the Columbia River in 2018–2022. Based on input from the CRRAG, the states shifted the start of the estuary fishery to mid-May, when catch rates would be lower, to increase the potential number of retention days and moved the start of the fishery above Wauna to mid-September when catch rates would be higher to increase the likelihood of achieving the harvest guideline for that area. Harvest in the estuary fishery averaged 1,820 white sturgeon during 2018–2022, ranging from zero fish in 2020, when issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the states from adopting a spring fishery, to 2,838 fish in 2019. Harvest in the fishery above Wauna during those years ranged from 685 to 1,049 fish, averaging 870 fish. ODFW adopted retention fisheries for white sturgeon in the Willamette River in 2020 and 2021, which produced respective harvest of 167 and 87 white sturgeon.

Abundance metrics for the LCR white sturgeon population remained mixed in 2022. The abundance of legal-size fish was estimated to be 78,400 fish, which was the lowest abundance for this segment of the population since 2012. While the legal abundance was enough to support some harvest, providing a meaningful and orderly fishing opportunity for recreational anglers would be challenging without risk of exceeding catch guidelines at the reduced harvest levels. The states ultimately have decided not to adopt any recreational retention fisheries for white sturgeon in the LCR or the LWR from 2023 to present. Tables 8, 9, and 10 display harvest guidelines and catch data.

2025 Recreational Sturgeon Fisheries

Recreational harvest of white sturgeon was not allowed in 2025. All recreational sturgeon fishery monitoring was done incidentally to creel surveys for salmon/steelhead fisheries, and sturgeon trips conducted outside of these fishing seasons were not monitored in 2025. Estimates of fish released by size category are approximations based on angler reported data collected during creel interviews.

Downstream of Wauna Powerlines (Estuary)

Anglers in the estuary made approximately 1,440 trips for catch-and-release sturgeon angling in 2025 and released an estimated 536 sublegal, 1,403 legal, and 2,657 over-legal white sturgeon. Additionally, 42 green sturgeon were released.

Upstream of Wauna Powerlines (above Wauna)

Anglers in the lower Columbia River upstream of the Wauna power lines made about 1,060 trips for catch-and-release sturgeon angling from February 1 through October 31, 2025, and released 807 sublegal, 954 legal, and 884 over-legal white sturgeon. Trips and catch for November through December are not available.

Willamette River

Anglers in the lower Willamette River made an estimated 1,599 trips for catch-and-release

sturgeon angling from March through June 2025 and released 1,301 sublegal, 1,208 legal, and 525 over-legal white sturgeon.

Expectations for 2026 Lower Columbia River Sturgeon Fisheries

Recreational and non-treaty commercial retention fisheries for white sturgeon in the Columbia River and tributaries downstream of Bonneville Dam will not be considered for 2026, based on current stock status information. Per permanent regulations, recreational sturgeon fisheries are restricted to catch-and-release only in the LCR and LWR, unless retention seasons are adopted. The sturgeon spawning sanctuary, in effect May 1 through August 31, prohibits all sturgeon fishing upstream of navigation marker 82 to Bonneville Dam.

STURGEON MANAGEMENT AND FISHERIES UPSTREAM OF BONNEVILLE DAM

Stock Status

White sturgeon historically ranged throughout the Columbia River, upstream into Idaho and Canada; however, with the construction of Bonneville Dam in 1938, the population became segregated and fish residing upstream could no longer migrate freely between freshwater and marine environments. The population was further segregated with the completion of McNary Dam in 1953, The Dalles Dam in 1957, and John Day Dam in 1968, resulting in functionally separate populations in Bonneville, The Dalles, John Day, and McNary pools. Today, a total of 12 dams on the mainstem Columbia River, from Grand Coulee Dam to Bonneville Dam, and five on the lower Snake River, from Hells Canyon Dam to Ice Harbor Dam, fragment white sturgeon populations throughout the basin. Inaccessibility to the marine environment and habitat alterations, primarily due to hydroelectric development and upstream navigation, has rendered these populations less productive than those residing below Bonneville Dam.

The Sturgeon Management Task Force (SMTF), established by the *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreements, consists of representatives from Oregon, Washington, and the Columbia River treaty Indian tribes (Nez Perce, Umatilla, Warm Springs, and Yakama). The purpose of the SMTF is to review sturgeon management issues and set harvest management guidelines for the upcoming year for treaty and non-treaty fisheries in the reservoirs between Bonneville and McNary dams, hereafter referred to as the Zone 6 management area.

Since 1994, sturgeon fisheries occurring in Zone 6 are managed separately in accordance with reservoir-specific harvest guidelines set forth by the SMTF (Table 11). Abundance of sturgeon populations in each of the three Zone 6 pools is estimated every three years to monitor the effects of hydrosystem operations and fishery management strategies. Population estimates are generated using a mark-recapture model incorporating data from directed sampling with gillnets and setlines. Significant harvest reductions were enacted beginning in 1988 and abundances in all three pools increased as a result of these management actions and other mitigation efforts. Additionally, trends in cohort strength have varied cyclically in correlation with water-year types (e.g., high-flow years versus low-flow years). High-flow years generally yield more recruits and subsequent increased

harvest guidelines as these relatively larger cohorts grow into the legal-size class, whereas low-flow years generally yield the opposite effect.

John Day Pool Stock Assessment

The 2025 Zone 6 white sturgeon stock assessment was conducted in John Day Pool. The 2025 estimated abundance for fish larger than 21 inches FL in John Day Pool was 31,159 fish. The estimated abundance of legal-size fish (43–54 inches FL) has nearly doubled from 5,660 fish in 2022 to 10,124 fish in 2025 and is the highest in recent history (Figure 7). Similarly, the estimated abundance of fish greater than 55 inches FL increased from 15,353 to 17,718 fish. In contrast, the estimated abundance of the smaller fish, those less than 43 inches FL, decreased from 10,441 to 4,224 fish. Within this group, the most substantial change was observed among fish less than 38 inches FL, with an estimated abundance declining from 6,338 to 997 fish (84% decrease; Figure 8). In summary, the total abundance estimate has remained fairly consistent since 2013; however, the size structure has changed considerably, shifting to an aging population with few juveniles present (Figure 8).

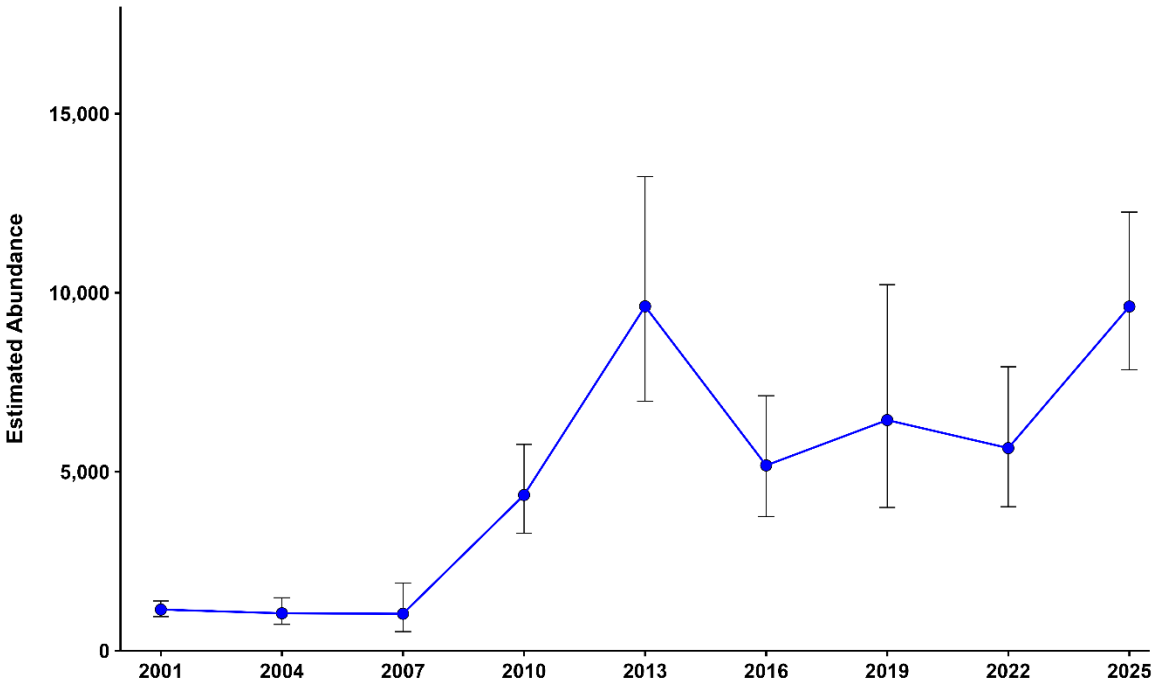

Figure 7. Estimated abundance for legal-size (43–54 inches FL) white sturgeon from John Day Pool (Columbia River), 2010–2025, using a Schnabel mark-recapture model. Error bars represent 95% confidence interval. In this reach, surveys are conducted on a three-year rotating basis between pools.

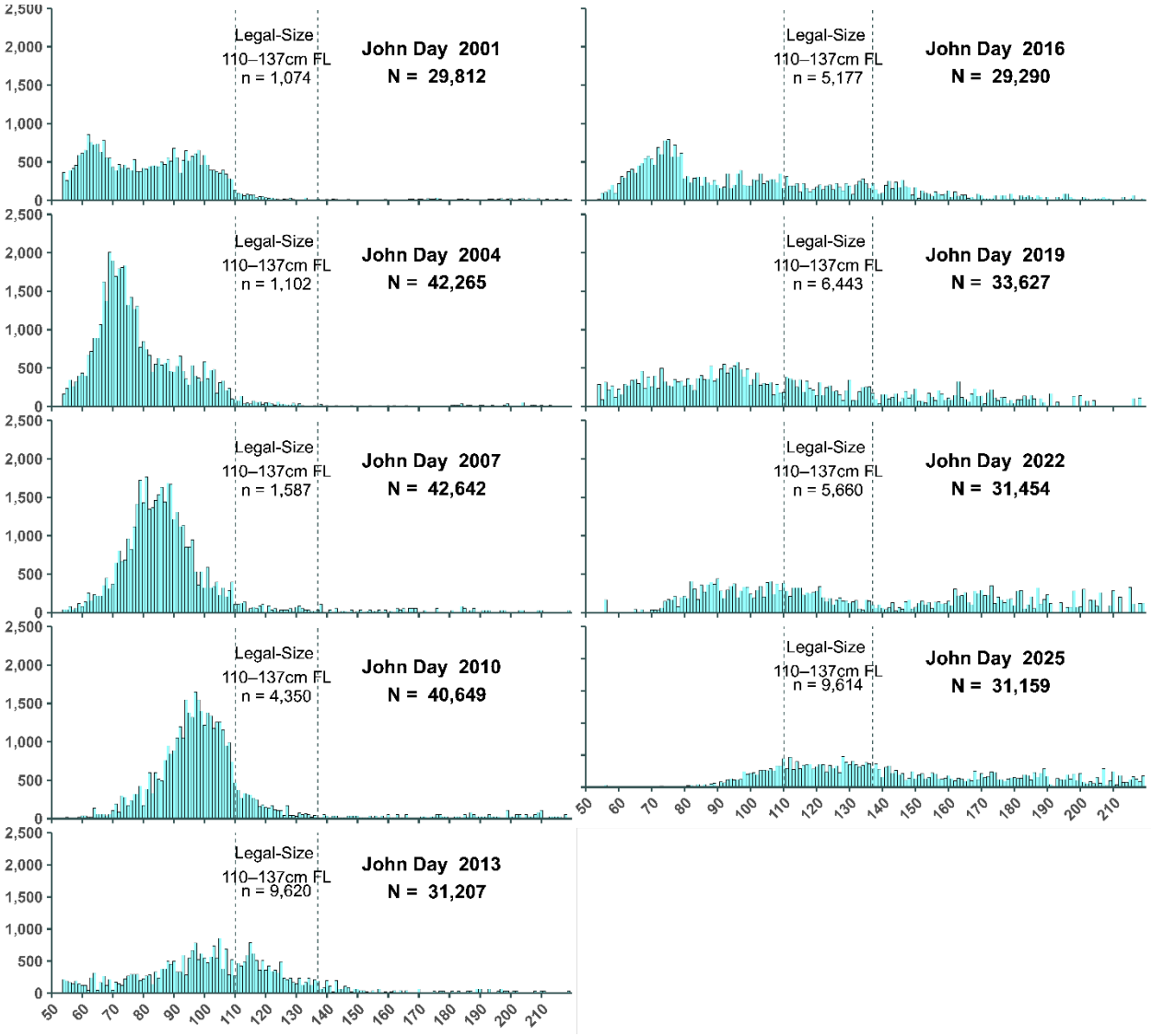

Figure 8. Size distribution of estimated abundance by 1-cm length increments of white sturgeon in the John Day Pool, 2001–2025. Sizes included in the legal-size class (43–54 inches FL) are denoted by vertical dashed lines.

Young-of-year Monitoring

Recruitment remains extremely poor in John Day Pool, with only one year of detectable recruitment since 2012, contributing to the low abundance of juvenile sturgeon (Table 2; Figure 9). This pattern reflects broader system-wide trends. Recruitment in Bonneville and The Dalles pools has also been depressed in recent years, although it tends to fluctuate more from year to year. Among the three Zone 6 pools, Bonneville has historically exhibited the highest levels of detectable recruitment; however, the 2025 Age-0 index (Ep) in the Bonneville Pool was the lowest observed since 2015, with The Dalles Pool monitoring showing similarly low levels.

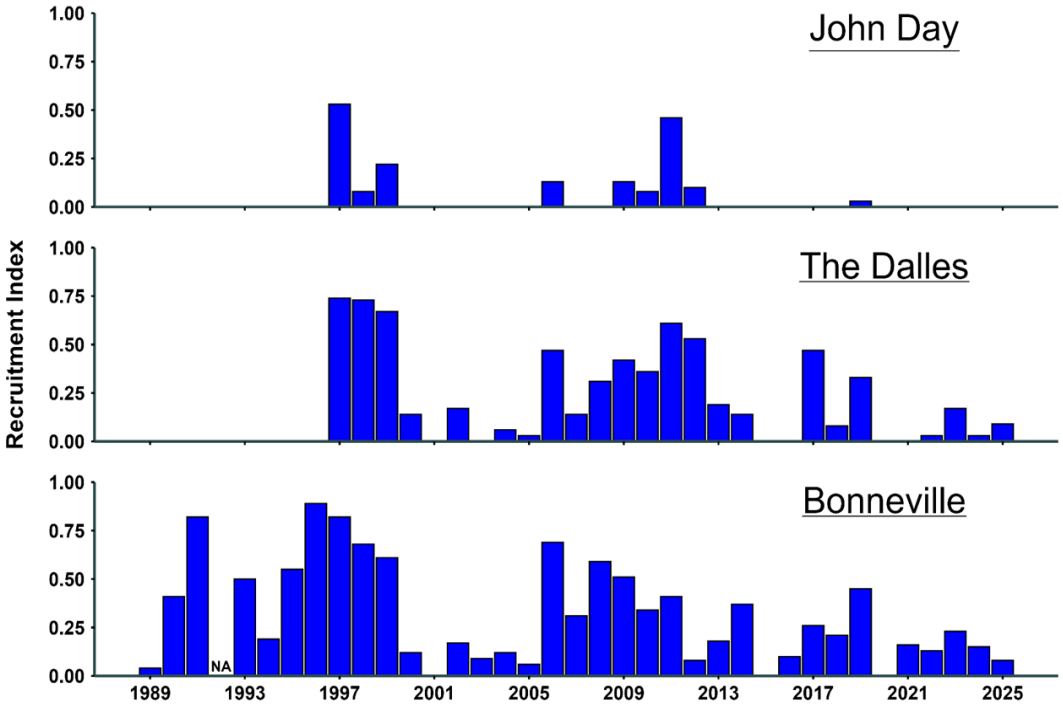

Figure 9. Recruitment index values for age-0 white sturgeon from the Zone 6 pools, 2004–2025.

Sturgeon Fisheries

Sturgeon fisheries in Zone 6 consist of treaty commercial and subsistence fisheries and non-treaty recreational fisheries. For treaty fisheries, three main gear types are used which consist of hook-and-line, setlines, and gillnets, although a small number of legal-sized sturgeon are also caught in hoop-nets. Non-treaty recreational fishing is restricted to hook-and-line only.

Pool-specific harvest guidelines are shaped to meet fishery demands and harvest allocations are split between the treaty commercial and non-treaty recreational fisheries. Within each pool, the harvest allocations vary, with equal harvest shares allocated to recreational and treaty commercial fisheries in Bonneville Pool, and a larger allocation for treaty commercial fisheries in The Dalles and John Day pools. Treaty fishers also keep sturgeon for subsistence purposes, which is considered separate from the commercial sturgeon harvest and is not included in the commercial catch guidelines. Subsistence catch is estimated through a creel monitoring program conducted by the tribes and reported to the SMTF.

Due to continued poor annual production of sturgeon in the Snake River from Ice Harbor Dam upstream to Lower Granite Dam, the WFWC adopted permanent rules prohibiting retention of sturgeon in this area effective July 1, 2015. On March 9, 2020, the WFWC adopted permanent rules to prohibit retention of sturgeon in recreational fisheries upstream of McNary Dam, in the McNary Pool/Hanford Reach, and in the lower Snake River (downstream of Ice Harbor Dam to the mouth of the Columbia River). Additionally, sturgeon spawning sanctuaries, located just

downstream of each of the mainstem Columbia dams from Bonneville to Priest Rapids and Ice Harbor Dam in the lower Snake River, were closed to all sturgeon angling (both for retention and catch-and-release) between May 1 and August 31, annually. The sturgeon spawning sanctuaries downstream of Priest Rapids Dam, within the Hanford Reach area, and downstream of McNary Dam were also extended spatially—see the current Washington and Oregon sport fishing regulations for more detail concerning area-specific fishing regulations (www.wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations; www.myodfw.com/fishing).

The most recent estimates of legal-size abundance are 17,592 38–54 inch FL fish in Bonneville Pool (2024), 9,982 43–54 inch FL fish in The Dalles Pool (2023) and 10,124 43–54 inch FL fish in John Day Pool (2025). For 2025 fisheries, the Bonneville Pool harvest rate on legal-size fish was maintained at 12 percent. This decision resulted in a higher overall harvest guideline due to the higher abundance of legal-size fish (Table 11). During 2024, the higher abundance of legal-size fish in The Dalles Pool estimated from the 2023 stock assessment also resulted in a higher overall harvest guideline. The John Day Pool harvest guideline was left unchanged in 2023 and will be revisited in 2026 by the SMTF.

2025 Treaty Fisheries

In 2025, the slot limit sizes for sturgeon retention were 43–54 in fork length in The Dalles and John Day pools and 38–54 in fork length in the Bonneville Pool. Seasons consisted of setline openings in January and February (Table 12).

During the January fishery, 706 sturgeon were harvested from Bonneville Pool from January 1–8. The January setline catches also included 328 sturgeon from The Dalles Pool from January 1–11, and 68 from the John Day Pool from January 1–31. There were no winter gillnet fisheries in February or March. A setline fishery occurred in the John Day Pool from February 1–15. Setline fishing occurred in The Dalles Pool from February 1–4, February 11–13, and March 3–4. In the Bonneville Pool, setline fishing occurred from February 26–27. During the February/March setline fisheries, landings totaled 510 fish, which included 328 in Bonneville Pool, 227 in The Dalles Pool, and three in John Day Pool (Table 13). There were no summer or late-fall setline fisheries in 2025 since there were insufficient fish remaining on the commercial treaty guidelines for the Bonneville and John Day pools after the winter fisheries (Table 13).

Commercial season totals were 79%, 67%, and 34% of the respective harvest guidelines for Bonneville, The Dalles, and John Day pools (Table 11). Treaty subsistence sturgeon fishing is open year-round and normally involves the retention of legal-sized sturgeon caught in association with other commercial and subsistence fishing activity. The subsistence catch in 2025 is estimated to be 440 fish, or 142% of the previous 5-year average of 311 sturgeon (Table 14).

2025 Non-Treaty Recreational Fisheries

Recreational sturgeon-retention fisheries have historically begun on January 1 in the Zone 6 reservoirs and continue until the reservoir-specific guideline is met (Table 15).

To moderate the increasingly volatile season lengths resulting from higher catch rates and daily effort, the states recently moved to a days-per-week structure for Bonneville and The Dalles pools fisheries. On November 8, 2024, the states met to consider altering permanent rules in both fisheries and adopted a two-days-per-week fishery structure (Wednesdays and Saturdays, opening January 1 and closing January 29) for both pools. The seven-days-per-week season structure in

permanent rules was not altered in John Day Pool for the 2025 fishery. After guidelines were met and retention was closed for the year, catch-and-release angling was allowed, except within the designated sanctuary areas downstream of the dam tailraces between May 1 and August 31.

In Bonneville Pool, 1,365 fish representing 109 percent of the harvest guideline, were caught on opening day. This prompted an immediate closure of retention after one day by the states for the remainder of the 2025 season. Effort and angler catch rates were extremely high, with a 295% rise in daily effort and a 395% increase in catch rates compared to the two-day season in 2024 (Table 2). This decision ensured a minimal exceedance of the harvest guideline.

A total of 141 fish were harvested in The Dalles Pool on opening day, lower relative to the previous year. However, this still represented more harvest when compared to pre-season expectations and to avoid exceeding the guideline, the states took action to close retention after one day. The states opted to delay proposing additional retention days until February when both effort and catch rates were expected to be lower. During a Joint State hearing on February 10, one retention day was adopted for February 15. Effort and catch rates were substantially lower on that day, with a total of 32 fish retained. At a Joint State hearing on February 19, two additional retention days were adopted for February 22 and 27. Effort and catch rates increased slightly relative to February 15 but were still 34% lower than on opening day. A total of 87 additional fish were retained, for a final harvest total of 260 fish, 95 percent of the 275 fish harvest guideline (Table 2).

In Bonneville and The Dalles pools, daily harvest accrual has increased in recent years, as evidenced by the disparity between total angler trips and estimated harvest (Figure 10). On January 1, water temperatures in the Columbia River at The Dalles, OR averages 41°F from 2007–2025 (USGS monitoring gage-14105700). In 2024 and 2025, warmer than average water temperatures during the first few days in January have likely led to higher catch rates at the onset of the fishery (averaging 45°F on January 1 at the same location). The increase in observed daily harvest rates can also be influenced by the amount of fishing effort, which has steadily increased on an annual basis in The Dalles Pool but dramatically increased in Bonneville Pool since 2023 (Figure 11; Table 16). These factors have led to retention opportunity lasting four or fewer days in both pools and exceeding the harvest guideline in Bonneville Pool during 2024 and 2025 (Table 16).

Effort and harvest in the 2025 John Day Pool fishery were similar to the 2021–2022 and 2024 seasons (Table 16). Catch rates were steady throughout the season, with slightly fewer fish harvested in January and more in March relative to the 2024 fishery. No harvest occurred during February, as colder than average water temperatures and poor angling conditions led to minimal fishing effort and no observed catch. Retention during 2025 was closed on March 13 after a season length of 72 days and 94 fish harvested, similar to the season length of 74 days and 96 fish kept during 2024.

The recreational sturgeon fisheries in the lower Snake River (downstream of Ice Harbor Dam) and in McNary Pool/Hanford Reach were closed to retention in 2020 under permanent regulations. Additionally, the recreational sturgeon fisheries in the Snake River, from Ice Harbor Dam upstream to Lower Granite Dam, were closed to retention in 2015 under permanent regulations.

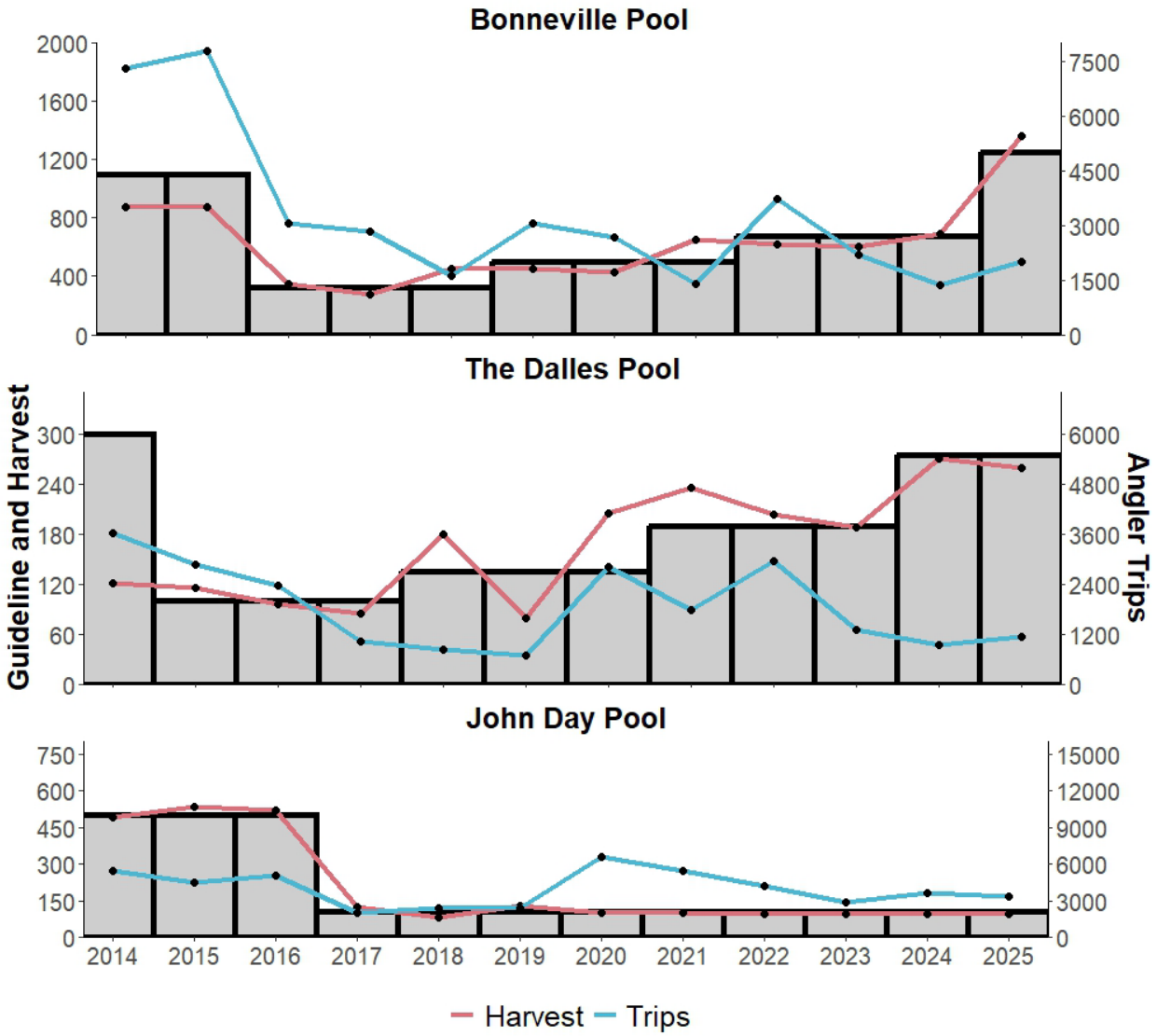

Figure 10. Harvest guidelines (gray bar on primary y-axis), total harvest (red line on primary y-axis), and total angler trips (blue line on secondary y-axis) by year during sturgeon retention fisheries upstream of Bonneville Dam.

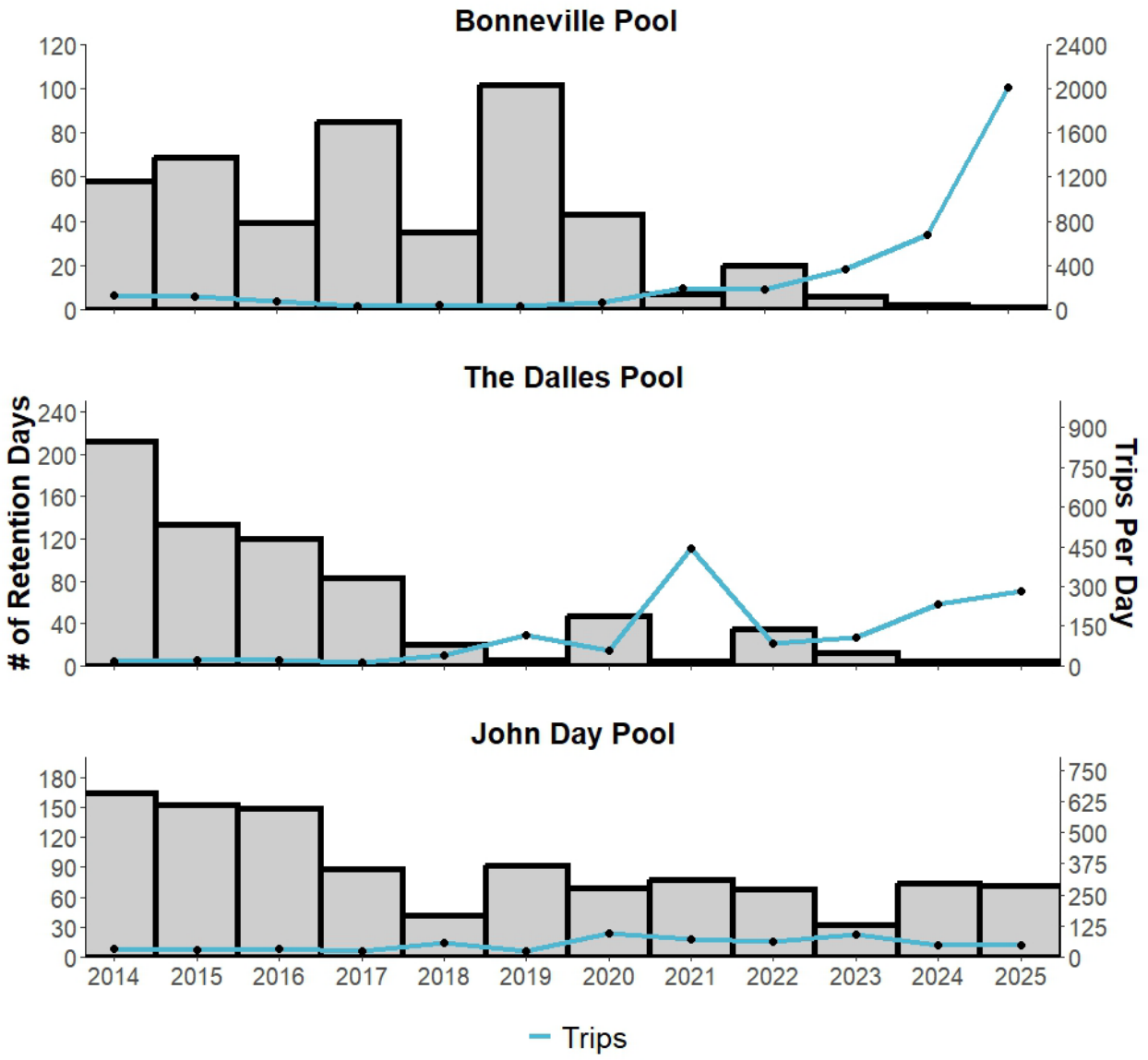

Figure 11. The number of retention days (gray bar, primary y-axis) fisheries were open and the average number of angler trips per day (blue line, secondary y-axis) by year during sturgeon retention fisheries upstream of Bonneville Dam.

Expectations for 2026 Sturgeon Fisheries upstream of Bonneville Dam

As per permanent regulations, treaty Indian winter commercial fisheries include a setline sturgeon fishery January 1–31. However, the tribes took action in December 2025 to modify the January fishery for the coming year, opting for a later start, reducing the number of days open, and delaying the start of the Bonneville Pool fishery until after The Dalles and John Day pools are scheduled to close.

Gillnet or setline fisheries have historically been scheduled annually to occur during February and

March. For 2026, setline fisheries are more likely than gillnet fisheries during these months. Additionally, these openings will likely be staggered so that actual and projected catches can be assessed.

Due to the difficulty in prosecuting meaningful and orderly recreational sturgeon retention fisheries in the Zone 6 reservoirs in recent years the states will delay 2026 these fisheries in Bonneville and The Dalles pools rather than letting them open on the traditional January 1 date. The expected opening of these fisheries is likely to be in February, when water temperatures are typically cooler and catch rates are expected to be slower. The states will maintain the traditional January 1 opening and seven-day-per-week structure for the John Day Pool because of the lower risk of meeting the harvest guideline in a short timeframe.

The SMTF meets in January annually to review harvest guidelines for Zone 6 sturgeon fisheries. In 2026, the SMTF will consider updated stock assessment data and new harvest guidelines for John Day Pool.

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TABLES

Table 1. Estimated and projected abundance of legal-size (38–54 in FL) white sturgeon in the lower Columbia River, 1987–2025.

		Setline (S)			Estimation Method (H/S) and Number (%) by size class	
Year	Historic (H)	Actual	Projected [1]		42-48 in. TL; 38-43 in. FL	48-60 in. TL; 43-54 in. FL
1987	104,000			H	75,900 (73%)	28,100 (27%)
1988	68,100			H	34,400 (51%)	33,700 (49%)
1989	48,700			H	31,900 (66%)	16,800 (34%)
1990	37,800			H	25,800 (68%)	12,000 (32%)
1991	44,200			H	32,500 (74%)	11,700 (26%)
1992	79,100			H	70,400 (89%)	8,700 (11%)
1993	129,700			H	115,500 (89%)	14,200 (11%)
1994 [2]	N/A			H	N/A	N/A
1995	202,200			H	143,200 (71%)	59,000 (29%)
1996	170,600			H	137,100 (80%)	33,500 (20%)
1997	174,300			H	146,600 (84%)	27,700 (16%)
1998	140,700			H	116,800 (83%)	23,900 (17%)
1999	134,500			H	116,800 (87%)	17,700 (13%)
2000	134,700			H	117,300 (87%)	17,400 (13%)
2001	127,500			H	102,200 (80%)	25,300 (20%)
2002	121,600			H	87,400 (72%)	34,200 (28%)
2003	131,200			H	85,000 (65%)	46,200 (35%)
2004 [2]	N/A			H	N/A	N/A
2005	136,900			H	106,900 (78%)	30,000 (22%)
2006	123,400			H	88,100 (71%)	35,300 (29%)
2007	131,700			H	101,800 (77%)	29,900 (23%)
2008	101,200			H	69,800 (69%)	31,400 (31%)
2009	95,000			H	65,000 (68%)	30,000 (32%)
2010	65,300	100,300		H	39,100 (60%)	26,200 (40%)
2011	72,800	80,600	77,000	H	46,300 (64%)	26,500 (36%)
2012	83,400	72,700	65,000	H	52,600 (63%)	30,800 (37%)
2013 [3]	N/A	113,900	74,300	-	N/A	N/A
2014	N/A	131,000	131,700	S	76,200 (55%)	54,800 (45%)
2015	N/A	143,900	138,200	S	74,100 (51%)	69,700 (49%)
2016	N/A	224,000	147,100	S	104,100 (46%)	119,900 (54%)
2017	N/A	199,800	237,900	S	86,300 (43%)	113,500 (57%)
2018	N/A	162,200	198,300	S	70,300 (43%)	91,900 (57%)
2019	N/A	168,200	164,100	S	76,900 (46%)	91,300 (54%)
2020 [4]	N/A	199,500	148,800	S	97,200 (49%)	102,300 (51%)
2021	N/A	110,100	201,400	S	56,400 (51%)	53,700 (49%)
2022	N/A	78,400	101,600	S	39,400 (50%)	39,000 (50%)
2023	N/A	65,600	74,500	S	32,400 (49%)	33,200 (51%)
2024	N/A	103,800	64,400	S	42,700 (41%)	61,100 (59%)
2025 [5]	N/A	90,100	102,900	S	31,800 (35%)	58,300 (65%)

[1] *Projected abundance is based on the previous year's setline estimate. Projections do not include harvest.*

[2] *Abundance estimates were not developed in 1994 and in 2004.*

[3] *Since 2013, abundance estimates have been developed using the setline method rather than the historic approach.*

[4] *Partial/incomplete sampling season in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions.*

[5] *Preliminary estimate.*

Table 2. Recruitment index values (Ep), calculated as the proportion of positive sets, for young-of-year white sturgeon in the Lower Columbia River downstream of Bonneville Dam (LCR), Lower Willamette River downstream of Willamette Falls (LWR), Bonneville Pool (BON), The Dalles Pool (TDA), and John Day Pool (JDA), 2004–2025. Dashes indicate no sampling conducted.

Year	LCR	LWR	BON	TDA	JDA
2004	0.44	--	0.12	0.06	**0.00**
2005	0.49	--	0.06	0.03	**0.00**
2006	0.52	--	0.69	0.47	0.13
2007	--	--	0.31	0.14	**0.00**
2008	0.45	--	0.59	0.31	**0.00**
2009	0.78	--	0.51	0.42	0.13
2010	0.18	0.24	0.34	0.36	0.08
2011	0.34	0.06	0.41	0.61	0.46
2012	0.35	0.22	0.08	0.53	0.10
2013	0.12	--	0.18	0.19	**0.00**
2014	0.31	0.38	0.37	0.14	**0.00**
2015	0.05	0.26	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**
2016	0.14	0.50	0.10	**0.00**	**0.00**
2017	0.58	0.50	0.26	0.47	**0.00**
2018	0.27	0.83	0.21	0.08	**0.00**
2019	0.19	0.58	0.45	0.33	0.03
2020	--	--	0.37	0.08	**0.00**
2021	0.02	0.17	0.16	**0.00**	**0.00**
2022	0.18	0.29	0.13	0.03	**0.00**
2023	0.07	0.42	0.23	0.17	**0.00**
2024	0.02	0.08	0.15	0.03	**0.00**
2025	**0.00**	**0.00**	0.08	0.09	**0.00**

Table 3. Estimated consumption of white sturgeon by pinnipeds at the Bonneville Dam tailrace, 2005–2024. The 2025 observation data was not available at the time this report was finalized. The data is sourced from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers observation program (USACE 2024). These reports indicate that the overall Spring sampling period is January through July and the Fall-Winter Sampling Period is August through December, though actual observation dates were initiated when 20 pinnipeds were present and concluded when all pinnipeds departed the tailrace.

Year	Spring Sturgeon Consumption Estimate	Fall Sturgeon Consumption Estimate
2005	--	--
2006	413	--
2007	664	--
2008	1,139	--
2009	1,710	--
2010	2,172	--
2011	3,003	--
2012	2,498	--
2013	635	--
2014	146	--
2015	44	--
2016	90	--
2017	24	238
2018	148	359
2019	187	762
2020	57	589
2021	N/A	1119
2022	40	10
2023	37	17
2024	19	--

Table 4. Lower Columbia River white sturgeon abundance estimates, by size-class, using a Lincoln-Peterson mark-recapture model from the annual stock assessment data, 2010–2025.

Year	21-27"	28-37"	38-54"	55-65"	66+"	Total Abundance 21+"
2010	406,920	503,066	100,291	3,887	11,034	1,025,198
2011	210,206	298,738	80,555	4,706	3,036	597,241
2012	139,320	201,626	72,702	4,157	2,222	420,027
2013	234,369	364,171	113,945	6,316	3,249	722,050
2014	127,856	240,568	130,990	11,085	3,689	514,188
2015	128,252	219,466	143,887	9,241	3,039	503,885
2016	184,309	293,556	223,959	23,069	5,953	730,846
2017	163,239	230,363	199,830	31,681	10,417	635,530
2018	147,927	193,472	162,182	28,659	6,108	538,348
2019	71,787	165,968	168,204	43,149	11,926	461,034
2020	109,279	204,628	199,487	59,915	14,497	587,806
2021	52,867	121,238	110,134	21,136	6,769	312,144
2022	14,951	57,283	78,390	18,664	11,047	180,335
2023	19,363	65,226	65,557	17,789	8,604	176,539
2024	15,234	89,344	103,787	37,962	19,873	266,200
2025	8,099	35,678	90,056	35,660	23,673	193,166

Table 5. Summary of mainstem commercial seasons and sturgeon regulations in the lower Columbia River, 1997–2025.

Winter/Spring	
Sturgeon catch also occurs in spring Chinook target fisheries. When applicable, annual approach for the winter/spring season typically included 200 sturgeon be set aside for Chinook-directed fisheries. Catches of sturgeon in these fisheries is typically low; therefore, weekly landing limits for sturgeon were generally not utilized in winter/spring salmon-directed fisheries.	
1997–2002	Two 30-hr fishing periods per week from the 2nd week of January through mid-February (Zones 1–5).
2003	Three 30-hr fishing periods (one per week) followed by one 12-hr period. January only (Zones 1–5).
2004	Five 24-hr fishing periods from mid-January through mid-February (Zones 1–5).
2005	Seven 24-hr fishing periods from January through late February (Zones 1–5).
2006	Ten fishing periods from January–February (Zones 1–5). Seven were 24 hours and three were 12 hours.
2007	Nine fishing periods from January–February. Seven were 24 hours and two were 18 hours (Zones 1–5).
2008	Eleven fishing periods from January–February. Six were 24 hours and five were 18 hours. Three openers were restricted to portions of Zones 4–5 and the remainder occurred in Zones 1–5.
2009	Eight fishing periods, January–February (Zones 1–5). Six 24-hr periods and two 18-hr periods. Landing limit of 12 during the last four periods.
2010	Five 24-hr fishing periods, January–February (Zones 1–5). Fifteen fish landing limit in effect.
2011	Four 24-hr fishing periods took place in late-January to early-February (Zones 1–5) with a 10 white sturgeon/vessel/week landing limit in effect. Some sturgeon harvest also occurs during the spring Chinook fishery. Protocol adopted for the winter/spring timeframe was 800 total (400 for set aside for winter sturgeon, and 400 for winter/spring salmon). Catches of sturgeon in winter/spring salmon directed fisheries is typically low; therefore, weekly landing limits for sturgeon are generally not utilized.
2012	Three 24-hr fishing periods took place during January 30–February 7 in Zones 1–5 with a 10 white sturgeon/vessel/week landing limit in effect. Some sturgeon harvest also occurs during the spring Chinook fishery; there were two fishing periods in early April (April 3 & 10) with six white sturgeon/vessel/week allowed.
2013	Three 24-hr fishing periods took place during January 31–February 7 in Zones 1–5 with a 10 white sturgeon/vessel/week landing limit in effect. Some sturgeon harvest also occurs during the spring Chinook fishery; there was one 9-hr fishing period on April 9th in Zones 1–5 with no landing limit for white sturgeon, and three fishing periods during May in Zones 1–5 with landing limits (May 15, 14-hrs with a five white sturgeon/vessel/weekly limit; May 22–23, a 12-hr fishing period also with a five white sturgeon/vessel/weekly limit, and May 29–30, a 12-hr fishing period with a three white sturgeon/vessel/weekly limit).
2014–2016	No sturgeon retention allowed.
2017	No mainstem commercial winter or spring fisheries.
2018	No mainstem commercial winter or spring fisheries.
2019	No mainstem commercial winter or spring fisheries.
2020	No mainstem commercial winter or spring fisheries.
2021	No mainstem commercial winter or spring fisheries.
2022	One tanglenet fishing period on May 23 in reduced Zones 4–5 with landing limits of three white sturgeon/vessel/weekly limit. No white sturgeon were landed.
2023–2025	No sturgeon retention allowed.

Summer	
2004	Two 12-hr fishing periods during late June and early July targeting sockeye and summer Chinook.
2005	Six 10-hr fishing periods during late June through late July targeting summer Chinook.
2006	Three 10-hr and ten 12-hr fishing periods from late June through July 31 targeting summer Chinook. Retention of green sturgeon in commercial fisheries was prohibited effective July 6, 2006.
2007	Two 10-hr fishing periods in late June and early July targeting summer Chinook. Weekly limit 5 white sturgeon per vessel.
2008	Three 10-hr fishing periods in late June and early July targeting summer Chinook. A 6-hr target sockeye fishery also occurred in Area 2S on June 30, 2008. Weekly limit 5 white sturgeon per vessel.
2009	One 12-hr fishing period on June 18 and two 10-hr fishing periods on June 24 and 30 targeting summer Chinook. Weekly limit 5 white sturgeon per vessel.
2010	Two 10-hr fishing periods on June 17 and 22 targeting summer Chinook. Weekly limit of 3 white sturgeon per vessel.
2011	Two 8-hr fishing periods, one on June 16–17 and another on June 22–23. The weekly limit was 5 white sturgeon per vessel.
2012	One 8-hr fishing period took place on June 17–18. The weekly limit was 5 white sturgeon per vessel.
2013	Two 8-hr fishing periods took place on June 16–17, and July 15–16. The weekly limit was five white sturgeon per vessel during the first fishing period, and two white sturgeon per vessel during the second period.
2014–2016	No sturgeon retention allowed.
2017–2022	No mainstem commercial summer fisheries.
2023–2025	No sturgeon retention allowed.

Table 5 cont'd. Summary of mainstem commercial seasons and sturgeon regulations in the lower Columbia River, 1997–2025**.**

	Early August
1998-2001	One 12-hr fishing period below Longview Bridge targeting sturgeon during the 1st week of August.
2002	Three fishing periods with a five white sturgeon per vessel per day limit. Possession and sales prohibited during the final two fishing periods.
2003–2005	Four 12-hr Chinook fishing periods each year in Zones 1–5.
2006	Six fishing periods in all or portions of Zones 1–5. Weekly landing limits ranged from five to seven white sturgeon per vessel.
2007	Three early August periods of 12 hours each in Zones 1–5. Weekly landing limits of 12 white sturgeon per vessel.
2008	Five fishing periods (four in Zones 1–5 and one in Zones 2–5). Weekly landing limits of 10 white sturgeon per vessel per week.
2009	Three 12-hr fishing periods (two in Zones 1–5 and one in Zones 2–5).
2010	Four 12-hr fishing periods (three in Zones 1–5 and one in Zones 2–5).
2011	One 9-hr fishing period in Zones 1–5 with a weekly landing limit of 10 white sturgeon per vessel.
2012	One 9-hr fishing period in Zones 1–5 (August 5–6) with a weekly landing limit of seven white sturgeon per vessel.
2013	There were no early-August seasons in Zones 1–5 during 2013.
2014–2016	No sturgeon retention allowed.
2017–2019	No mainstem commercial early August fisheries.
2020	Two 9-hr fishing periods in Zones 4–5 with weekly landing limits of five white sturgeon per vessel August 10–13.
2021	Two 9-hr fishing periods in Zones 4–5 with weekly landing limits of four white sturgeon per vessel August 9–12.
2022	One 9-hr fishing periods in Zones 4–5 with weekly landing limits of four white sturgeon per vessel August 10–11.
2023–2025	No sturgeon retention allowed.

	Late August
1997–2003	Target Chinook seasons in Area 2S or expanded Area 2S during late August.
2004–2005	Four fishing periods during mid to late-August with varying area and possession limit restrictions.
2006	One fishing period in Zones 3–5 and one in Zones 4–5 (upstream of the I-205 Bridge),with a weekly landing limit of seven white sturgeon.
2007	One 11-hr fishery in Zones 4–5 with a three white sturgeon per vessel weekly landing limit.
2008	Two fishing periods in Zones 4–5, with a weekly landing limit of three white sturgeon.
2009	Two 10-hr fishing periods in Zones 3–5 (upstream of Kalama River) with a weekly landing limit of nine white sturgeon and one 10-hr period in Zone 5 only with a weekly landing limit of three white sturgeon.
2010	One 10-hr and two 9-hr fishing periods in Zones 4–5, with a weekly landing limit of four white sturgeon.
2011	Seven 9-hr fishing periods in Zones 4–5 with weekly landing limits of 10 white sturgeon per vessel.
2012	Eight 9-hr fishing periods in Zones 4–5 with weekly landing limits of three white sturgeon per vessel August 12–24; and five white sturgeon per vessel August 26–29.
2013	Eight 9-hr fishing periods in Zones 4–5 with weekly landing limits of four white sturgeon per vessel August 11–29.
2014–2016	No sturgeon retention allowed.
2017	Five 9-hr fishing periods in Zones 4–5 with weekly landing limits of six white sturgeon per vessel August 22–September 1.
2018	Three 9-hr fishing periods and one 7-hr fishing period in Zones 4–5. Weekly landing limits of six white sturgeon per vessel August 21–27 and seven white sturgeon per vessel August 29–30.
2019	Four 9-hr fishing periods in Zones 4–5 with weekly landing limits of seven white sturgeon per vessel August 14–27.
2020	Four 9-hr fishing periods in Zones 4–5 with weekly landing limits of five white sturgeon per vessel August 17–27.
2021	Six 9-hr fishing periods in Zones 4–5 with weekly landing limits of four white sturgeon per vessel August 16–September 2.
2022	Seven 9-hr fishing periods in Zones 4–5 with weekly landing limits of four white sturgoen per vessel August 15–September 2.
2023–2025	No sturgeon retention allowed.

Table 5 cont'd. Summary of mainstem commercial seasons and sturgeon regulations in the lower Columbia River, 1997–2025**.**

Late Fall	
Fisheries occur during mid-September through the end of October and include both salmon- and sturgeon-directed fisheries. Salmon seasons vary	
1997–2000	Target fall sturgeon seasons occurred.
2001	Sturgeon sales prohibited in late-fall due to high landings earlier in the year.
2002	A five white sturgeon per day per vessel possession and sales limit was in effect for nearly the entire late fall season except for the final 3-day fishing period when sturgeon possession and sales were prohibited.
2003	Sturgeon possession and sales limits ranged 3–9 per vessel per week.
2004	Sturgeon possession and sales limit of five white sturgeon per vessel per week was in place for most of the late fall period, but was increased to ten fish during the final three fishing periods.
2005	Sturgeon possession and sales limits ranged 3–15 fish per vessel.
2006	White sturgeon possession and sales limits were maintained at eight white sturgeon per week per vessel when retention was allowed.
2007	White sturgeon possession and sales limits ranged 7–12 white sturgeon per vessel through October 5, after which white sturgeon sales in the mainstem were prohibited.
2008	Most fishing periods occurred in Zones 4–5, however, some fishing did occur in all or portions of Zones 1–3. Sturgeon sales were allowed in all periods, with weekly landing limits of 10 fish per vessel through October 3, followed by three fish landing limits thereafter.
2009	Most fishing periods occurred in Zones 4–5, however, some fishing did occur in all or portions of Zones 1–3. Sturgeon sales were allowed through October 23, with weekly landing limits ranging 5–8 fish per vessel. Sales were prohibited after October 23.
2010	Eleven fishing periods during September 22–October 22 with weekly landing limits of 5–8 fish per vessel.
2011	Ten fishing periods during September 18–October 20 with weekly landing limits of 2–7 white sturgeon per vessel.
2012	Sturgeon retention allowed in five (September 19–28 and October 4–5) of 15 late fall fishing periods. The landing limit for the first four fishing periods (three in Zones 4–5, and the fourth in Zones 1–5) was five white sturgeon per vessel. On October 4–5, (one period in Zones 1–5), the vessel limit was two white sturgeon.
2013	Sturgeon retention was allowed for the first seven of 34 late fall fishing periods (September 15–30). The landing limit was two white sturgeon per vessel during each week sturgeon were allowed. Sturgeon retention was not allowed October 1–November 1.
2014–2016	No sturgeon retention allowed.
2017	Two 10-hr fishing periods in Zones 4–5 with weekly landing limits of five white sturgeon per vessel, September 17–20.
2018	No mainstem commercial late fall fishery.
2019	No mainstem commercial late fall fishery.
2020	Two 10-hr fishing periods in Zones 4–5 with weekly landing limits of four white sturgeon per vessel during September 15–22.
2021	Four 10-hr and four 12-hr fishing periods in Zones 4–5 (8" min. mesh). Fourteen 18-hr and five 14-hr fishing periods in Zones 1–3 (tangle net). Weekly landing limits of six white sturgeon per vessel, September 19–October 29.
2022	Three 10-hr and four 12-hr fishing periods in Zones 4–5 (8" min. mesh). Twenty 18-hr and five 14-hr fishing periods in Zones 1–3 (Tangle net). Weekly landing limits of six white sturgeon per vessel, September 18–October 28.
2023–2025	No sturgeon retention allowed.

Table 6. History of sturgeon regulations for the lower Columbia River recreational fishery.

Year	Daily Bag Limit	Annual Bag Limit	Size Restrictions	Other Regulations
Pre-1940	None	None	None	None
1940	Only 3 < 4'	"	"	"
1942	Five (3 < 4' and 2 ≥ 4')	"	"	"
1950	"	"	30" min.–72" max.	"
1951	3 Fish	"	"	"
1957	"	"	"	Cannot remove head or tail in the field.
1958	"	"	36" min.–72" max.	
1986	2 Fish	OR-30	"	OR: required sturgeon tag: WA: no gaffing.
1989	"	OR-30, WA-15	40" min.–72" max.	WA: required sturgeon tag. New minimum size limit effective April 1.
1990	"	15	"	Single-point barbless hooks required. OR: no gaffing.
1991	"1 and 1" slot limit	"	"	Daily limit changed to one fish 40–<48" and one fish 48–72".
1992	"	"	"	WA: 60" max. length effective April 16, 1992-April 15, 1993. WA: Beacon Rock to Bonneville Dam sturgeon spawning sanctuary (boat and bank) April 16 - June 15, 1992.
1994	"	10	42" min.–66" max.	Daily limit changed to one fish 42–<48" and one fish 48–66".
1995	"	"	"	LCR closed to retention September 1–December 31.
1996	1 Fish	"	"	One 42–66" fish daily bag limit effective April 1. Closed to boat angling from Beacon Rock to Bonneville Dam May 1–June 30.
1997	"	"	42" min.–60" max.	80% allocation of 67,300 annual harvest guideline to sport fishery (53,840).
1999	"	"	"	Harvest guideline adjusted to 50,000 in-season (40,000 sport). U.S. Army Corps implements Bonneville Boat Restricted Zone from Robins Is. to Hamilton Is. boat ramp.
2000	"	"	"	Retention disallowed below Wauna powerlines April 1–30. Beacon Rock-Bonneville boat angling closure extended through 7/15. Annual limit 10 fish even if licensed in both states.
2001	"	"	"	LCR closed to retention August 1–September 30.
2002	"	"	"	LCR closed to retention on Sundays and Mondays during March 3–May 13 and seven days per week during July 25–November 22.
2003	"	"	"	32,000 annual harvest guideline split 40% above Wauna and 60% below Wauna. Retention allowed above Wauna January 1–March 23 and July 1–October 31 and below Wauna January 1–June 27.
2004	"	5	42" min.–60" max. 45" min. below Wauna during May 15–July 3	28,800 annual harvest guideline split 12,800 above Wauna and 16,000 below Wauna. Retention allowed above Wauna January 1–31, then three days per week (Thur.–Sat.) during February 1–July 31 and October 1–December 31. Retention allowed below Wauna January 1–April 30 under permanent rules, then May 15–July 3 with a 45" minimum size limit. Closed to boat and bank angling from Beacon Rock to Bonneville Dam May 1–July 31. Annual limit reduced to five sturgeon.
2005	"	"	42" min.–60" max. 45" min. below Wauna during May 14–July 10 and July 15–August 15	29,343 annual harvest guideline split 11,560 above Wauna and 17,783 below Wauna. Retention allowed above Wauna three days per week (Thur.–Sat.) January 1–July 31 and October 1–December 31. Retention allowed below Wauna January 1–April 30 under permanent rules, then May 14–July 10 and July 15–August 15 with a 45" minimum size limit.
2006	"	"	42" min.–60" max. 45" min. below Wauna during May 13–July 4	28,800 annual harvest guideline split 12,800 above Wauna and 16,000 below Wauna. Retention allowed above Wauna three days per week (Thur.–Sat.) during January 1–July 31 and October 1–December 31. Retention allowed below Wauna January 1–April 30 under permanent rules, then May 13–July 4 with a 45" minimum size limit. Closed to boat and bank angling from Navigation Marker 85 to Bonneville Dam May 1–July 31.

Table 6 cont'd. History of sturgeon regulations for the lower Columbia River recreational fishery.

Year	Daily Bag Limit	Annual Bag Limit	Size Restrictions	Other Regulations
2007	"	"	42" min.–60" max. 45" min. below Wauna during May 12–July 4	30,126 harvest guideline split 13,852 above Wauna and 16,274 below Wauna. Retention allowed above Wauna three days per week (Thur.–Sat.) January 1–31 and four days per week (Thur–Sun.) February 1–July 31 and seven days per week August 18–December 31. Sturgeon retention allowed below Wauna January 1–April 30 under permanent rules then May 12–July 4 with a 45" minimum size limit. Retention of green sturgeon prohibited.
2008	"	"	42" min.–60" max. 45" min. below Wauna during May 10–July 26	25,530 harvest guideline split 12,387 above Wauna and 13,143 below Wauna. Retention allowed above Wauna four days per week (Thur–Sun.) January 1–December 31. Sturgeon retention allowed below Wauna January 1–April 30 under permanent rules then May 10–June 24, July 10–12, July 17–19, and July 26 with a 45" minimum size limit.
2009	"	"	38" min. FL–54" max. FL 41" min. FL below Wauna during May 9–July 25	Fork length measurement. 26,959 harvest guideline split 11,430 above Wauna and 15,529 below Wauna. Retention allowed above Wauna three days per week (Thur.–Sat.) January 1–July 31 and October 1–December 31. Retention allowed below Wauna January 1–April 30 under permanent rules, then May 9–June 28, July 2–5, 10–12, 17–19 and 24–26 with a 41" minimum size (FL) limit.
2010	"	"	38" min. FL–54" max. FL 41" min. FL below Wauna during May 22–August 1	17,300 annual harvest guideline split 7,700 above Wauna (including a sub–allocation for the Willamette River of 2,865) and 9,600 for the estuary. Retention allowed above Wauna three days per week (Thur.–Sat.) January 1–July 31 and October 1–December 31, except closed inside Sand Island (near Rooster Rock) April 29–July 31. Closed to all sturgeon angling during May 1–August 31 from Skamania Island upstream to Bonneville Dam. Retention allowed below Wauna January 1–April 30 under permanent rules, then May 22–July 11 and July 15–August 1 with a 41" minimum size (FL) limit.
2011	1	5	38" min. FL–54" max. FL 41" min. FL below Wauna during May 14–July 31	12,240 annual harvest guideline split 5,440 above Wauna (including a sub-allocation for the Willamette River of 2,030) and 6,800 for the estuary. Retention allowed above Wauna three days per week (Thur.–Sat.) January 1–July 31 and October 1–December 31, except closed inside Sand Island (near Rooster Rock) January 1–April 30. Retention allowed below Wauna January 1–April 30 under permanent rules, then May 14–July 31 with a 41" minimum size (FL) limit.
2012	"	"	38" min. FL–54" max. FL 41" min. FL below Wauna during May 12–July 4	7,488 annual harvest guideline split 3,328 above Wauna (including a sub–allocation of 1,248 for the Willamette), and 4,160 for the estuary. Retention allowed above Wauna three days per week (Thur.–Sat.) January 1–July 31. Retention allowed below Wauna January 1–April 30 under permanent rules, then May 12–July 4 with a 41" minimum size (FL) limit.
2013	"	2	38" min. FL–54" max. FL 41" min. FL below Wauna during May 11–June 20	7,276 annual harvest guideline split 3,234 above Wauna (including a sub–allocation of 1,213 for the Willamette), and 4,042 for the estuary. Retention allowed above Wauna three days per week (Thur.–Sat.) January 1–June 15. Retention allowed below Wauna January 1–April 30 under permanent rules, then May 11–June 20 with a 41" minimum size (FL) limit.
2014–2016	0	0	No retention.	Catch and release only.
2017	1	2	44" min. FL–50" max. FL	4,245 annual harvest guideline split 1,245 above Wauna and 3,000 for the estuary. Retention allowed in the estuary June 5, 7, 10, 12, and 14 with no angling allowed after 2 pm. Retention allowed above Wauna October 21, 26, and 28.

Table 6 cont'd. History of sturgeon regulations for the lower Columbia River recreational fishery.

Year	Daily Bag Limit	Annual Bag Limit	Size Restrictions	Other Regulations
2018	"	"	"	4,190 annual harvest guideline split 1,230 above Wauna and 2,960 for the estuary. Retention allowed in the estuary May 14, 16, 19, 21, 23, 26, 28, 30 and June 2, 4 and 9 with no angling allowed after 2 pm. Retention allowed above Wauna September 15 and 22.
2019	"	"	"	4,190 annual harvest guideline split 1,230 above Wauna and 2,960 for the estuary. Retention allowed in the estuary May 13, 15, 18, 20, 22, 25, 27, 29 and June 1, 3 and 5 with no angling allowed after 2 pm. Retention allowed above Wauna September 21 and 28 and October 12, 19, and 24.
2020	"	"	"	3,890 annual harvest guideline split 1,140 above Wauna and 2,750 for the estuary. No retention season allowed in the estuary. Retention allowed above Wauna September 12, 19, 26, 29, and October 3.
2021	"	"	"	4,190 annual harvest guideline split 1,230 above Wauna and 2,960 for the estuary. Retention allowed in the estuary May 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, 22, 24, 26, 29, 31 and June 2, 5 and 12 with no angling allowed after 2 pm. Retention allowed above Wauna September 11, 18, 19, 22, 25, and 29.
2022	"	"	"	2,720 annual harvest guideline split 800 above Wauna and 1,920 for the estuary. Retention allowed in the estuary May 11, 14, 18, 21, 23, 25, 28, 30 and June 1, 4, 8 and 11 with no angling allowed after 2 pm. Retention allowed above Wauna September 10, 14, and 17.
2023–2025	0	0	No retention.	Catch and release only.

Table 7. Annual commercial white sturgeon landings and harvest guidelines in the lower Columbia River, 1993–2025.

	Mainstem							Select Area				
Year	Winter Sturgeon [1]	Winter Salmon [1]	Summer	Early August	Late August	Late Fall	Total	Winter/ Spring/ Summer	Fall	Total	Grand Total	Guideline
1993	990			0	0	7,010	8,000	30	20	50	8,050	6,000
1994	2,990			0	0	3,380	6,370	30	0	30	6,400	6,000
1995	0			0	0	5,980	5,980	110	70	180	6,160	8,000
1996	800			0	330	6,580	7,710	580	110	690	8,400	8,000
1997	2,710			1,740	140	7,790	12,380	350	100	450	12,830	13,460
1998	2,680			2,540	90	8,060	13,370	360	170	530	13,900	13,460
1999	1,780			2,770	60	4,180	8,790	520	190	710	9,500	10,000
2000	2,260			2,490	300	5,130	10,180	540	160	700	10,880	10,000
2001	3,060			4,720	1,020	0	8,800	490	20	510	9,310	9,100
2002	2,720			1,340	380	4,200	8,640	650	330	980	9,620	9,800
2003	1,490	27		2,170	410	3,430	7,527	250	170	420	7,947	8,000
2004	1,696	174	9	1,550	917	3,219	7,565	184	117	301	7,866	8,000
2005	473	70	1,369	1,129	965	3,793	7,799	279	74	353	8,152	8,200
2006	288	1,651	544	1,548	363	3,492	7,886	317	109	426	8,312	8,000
2007	1,424	47	414	2,646	91	2,734	7,356	257	148	405	7,761	7,850
2008	869	17	523	2,706	103	3,170	7,388	337	134	471	7,859	7,927
2009	1,697	21	624	2,213	756	2,001	7,312	311	114	425	7,737	8,000
2010	518	28	289	1,578	297	1,348	4,058	211	116	327	4,385	4,800
2011	50	125	504	967	353	1,187	3,186	201	0	201	3,387	3,400
2012	40	14	281	585	409	368	1,697	225	0	225	1,922	2,080
2013	15	274	326	0	719	324	1,658	254	100	354	2,012	2,021
2014–2016 [2]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2017	0	0	0	0	485	239	724	266	237	503	1,227	1,245
2018	0	0	0	0	413	0	413	296	117	413	826	1,230
2019	0	0	0	0	509	0	509	487	212	699	1,208	1,230
2020	0	0	0	74	332	161	567	547	0	547	1,114	1,140
2021	0	0	0	27	270	98	395	428	371	799	1,194	1,230
2022	0	0	0	7	177	85	269	260	168	428	697	800
2023–2025 [2]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[1] *Prior to 2003, values reflect all winter commercial fisheries.*

[2] *No sturgeon retention allowed during 2014–2016 and 2023–2025.*

Table 8. Annual recreational white sturgeon catch and harvest guidelines in the lower Columbia River and lower Willamette River, 2004–2025. No sturgeon retention fisheries were opened during years in which the guideline was zero.

	Columbia River - Estuary		Columbia River - Above Wauna		Willamette River [3]			Combined	
Year	Catch	Guideline	Catch	Guideline	Catch	Baseline [4]	Guideline [5]	Catch	Guideline
2004	15,050	16,000	10,519	12,800	4,099	1,225	N/A	29,668	28,800
2005	17,911	17,783	11,891	11,560	2,327	1,225	N/A	32,129	29,343
2006	15,726	16,000	8,545	12,800	3,348	1,225	N/A	27,619	28,800
2007	19,131	16,274	10,675	13,852	6,555	1,225	N/A	36,361	30,126
2008	13,614	13,143	7,959	12,387	9,148	1,225	N/A	30,721	25,530
2009	13,109	15,529	4,599	11,430	7,346	1,225	N/A	25,054	26,959
2010	6,491	9,600	4,831	4,835	3,529	735	2,865	14,851	17,300
2011	6,117	6,800	2,908	3,410	2,690	520	2,030	11,715	12,240
2012	4,466	4,160	1,859	2,080	1,535	520	1,248	7,860	7,488
2013	4,559	4,042	1,942	2,021	1,410	520	1,213	7,911	7,276
2014–2016	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2017	3,235	3,000	430	1,245	0	0	745	3,665	4,990
2018 [1]	2,412	2,960	1,050	1,230	0	0	740	3,462	4,930
2019 [1]	2,838	2,960	735	1,230	0	0	740	3,573	4,930
2020 [1,2]	0	2,750	857	1,140	167	0	690	1,024	4,580
2021 [1]	2,549	2,960	885	1,230	87	0	740	3,521	4,930
2022 [1]	1,292	1,920	891	800	0	0	480	2,183	3,200
2023–2025	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[1] *The Cowlitz River was opened with the Above Wauna fishery in 2018–2022.*

[2] *No estuary sturgeon retention allowed during 2020.*

[3] *Willamette River harvest estimates revised November 2011 based on updated punch card and existing creel information.*

[4] *Baseline harvest levels for the lower Willamette River were based on average harvest during 1986-1996 (1,225 fish). The lower Willamette River baseline decreased to 735 fish in 2010 and 520 fish in 2011 consistent with declining llegal abundance estimates. The baseline was eliminated in 2017.*

[5] *During 2003-2009, harvest in excess of the baseline was applied to the above Wauna recreational harvest guideline. Beginning in 2010, a separate harvest guideline was established for the lower Willamette River.*

Table 9. Recreational and commercial white sturgeon harvest and guidelines in the lower Columbia River and tributaries, 2004–2025. No sturgeon retention fisheries were opened during years in which the guideline was zero.

	Recreational		Commercial		Combined	
Year	Catch [1]	Guideline + LWR Baseline [2]	Catch	Guideline	Catch [1]	Guideline [2]
2004	29,668	30,025	7,866	8,000	36,309	38,025
2005	32,129	30,568	8,152	8,200	39,056	38,768
2006	27,619	30,025	8,312	8,000	34,706	38,025
2007	36,361	31,351	7,761	7,850	42,897	39,201
2008	30,721	26,755	7,859	7,927	37,355	34,682
2009	25,054	28,184	7,737	8,000	31,566	36,184
2010	14,851	18,035	4,385	4,800	18,501	22,835
2011	11,715	12,760	3,387	3,400	14,582	16,160
2012	7,860	8,008	1,922	2,080	9,262	10,088
2013	7,911	7,796	2,012	2,021	9,403	9,817
2014–2017	0	0	0	0	0	0
2017	3,665	4,990	1,227	1,245	4,892	6,235
2018	3,462	4,930	826	1,230	4,288	6,160
2019	3,573	4,930	1,208	1,230	4,781	6,160
2020	1,024	4,580	1,114	1,140	2,138	5,720
2021	3,521	4,930	1,194	1,230	4,715	6,160
2022	2,183	3,200	697	800	2,880	4,000
2023–2025	0	0	0	0	0	0

[1] *Catch includes the total recreational harvest in the lower Willamette River (LWR) and mainstem Columbia River for all years. Catch also includes total harvest in the Cowlitz River beginning in 2018.*

[2] *Actual guidelines used in-season may have been different than shown here. Includes LWR baseline plus total guideline.*

Table 10. Recreational and commercial sturgeon kept catch (in thousands) and white sturgeon catch sharing percentages in the lower Columbia River, 1977–2025.

	White Sturgeon					Green Sturgeon		
	Recreational		Commercial		Total	Recreational	Commercial	Total
Year	Catch [1]	%	Catch [2]	%	Catch	Catch	Catch [2]	Catch
1977–79 Ave	29.2	70	13.3	30	42.5	0.0	1.2	1.2
1980–84 Ave	31.5	70	13.2	30	44.7	<0.1	1.2	1.3
1985–89 Ave	44.9	84	8.3	16	53.2	<0.1	3.5	3.8
1990–94 Ave	30.3	83	6.0	17	36.3	0.1	2.0	2.1
1995–99 Ave	41.5	80	10.2	20	51.7	0.1	0.8	0.9
2000–04 Ave	36.0	80	9.1	20	45.1	<0.1	0.4	0.4
2005–09 Ave	29.1	78	8.0	22	37.1	<0.1	0.0	<0.1
2010–14 Ave	8.0	78	2.9	22	10.9	<0.1	0.0	<0.1
2015 [3]	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2016 [3]	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2017	3.7	75	1.2	25	4.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
2018	3.5	81	0.8	19	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
2019 [4]	3.5	74	1.2	26	4.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
2015–19 Ave	2.1	77	6.5	23	8.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
2020 [4]	1.0	48	1.1	52	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
2021 [4]	3.5	74	1.2	26	4.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
2022 [4]	2.2	76	0.7	24	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
2023 [3]	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2024 [3]	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2020–24 Ave	1.3	68	0.6	32	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
2025 [3]	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

[1] *Includes Willamette River harvest in excess of the adjusted 1986–1996 baseline.*

[2] *Includes Youngs Bay (1979-present) and other Select Area landings (1998–present).*

[3] *No sturgeon retention allowed during 2014–2016 and 2023–2025.*

[4] *Includes catches from the Cowlitz River since 2019 and the lower Willamette since 2020.*

Table 11. Annual treaty and recreational white sturgeon catch and harvest guidelines by pool in Zone 6, 2016–2025.

	Bonneville Pool		The Dalles Pool		John Day Pool	
Year	Catch	Guideline	Catch	Guideline	Catch	Guideline
Treaty Commercial Fisheries						
2016	224	325	260	325	809	1,000
2017	368	"	326	"	209	295
2018	406	"	415	415	166	210
2019	630	500	426	"	187	175
2020	748	"	508	"	182	210
2021	1,537	"	523	560	166	"
2022	909	675	829	"	187	"
2023	830	"	441	"	268	"
2024	1,111	675	852	825	206	210
2025	986	1,250	555	"	71	"
Non-Treaty Recreational Fisheries						
2016	349	325	96	100	520	500
2017	276	"	84	"	126	105
2018	452	"	180	135	81	"
2019	448	500	79	"	129	"
2020	431	"	205	"	102	"
2021	655	"	235	190	98	"
2022	622	675	204	"	94	"
2023	600	"	188	"	95	"
2024	692	"	271	275	96	"
2025	1,365	1,250	260	"	94	"

Table 12. Treaty commercial white sturgeon seasons and catch in Zone 6, 2020–2025.

Fishery	Dates	Open Pools [1]	Length (days)	Mesh Size Restriction	Catch [2]
		2020			
Winter	January 1-31	All	30	Setline	320
"	February 1-8	TD	7.5	None	395
"	February 1-8, 12-17, 20-24	JD	15.5	None	137
"	February 20 - March 5	BO	12.5	None	592
				Total	**1,444**
		2021			
Winter	January 1-31	All	30	Setline	182
"	February 1-6	TD	5.5	None	393
"	February 1-6, 12-17, 24-26	JD	11.5	None	148
"	February 20 - March 5	BO	4.5	None	1,503
				Total	**2,226**
		2022			
Winter	January 1-31	All	30	Setline	115
"	February 1-5, 10-12, 16-18	TD	4.5	None	726
"	February 1-28, March 12-16	JD	31	None	187
"	March 2-4	BO	2.5	None	896
				Total	**1,924**
		2023			
Winter	January 1-31	All	30	Setline	604
"	February 4-6, March 6-9	TD	7.5	None, March 6-9 Setline only	371
"	February 1-13	JD	19.5	None	251
"	February 27-March 1	BO	2.5	Setline	313
				Total	**1,538**
		2024			
Winter	January 1-31	All	30	Setline	671
"	February 13-20	TD	7.5	Setline	541
"	February 13-20, March 7-11	JD	12	Setline	135
"	February 10-12, March 2-4	BO	5	Setline	822
				Total	**2,169**
		2025 [3]			
Winter	January 1-11, February 1-4, February 11-13, March 3-4	TD	17.75	Setline	555
"	January 1-February 15	JD	45.25	Setline	71
"	January 1-8, February 26-27	BO	8.75	Setline	986
				Total	**1,612**

[1] *BO = Bonneville Pool, TD = The Dalles Pool, JD = John Day Pool.*

[2] *Legal-sizes of 38–54 inches FL in Bonneville Pool and 43–54 inches FL adopted January 29, 2009.*

[3] *Preliminary estimates*

Table 13. Preliminary 2025 Zone 6 treaty commercial catch of white sturgeon by season and pool, with catch guidelines.

Reservoir	January Setline	Feb/Mar Setline	Winter Gill Net	Summer Setline	Late Fall Setline	Commercial + OTB Total	Guideline
Bonneville	706	280	--	--	--	986	1,250
The Dalles	328	227	--	--	--	555	825
John Day	68	3	--	--	--	71	210
Total	**1,102**	**510**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1,612**	**2,285**

"--" indicates no fishery during this timeframe.

Table 14. White sturgeon catch in treaty commercial, treaty subsistence, and non-treaty recreational fisheries in Zone 6, 2016–2025.

	Treaty Commercial			Treaty	Non-Treaty
Year	Gill Net	Setline	Total	Subsistence	Recreational
2016	978	315	1,293	144	965
2017	857	46	903	103	486
2018	556	431	987	84	713
2019	1,144	239	1,383	140	656
2020	1,124	320	1,444	295	738
2021	2,044	182	2,226	233	988
2022	1,809	115	1,924	156	920
2023	622	916	1,538	274	883
2024	0	2,169	2,185	470	1059
2025 [1]	0	1,612	1,612	440	1719

[1] *Estimates are preliminary.*

Table 15. Recreational white sturgeon retention seasons in Zone 6, 2016–2025.

Year	Bonneville Pool	The Dalles Pool	John Day Pool
2016	Jan 1–Feb 7, Jun 18	Jan 1–Apr 29	Jan 1–May 28
2017	Jan 1–Mar 24, Jun 10, Jun 23	Jan 1–Mar 24	Jan 1–Mar 29
2018	Jan 1–Feb 3, Jun 15	Jan 1–19, June 15	Jan 1–Feb 11
2019	Jan 1–Apr 12	Jan 1–Jan 6	Jan 1–Apr 2
2020	Jan 1–Feb 13	Jan 1–Feb 17	Jan 1–Mar 9
2021	Jan 1–Jan 7	Jan 1–Jan 4	Jan 1–Mar 18
2022	Jan 1–19, Mar 9	Jan 1–Mar 21 (M/W/Sa Only)	Jan 1–Mar 9
2023	Jan 1, Jan 2–11 (M/W/Sa Only)	Jan 1, Jan 2–25 (M/W/Sa Only)	Jan 1–29, Feb 11,15,18
2024	Jan 1–3 (M/W/Sa Only)	Jan 1–3, Feb 24, 28 (M/W/Sa Only)	Jan 1–Mar 14
2025	Jan 1	Jan, Feb 15, 22, 27	Jan 1–Mar 13

Table 16. Five-year summary of recreational sturgeon retention periods and harvest in the Zone 6 pools.

Year	Retention Period(s)	Total Retention Days	Total Guideline	Recreational Harvest	Proportion of Guideline Harvested	Average Fish Kept Per Day	Average Trips Per Day
Bonneville Pool							
2021	Jan 1–7	7	500	655	131%	94	197
2022	Jan 1–19, Mar 9	20	675	622	92%	31	187
2023 [1]	Jan 1–11	6	675	600	89%	100	364
2024 [1]	Jan 1–3	2	675	692	103%	346	682
2025 [2]	Jan 1	1	1,250	1,365	109%	1,365	2,010
The Dalles Pool							
2021	1/1–1/4	4	190	235	124%	59	445
2022 [1]	1/1–3/21	35	190	204	107%	6	84
2023 [1]	1/1–1/25	12	190	188	99%	16	108
2024 [1]	1/1–1/3, 2/24, 2/28	4	275	271	99%	68	233
2025 [2]	1/1, 2/15, 2/22, 2/27	4	275	260	95%	65	282
John Day Pool							
2021	1/1–3/18	77	105	98	93%	1.3	71
2022	1/1–3/9	68	105	94	90%	1.4	62
2023	1/1–1/29, 2/11, 2/15, 2/18	32	105	95	90%	3.3	90
2024	1/1–3/14	74	105	96	91%	1.3	50
2025	1/1–3/13	72	105	94	90%	1.3	46

[1] *Season initially set as a three-days-per-week retention schedule (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays).*

[2] *Season initially set as a two-days-per-week retention schedule (Wednesdays and Saturdays).*