

Response Statement - White Sturgeon, Lower Fraser River population

December 18, 2013

Common Name: White Sturgeon, Lower Fraser River population

Scientific Name: *Acipenser transmontanus*

Status assessment by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC): Threatened

How the Minister of the Environment intends to respond to the assessment: The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans will undertake consultations with the government of British Columbia, Aboriginal peoples, stakeholders, and the public on whether or not the White Sturgeon, Lower Fraser River population, should be added to the *List of Wildlife Species at Risk* (Schedule 1) under the *Species at Risk Act* as Threatened. The Minister of the Environment will forward the COSEWIC assessment of the White Sturgeon, Lower Fraser River population, to the Governor in Council upon completion of consultations.

Once a species has been assessed by COSEWIC, further steps must be undertaken before it is added to Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*. For more information on this process, please view [The Species Listing Process Under SARA](#).

Reason(s) for status designation provided by COSEWIC: This large-bodied fish occurs in a small area and number of locations in the lower Fraser River Valley. It has declined greatly in abundance over the last 100 years and, although adult abundances now appear to be stable or increasing slightly, habitat degradation continues and fish are subject to mortality from by-catch in commercial salmon fisheries as well as mortality associated with a growing catch-and-release recreational fishery.

Occurrence: British Columbia

Competent Minister(s):

Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

Province(s) and territory (territories) to be consulted:

British Columbia

Applicable federal legislation: Fisheries are managed and fish habitat is protected under the *Fisheries Act*.

Conservation activities underway: DFO and the Province of British Columbia, together with partners, have developed a SARA Recovery Strategy for White Sturgeon. Though Lower Fraser River White Sturgeon are not currently listed under SARA, the Recovery Strategy includes an appendix that includes information focused on recovery of the population, including identifying threats to the population, recovery objectives, and important habitats.