

# WHITE STURGEON SAMPLING IN KOOTENAY LAKE

## KOOTENAY WHITE STURGEON ARE LISTED AS CRITICALLY ENDANGERED, UNDER CANADA’S SPECIES AT RISK ACT.

- » White sturgeon are one of 29 species of sturgeon world wide, a family of fish that has been around for 125 million years;
- » Long lived: live up to 100 years, females mature at age 25-35 years and males at 15-25 years old;
- » Kootenay population has had virtually no natural reproduction since 1974;
- » Hatchery program (since the 1990s) necessary until sturgeon are able to successfully spawn on their own, and are growing and surviving well in the wild;
- » Adults and juveniles range throughout Kootenay Lake and River;
- » The wild population is mostly aging adults and the hatchery population ranges in juveniles from 1-25+ years old, with some entering adulthood.

International work takes place throughout the Kootenay River, from below Libby Dam in Montana, into Idaho and finally into Kootenay River and Kootenay Lake in B.C. Here are a few key ongoing studies taking place in 2020 by BC MFLNRORD crew:



Above: We use gill nets and setlines to sample for juveniles. All fish released after capture.

What we learn: where hatchery fish go, how well they survive and grow, and differences between habitats. This is also how we determine if any wild juveniles are surviving.



Above: Starting 2020, you may see us out in the West Arm and Crawford Bay as we expand our lake sampling.

Below: We use setlines and angling for adults.

Adults are sampled to track growth and monitor population trends. Current estimate in the river and lake is ~1700 wild adults remaining.



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