

Lake Sturgeon

Acipenser fulvescens



Status: **Special Concern**

Threats:

- ◆ Over-harvesting for meat and caviar
- ◆ Introduction of non-native species
- ◆ Barriers (dams) in tributaries that prevent spawning
- ◆ Reduced water quality
- ◆ Predation on eggs and fry



Description:

- ◆ Canada's largest freshwater fish; ave length between 1-2 m; avege weight between 4-36 kg; can weight up to 180 kg
- ◆ Heavy, torpedo-shaped body with very tough skin and prominent rows of bony plates or shields
- ◆ Large, ventral, suctorial mouth with 4 barbels in front of it
- ◆ Back and sides olive-brown to grey; underside is white
- ◆ Fins are dark brown or grey with the single, dorsal fin far back near the caudal fin
- ◆ Colour is uniform in adults, blotchy in younger fish

Biology:

- ◆ Are bottom dwellers, adapted to feeding on the mud or gravel and mud bottom; omnivorous; feed on insect larvae, crayfish, molluscs, small fish and plants
- ◆ Spawn from early May to late June and migrate to the spawning rivers after the ice melts; individuals usually return to the same spawning rivers year after year
- ◆ Females reach maturity between 14 and 33 years; 8 to 12 years for males
- ◆ Females lay 4,000 to 7,000 eggs per pound of fish
- ◆ Typical life-span is 55 years for males and 80-150 years for females

Habitat:

- ◆ Cold-water fish species found in shoal areas of large lakes and rivers
- ◆ Spawning occurs on clean, gravel shoals and stream rapids
- ◆ Known to spawn in the Moon River; may spawn in the Severn, Musquash, Go Home, and Seguin Rivers

Species at Risk
STEWARDS' GUIDE SERIES

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Lake Sturgeon on Your Property? *Here's What You Can Do:*

- ◆ **Follow regulations relating to the destruction or harmful alteration of fish habitat as outlined in the Federal Fisheries Act.**
- ◆ **See a Lake Sturgeon?** Submit your sighting to the Natural Heritage Information Centre at nhic.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/nhic/species/species_report.cfm. Photographs with specific locations or mapping coordinates are always helpful.
- ◆ **Contact the Ministry of Natural Resources** if you would like to participate in local spawning bed rehabilitation projects.
- ◆ **Learn More.** Check out the Species at Risk section on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources website at www.mnr.gov.on.ca.



Ontario's *Endangered Species Act*

Ontario's *Endangered Species Act, 2007* came into force on June 30, 2008, making Ontario a North American leader in the protection of species at risk and their habitats.

Compared to Ontario's previous Act, written in 1971, the new ESA 2007 provides:

- ◆ Science-based assessment of species' status
- ◆ Automatic protection of a species and its habitat once it's listed as endangered or threatened
- ◆ Broader protection for species at risk and their habitats
- ◆ Greater support for volunteer stewardship efforts of private landowners, resource users, and conservation organizations
- ◆ A commitment to recovery of species through recovery planning
- ◆ Greater accountability, including government reporting requirements

Ontario is home to more than 30,000 species, most of which have stable populations.

However, more than 180 species in Ontario, 34 of which are found in Parry Sound-Muskoka, are currently considered "at risk" because of threats like:

- ◆ Habitat loss
- ◆ Global changes in insect populations
- ◆ Pollution
- ◆ Invasive species
- ◆ Climate change
- ◆ Over-harvesting
- ◆ Road mortality



Learn more about Species at Risk on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources website at www.mnr.gov.on.ca.