

**15. Review of Lower Columbia River Sturgeon Management Policy C-3001 (Briefing/Public Comment)**

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## Summary

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<b>Meeting dates:</b>	December 7, 2013
<b>Agenda item #15:</b>	Review of Lower Columbia River Sturgeon Management Policy C-3001 – (Briefing/Public Comment)
<b>Presenter(s):</b>	Cindy LeFleur, Region 5 Fish Program Manager (Fish Program) Brad James, Region 5 Sturgeon Manager (Fish Program)

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### **Background summary:**

The 2011-2013 Lower Columbia Sturgeon Management Policy (C-3001) states that given the uncertainty about the current state of the Columbia River white sturgeon population, the Commission is adopting a precautionary approach to management. Additionally, the policy requires an annual review for the Commission, as an essential component of this precautionary approach, to include updated information on:

- stock status;
- predation rates;
- review of in-season management actions;
- accounting of fish left unharvested;
- review of sturgeon harvest in areas outside of the lower Columbia River;
- by-catch in all fisheries;
- recommended management changes; and
- other pertinent information

Detailed information regarding stock status, predation, harvest, and by-catch is summarized in Attachment 1: “Lower Columbia River White Sturgeon – Stock Assessment and Fishery Management – 2013 Update”.

### Stock Status

The downward trend in abundance of the legal-size (38-54 inch fork length) segment of the population observed in recent years has stopped and has begun to increase with the 2013 estimate. Catch rates of sublegal-size fish in the recreational fishery have been stable over the past five years and have increased for the legal-size segment of the population over the past three years.

### Predation Rates

The number of Steller sea lions present in the area just below Bonneville Dam increased steadily through 2011, peaking at 89 animals before dropping to 73 animals in 2012, with 80 animals observed in 2013. Observed consumption of white sturgeon at Bonneville Dam during 2013 decreased by 75% from the 2012 level.

### In-season Management/Harvest

The Joint State Accord on Sturgeon Management for 2011-2013 was amended for 2012, reducing the harvest rate guideline from 22.5% to 16%. For 2013, the 16% rate was further reduced by 15%, resulting in a 13.6% rate. The number of fish available for harvest in 2013 totaled 9,817 legal-sized fish. Some modifications were made to sport fishery seasons to remain within the overall guideline.

Fishery	Guideline	Harvest	Difference
Sport	7,796	7,911	-115
Commercial	2,021	1,961	60
Total	9,817	9,872	-55

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Sturgeon harvest in areas outside of the lower Columbia River

In 2012, the most recent year of available data, harvest of white sturgeon in Washington coastal and Puget Sound recreational fisheries totaled 328 fish, 4.2% of the lower Columbia River recreational total for that year. This matched the preceding 10-year average percent. Recreational harvest in Oregon coastal rivers and estuaries has averaged 2.5% of the lower Columbia River amount during the past 10 years.

By-Catch

Commercial fisheries were monitored during the fall of 2012 and documented in a final WDFW report titled “2012 Fall Columbia River Commercial Fisheries Observation Study”. Information on sublegal, legal-size, and over-legal size white catch and green sturgeon catch is summarized in Attachment 1. Results were consistent with past observations.

Recommended Management Changes

Two permanent rules affecting recreational fisheries for white sturgeon were adopted in 2013. One reduced the annual limit for white sturgeon from five fish to two fish. The second rule prohibits retention of white sturgeon by anglers fishing the lower Columbia River below Bonneville Dam, the Washington coast, Puget Sound and their tributaries, starting January 1, 2014. Oregon adopted equivalent rules.

Lower Columbia River commercial seasons, including allowable harvest, are set through the Columbia River Compact process and implemented by emergency rule. This approach will be used to comply with Commission guidance on white sturgeon retention prohibitions in commercial fisheries starting January 1, 2014. A similar approach is expected for non-Indian commercial fisheries in coastal areas.

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**Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:**

The current policy, C-3001 (Attachment 2), was adopted for a 3-year time period and will expire December 31, 2013; therefore, a policy needs to be adopted to take effect in January 2014. Staff has provided a draft policy for consideration (Attachment 3) that includes very minimal changes to the current policy, with the exception of reorganizing the language to allow the policy to apply whether fisheries are open or closed to retention of sturgeon.

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**Public involvement process used and what you learned:**

Once finalized, staff will distribute copies of the “Lower Columbia River White Sturgeon – Stock Assessment and Fishery Management – 2013 Update” to the Columbia River Recreational and Commercial advisor groups.

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**Action requested:**

Briefing only.

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**Draft motion language:**

N/A

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**Justification for Commission action:**

N/A

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**Communications plan:**

N/A

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Attachment 1

# **Lower Columbia River White Sturgeon Stock Assessment and Fishery Management 2013 Update**

**Summary Prepared by**

**Joint Columbia River Management Staff  
*Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife*  
*Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife***

**November 18, 2013**

Table 1. Estimated and projected abundance of 38-54 inch FL white sturgeon in the lower Columbia River, 2008-2014.

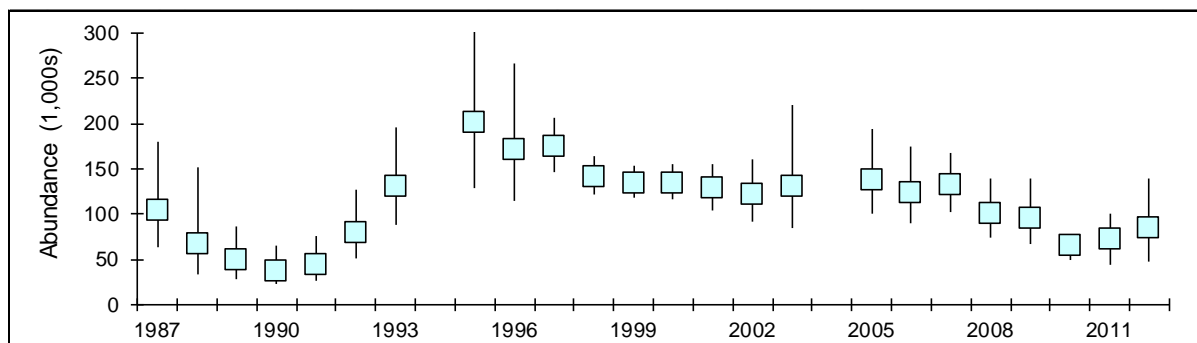
Year	Historic method estimate <sup>1</sup>	Setline method <sup>1</sup>		Harvest guideline
		Estimate	Projection	
2008	101,200	N/A	N/A	40,000
2009	95,000	N/A	N/A	40,000
2010	65,300	100,200	N/A	24,000
2011	72,800	80,500	77,000	17,000
2012	83,400	72,700	65,000	10,400
2013	--	114,200 <sup>2</sup>	74,300	10,105
2014	--	--	N/A <sup>3</sup>	--

<sup>1</sup> Historic method is the number of fish present at the start of July (2008-09) or May (2010-2012), while the setline method is the number of fish present at the start of the year.

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary.

<sup>3</sup> Projected abundance for 2014 was not available at the time this report was prepared.

Figure 1 and Table 2. Estimated abundance, using the historic method, of 38-54 inch FL (42-60 inch TL) white sturgeon in the lower Columbia River, 1987-2012.



Tag year <sup>1</sup>	Abundance by length interval				
	38-43 FL (42-48 TL)	43-54 FL (48-60 TL)	38-54 FL (42-60 TL)	Lower CI	Upper CI
1987	75,900	28,100	104,000	63,900	179,500
1988	34,400	33,700	68,100	32,600	152,000
1989	31,900	16,800	48,700	29,000	86,100
1990	25,800	12,000	37,800	22,900	65,700
1991	32,500	11,700	44,200	27,400	75,500
1992	70,400	8,700	79,100	51,500	127,400
1993	115,500	14,200	129,700	89,300	195,200
1994	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1995	143,200	59,000	202,200	129,000	319,400
1996	137,100	33,500	170,600	114,600	266,100
1997	146,600	27,700	174,300	147,200	205,800
1998	116,800	23,900	140,700	120,500	163,700
1999	116,800	17,700	134,500	117,800	153,100
2000	117,300	17,400	134,700	117,100	154,500
2001	102,200	25,300	127,500	103,500	156,000
2002	87,400	34,200	121,600	91,800	160,600
2003	85,000	46,200	131,200	84,400	219,600
2004	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2005	106,900	30,000	136,900	99,600	194,200
2006	88,100	35,300	123,400	89,500	174,300
2007	101,800	29,900	131,700	103,100	168,000
2008	69,800	31,400	101,200	74,100	140,100
2009	65,000	30,000	95,000	67,000	140,200
2010	39,100	26,200	65,300	55,000	77,900
2011	46,300	26,500	72,800	51,900	107,300
2012 <sup>2</sup>	52,600	30,800	83,400	54,700	137,000

<sup>1</sup> Tagging is conducted from May-June and/or July each year. Tag recover information is collected well into the following year, consequently, 2012 is the most recent "tag year" with enough information to estimate abundance using the historic method.

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary.

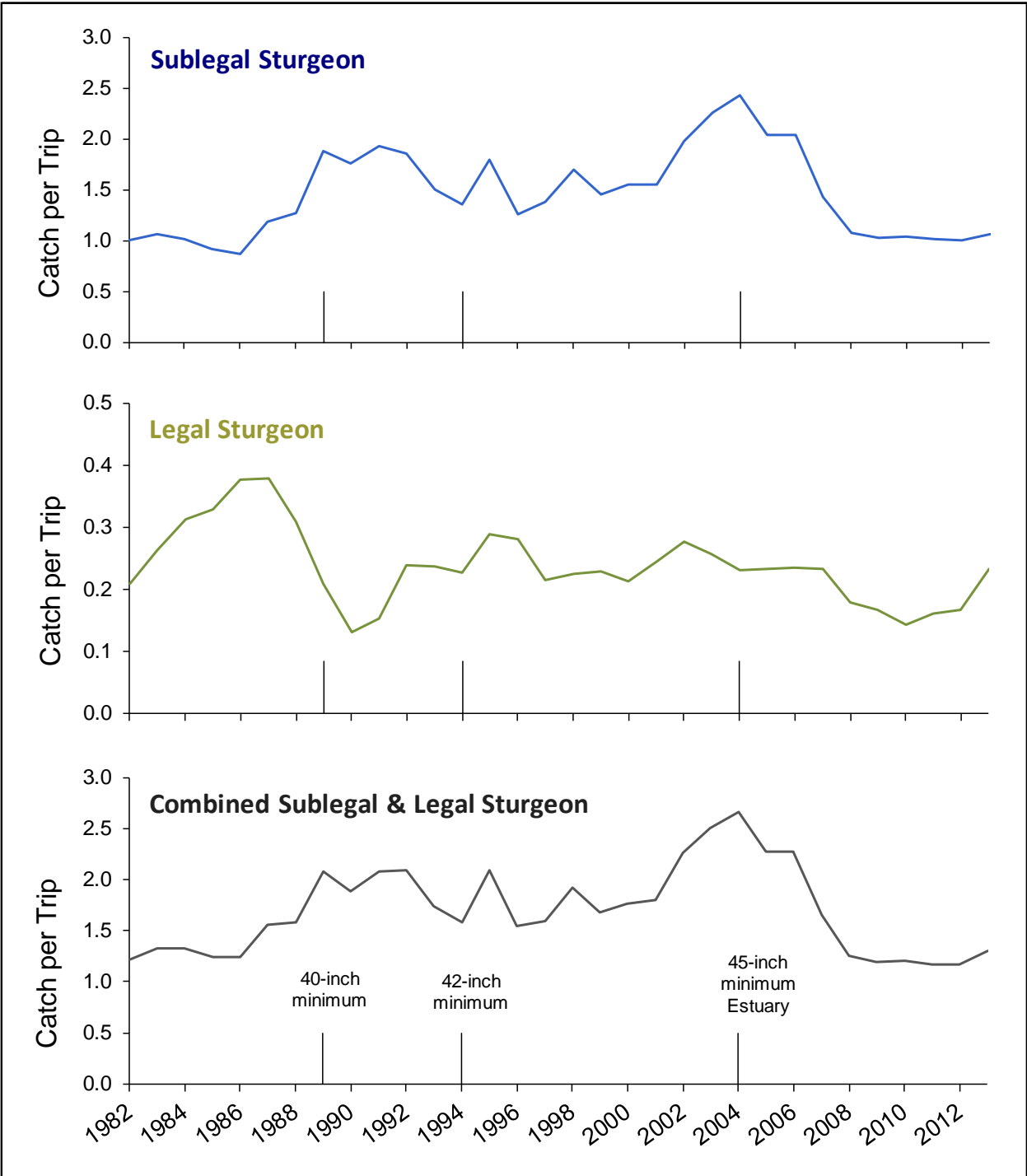
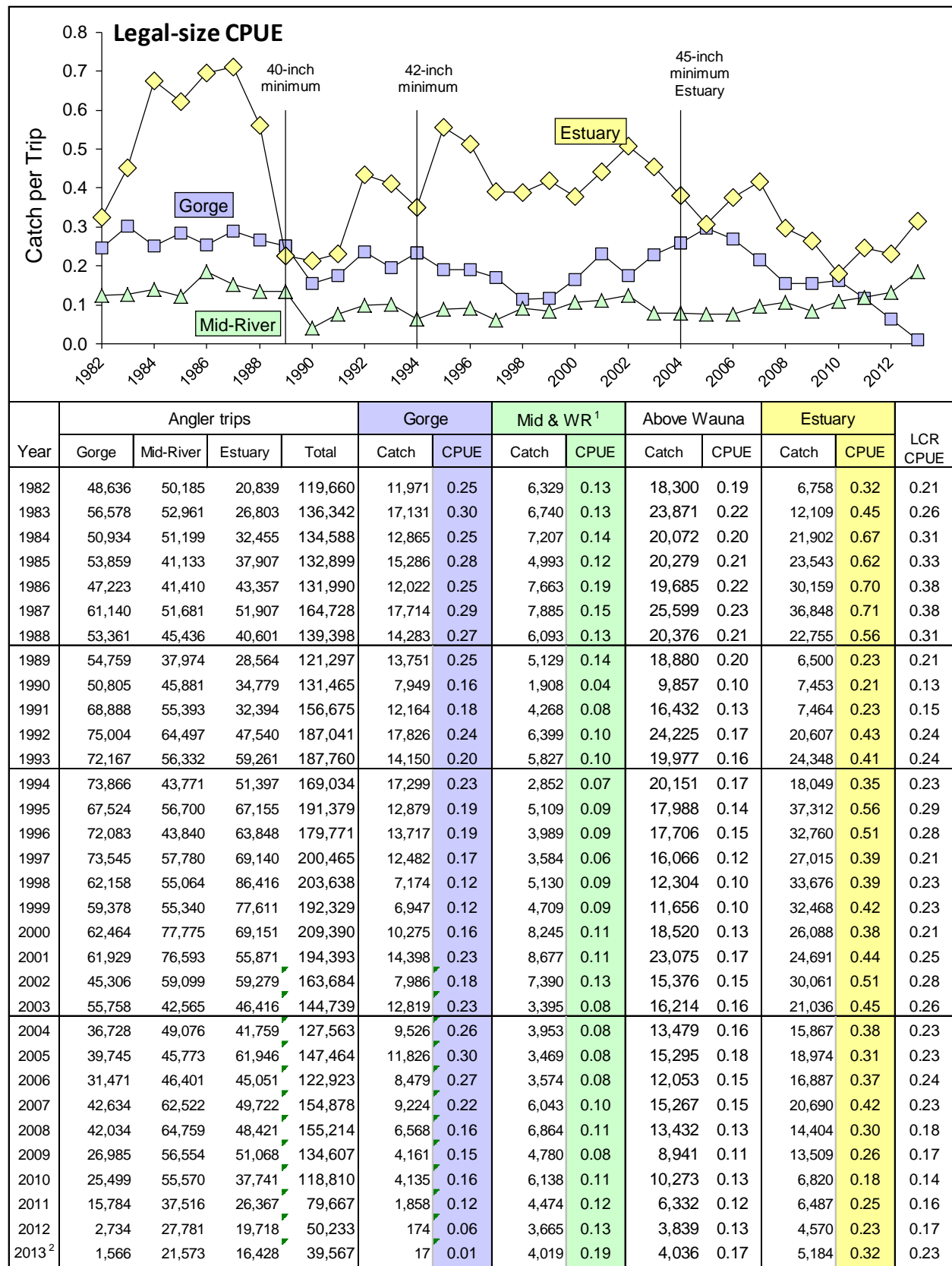


Figure 2. Catch rates of sublegal, legal-size, and combined sublegal and legal-size white sturgeon in lower Columbia River recreational fisheries, 1982-2013. Includes data from sampling the lower Willamette River recreational fishery for 2000-2013. Data for 2013 is considered preliminary.

Figure 3 and Table 3. Catch rates by area of legal-size white sturgeon in lower Columbia River recreational fisheries, 1982-2013.

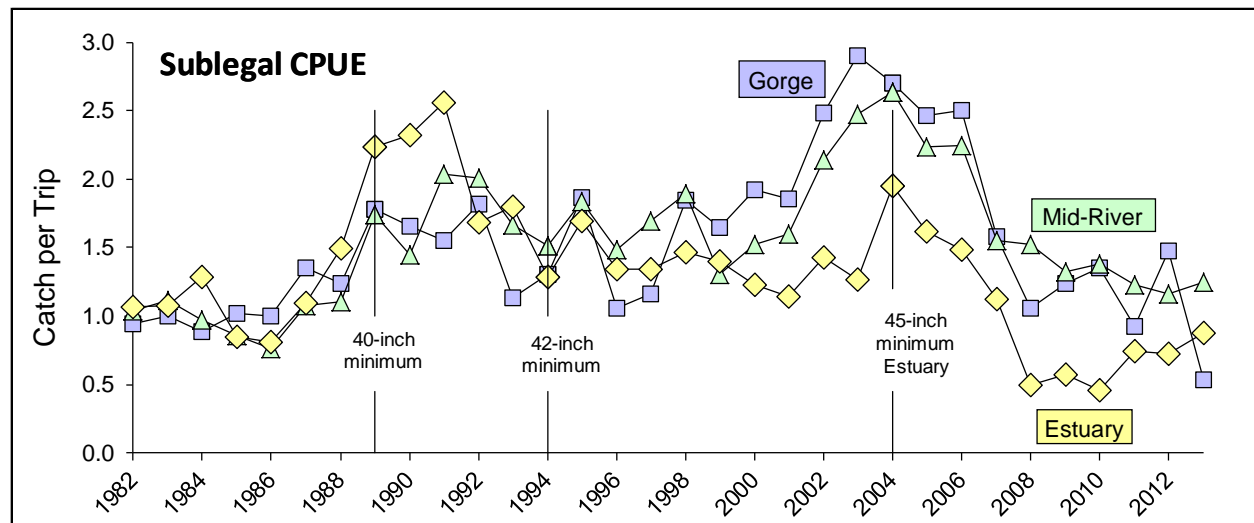


<sup>1</sup> Includes Willamette River sampling for 2000-2013.

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary.



Figure 4 and Table 4. Catch rates by area of sublegal white sturgeon in lower Columbia River recreational fisheries, 1982-2013.



Year	Angler trips				Gorge		Mid & WR <sup>1</sup>		Above Wauna		Estuary		LCR CPUE
	Gorge	Mid-River	Estuary	Total	Catch	CPUE	Catch	CPUE	Catch	CPUE	Catch	CPUE	
1982	48,636	50,185	20,839	119,660	46,008	0.95	52,038	1.04	98,046	0.99	22,305	1.07	1.01
1983	56,578	52,961	26,803	136,342	56,753	1.00	59,083	1.12	115,836	1.06	28,875	1.08	1.06
1984	50,934	51,199	32,455	134,588	45,388	0.89	49,788	0.97	95,176	0.93	41,772	1.29	1.02
1985	53,859	41,133	37,907	132,899	54,744	1.02	35,196	0.86	89,940	0.95	32,059	0.85	0.92
1986	47,223	41,410	43,357	131,990	47,456	1.00	31,497	0.76	78,953	0.89	35,004	0.81	0.86
1987	61,140	51,681	51,907	164,728	82,569	1.35	55,448	1.07	138,017	1.22	56,807	1.09	1.18
1988	53,361	45,436	40,601	139,398	66,161	1.24	50,160	1.10	116,321	1.18	60,610	1.49	1.27
1989	54,759	37,974	28,564	121,297	97,504	1.78	65,980	1.74	163,484	1.76	63,921	2.24	1.87
1990	50,805	45,881	34,779	131,465	83,991	1.65	66,212	1.44	150,203	1.55	80,903	2.33	1.76
1991	68,888	55,393	32,394	156,675	106,807	1.55	113,022	2.04	219,829	1.77	82,878	2.56	1.93
1992	75,004	64,497	47,540	187,041	136,558	1.82	129,229	2.00	265,787	1.91	80,094	1.68	1.85
1993	72,167	56,332	59,261	187,760	81,618	1.13	93,648	1.66	175,266	1.36	106,678	1.80	1.50
1994	73,866	43,771	51,397	169,034	96,256	1.30	66,076	1.51	162,332	1.38	65,998	1.28	1.35
1995	67,524	56,700	67,155	191,379	126,255	1.87	103,933	1.83	230,188	1.85	113,994	1.70	1.80
1996	72,083	43,840	63,848	179,771	76,031	1.05	65,184	1.49	141,215	1.22	85,534	1.34	1.26
1997	73,545	57,780	69,140	200,465	85,769	1.17	97,690	1.69	183,459	1.40	92,972	1.34	1.38
1998	62,158	55,064	86,416	203,638	114,905	1.85	104,270	1.89	219,175	1.87	126,935	1.47	1.70
1999	59,378	55,340	77,611	192,329	97,715	1.65	72,003	1.30	169,718	1.48	108,445	1.40	1.45
2000	62,464	77,775	69,151	209,390	120,078	1.92	118,766	1.53	238,844	1.70	84,948	1.23	1.55
2001	61,929	76,593	55,871	194,393	114,976	1.86	122,706	1.60	237,682	1.72	63,779	1.14	1.55
2002	45,306	59,099	59,279	163,684	112,625	2.49	126,693	2.14	239,318	2.29	84,772	1.43	1.98
2003	55,758	42,565	46,416	144,739	161,788	2.90	105,259	2.47	267,047	2.72	58,927	1.27	2.25
2004	36,728	49,076	41,759	127,563	99,179	2.70	129,158	2.63	228,337	2.66	81,439	1.95	2.43
2005	39,745	45,773	61,946	147,464	97,815	2.46	102,410	2.24	200,225	2.34	100,047	1.62	2.04
2006	31,471	46,401	45,051	122,923	78,852	2.51	104,328	2.25	183,180	2.35	67,112	1.49	2.04
2007	42,634	62,522	49,722	154,878	67,504	1.58	96,896	1.55	164,400	1.56	56,082	1.13	1.42
2008	42,034	64,759	48,421	155,214	44,632	1.06	98,474	1.52	143,106	1.34	24,184	0.50	1.08
2009	26,985	56,554	51,068	134,607	33,524	1.24	74,748	1.32	108,272	1.30	29,229	0.57	1.02
2010	25,499	40,486	37,741	103,726	34,547	1.35	56,048	1.38	90,595	1.37	17,236	0.46	1.04
2011	15,784	37,516	26,367	79,667	14,530	0.92	46,082	1.23	60,612	1.14	19,667	0.75	1.01
2012	2,734	27,781	19,718	50,233	4,046	1.48	32,275	1.16	36,321	1.19	14,244	0.72	1.01
2013 <sup>2</sup>	1,566	21,654	16,428	39,648	834	0.53	26,939	1.24	27,773	1.20	14,458	0.88	1.07

<sup>1</sup> Includes Willamette River sampling for 2000-2013.

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary.

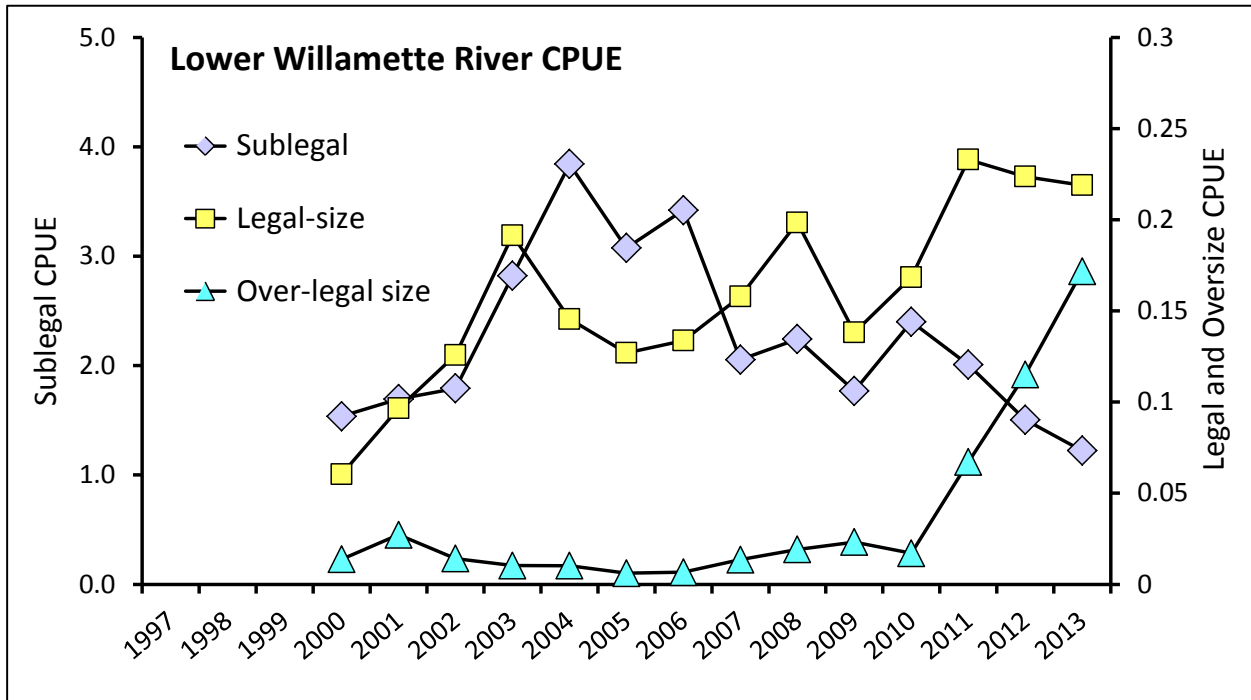


Figure 5. Catch rates of white sturgeon in the lower Willamette River recreational fishery, March-June 2000-2009, January-June and November 2010, February-March 2011, February 2012, and July and October 2013.

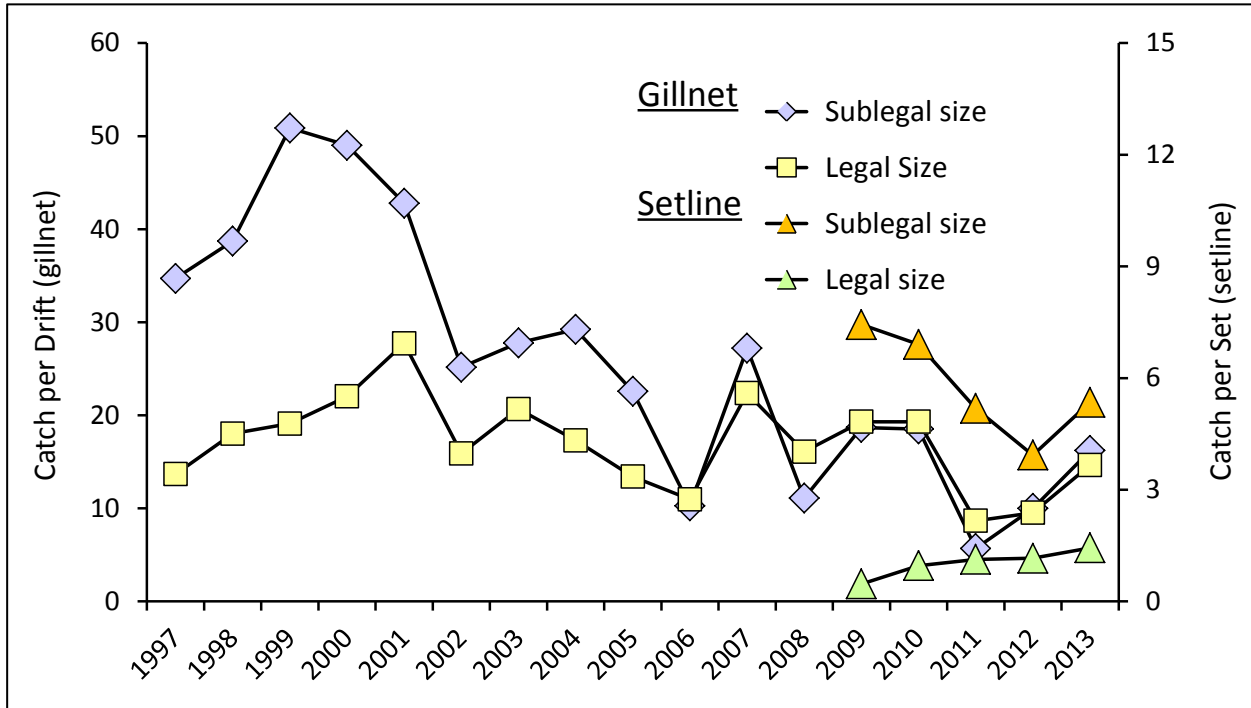


Figure 6. Catch per drift (gillnet) and catch per set (setline) of sublegal and legal-size white sturgeon during lower Columbia River sturgeon tagging and stock assessment projects, 1997-2013.

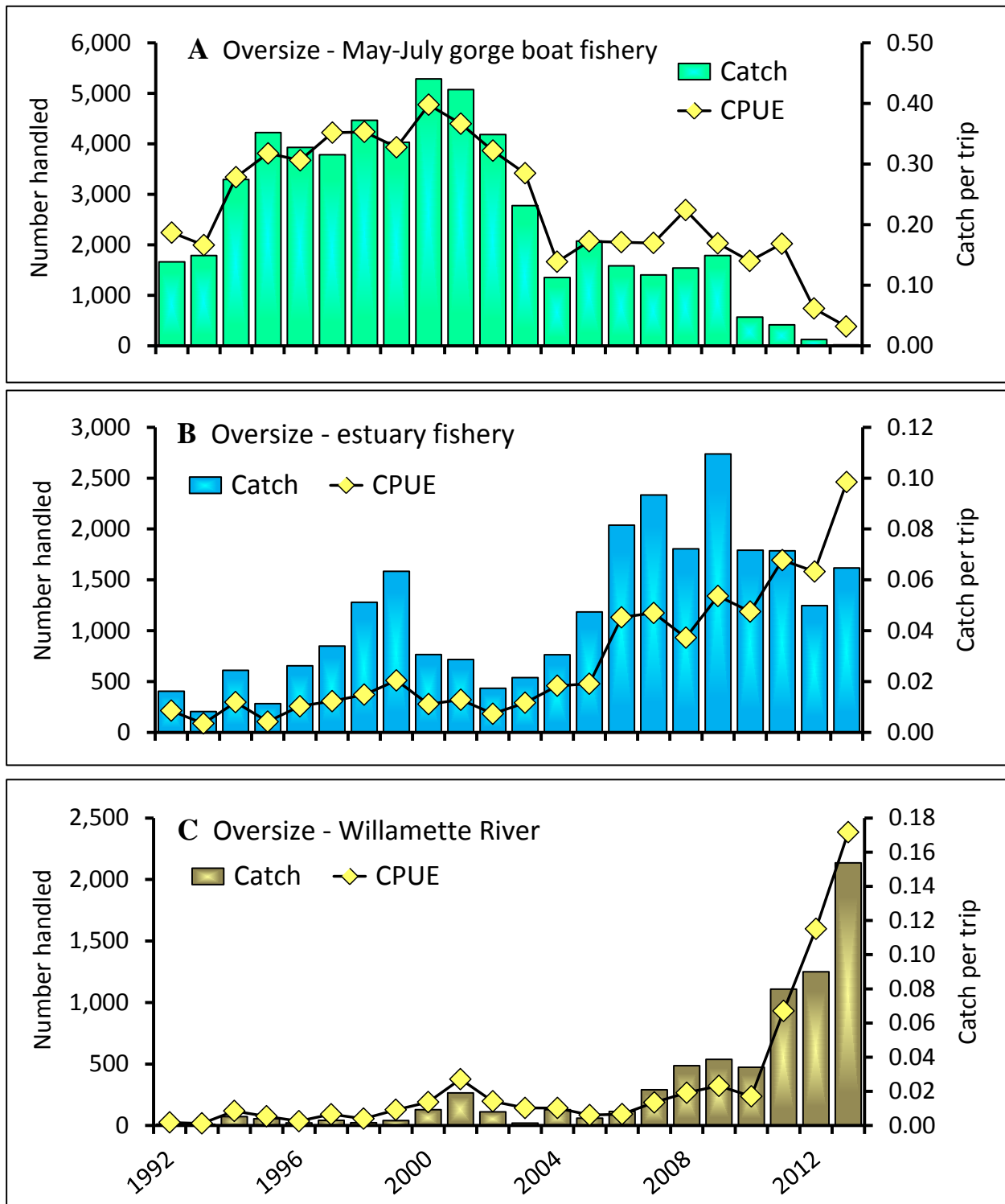


Figure 7. Catch and catch rates of oversize (>66" TL 1995-1996; >60" TL 1992-2008; >54" FL 2009-2013) white sturgeon in: (A) gorge boat fishery; (B) estuary fishery; and (C) Willamette River, 1992-2013. Note the difference in scale between the three charts.

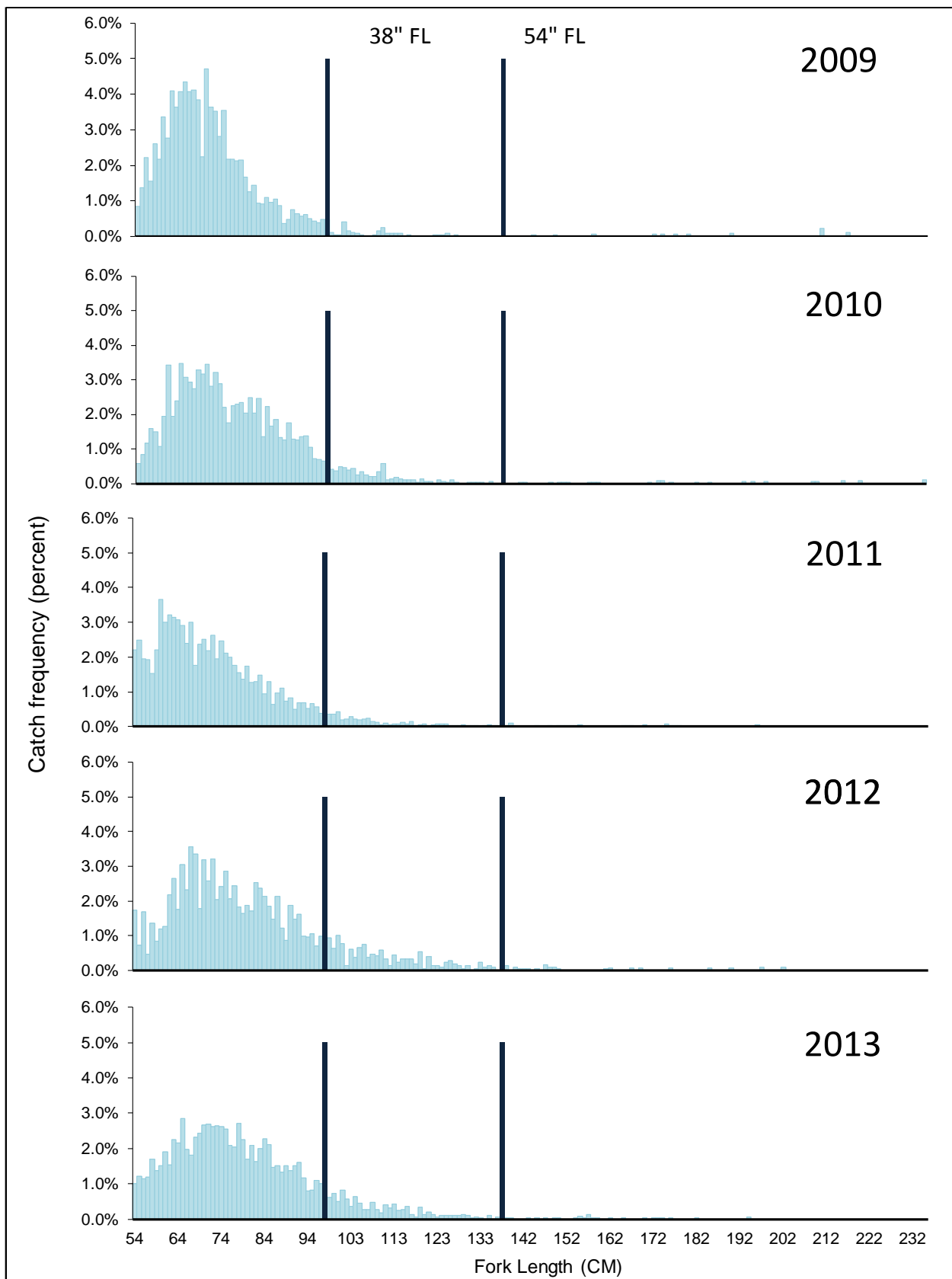
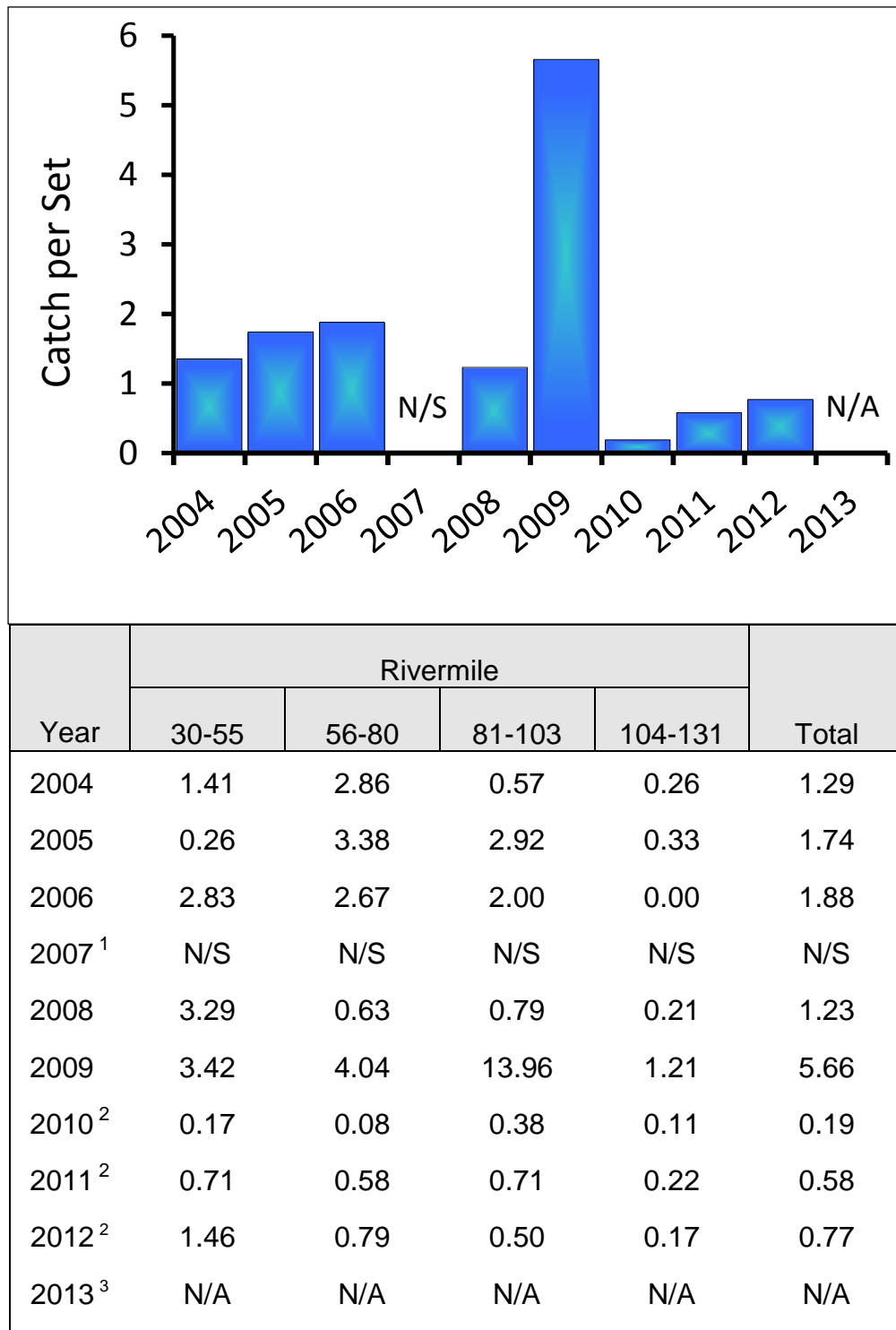


Figure 8. Frequency (percent) by 1 cm size intervals of white sturgeon captured in the lower Columbia River using research setlines, 2009-2013. Preliminary data for 2013.

Figure 9 and Table 5. Catch per set of Age-0 white sturgeon in the lower Columbia River, 2004-2012.



<sup>1</sup> Sampling for Age-0 white sturgeon was not conducted in 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary assessments based on length frequency examinations.

<sup>3</sup> The 2013 field sampling was ongoing at the time this report was prepared.

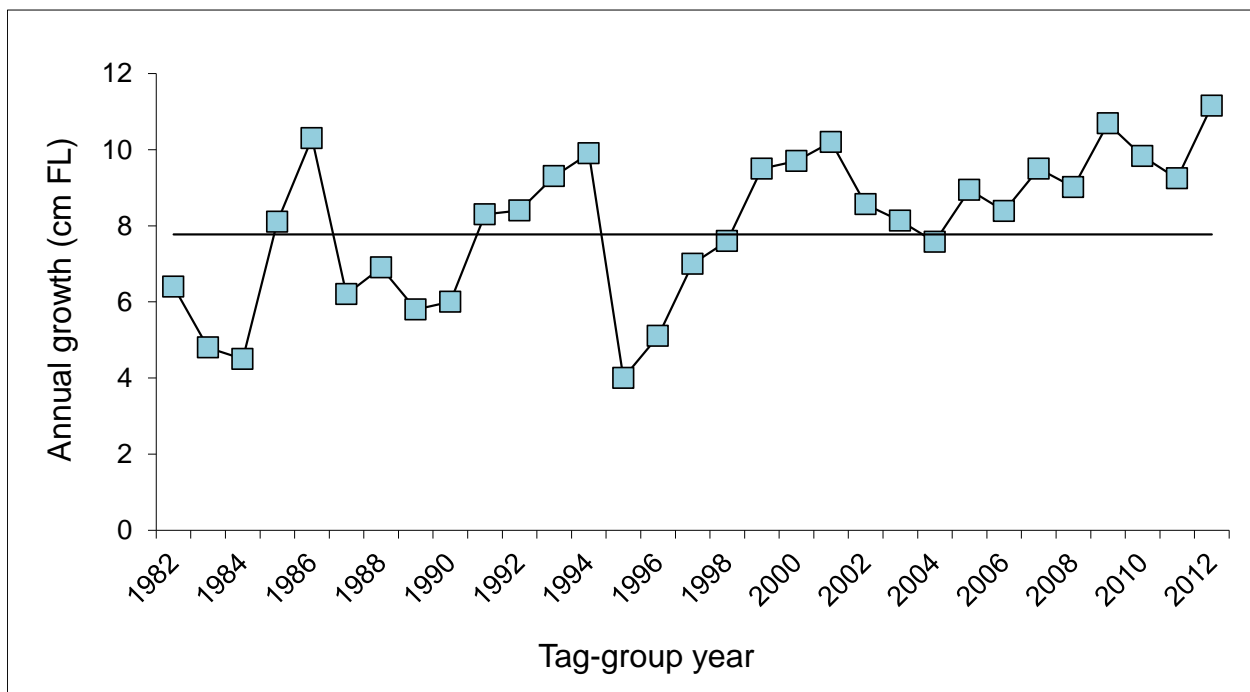


Figure 10. Annual growth rates of lower Columbia River white sturgeon tag groups at large at least one year, 1982-2012 (example: the 1982 data point is of fish tagged in May-June 1982 and re-measured from May-June 1983 through May-June 1984). The 2012 data point is preliminary and may change once data from fall 2013 through June 2014 is collected. The solid line is the average (mean) 1982-2012 growth rate.

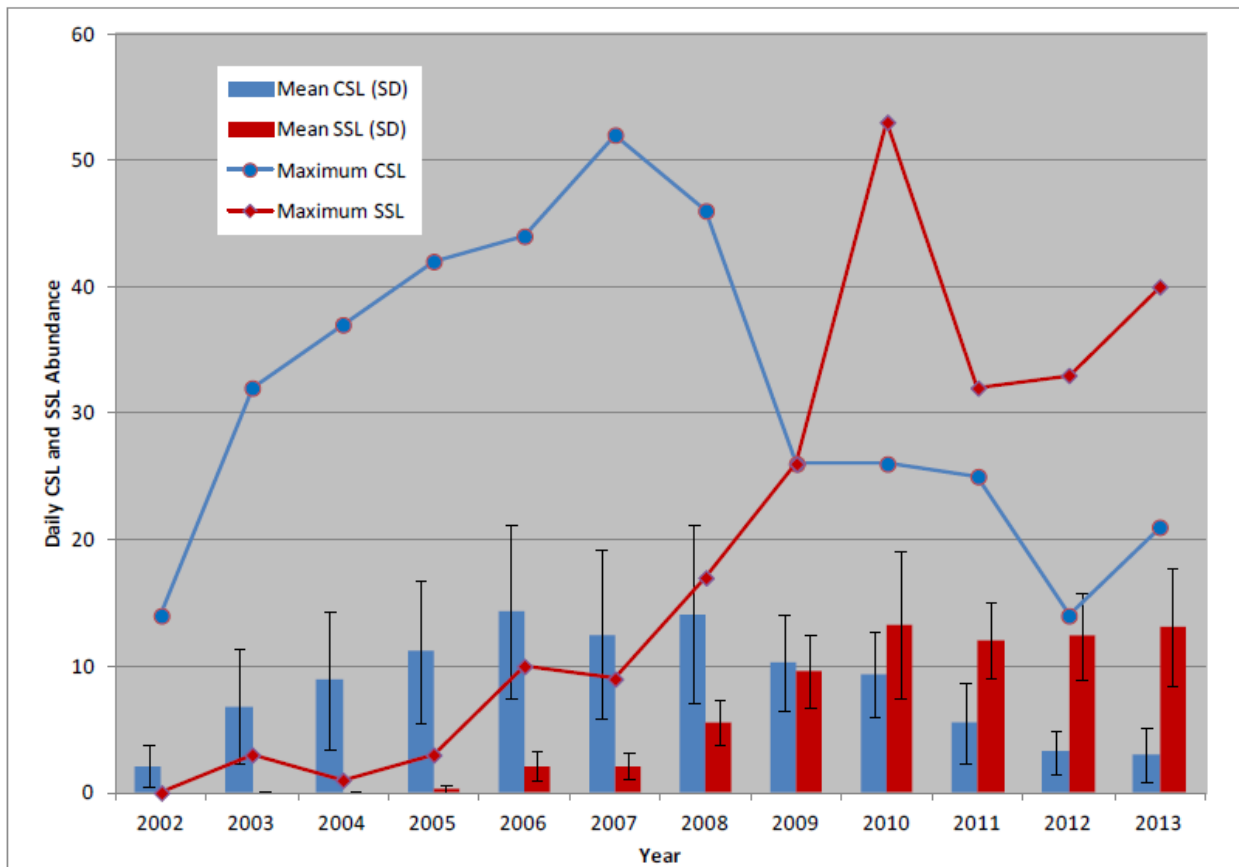


Figure 11. Mean (and SD) and maximum daily estimated number of California sea lions (CSL) and Steller sea lions (SSL) present at Bonneville Dam between January 1 and May 31, 2002 to 2013. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) data.

Table 6. Consumption of white sturgeon by CSL and SSL observed during USACE monitoring of the Bonneville Dam tailrace, 2005-2013. Adjusted estimates include a proportion of the total unidentified catch.

Year	Total hours observed	Observed sturgeon catch	Sturgeon catch per hour observed	Expanded sturgeon catch estimate	Adjusted sturgeon catch estimate
2005	1,108	1	0.001	--	--
2006	3,647	265	0.073	315	413
2007	4,433	360	0.081	467	664
2008	5,131	606	0.118	792	1,139
2009	3,455	758	0.219	1,241	1,710
2010	3,609	1,100	0.305	1,879	2,172
2011	3,315	1,353	0.408	2,178	3,003
2012	3,404	1,342	0.394	2,227	2,498
2013	3,247	314	0.097	552	635

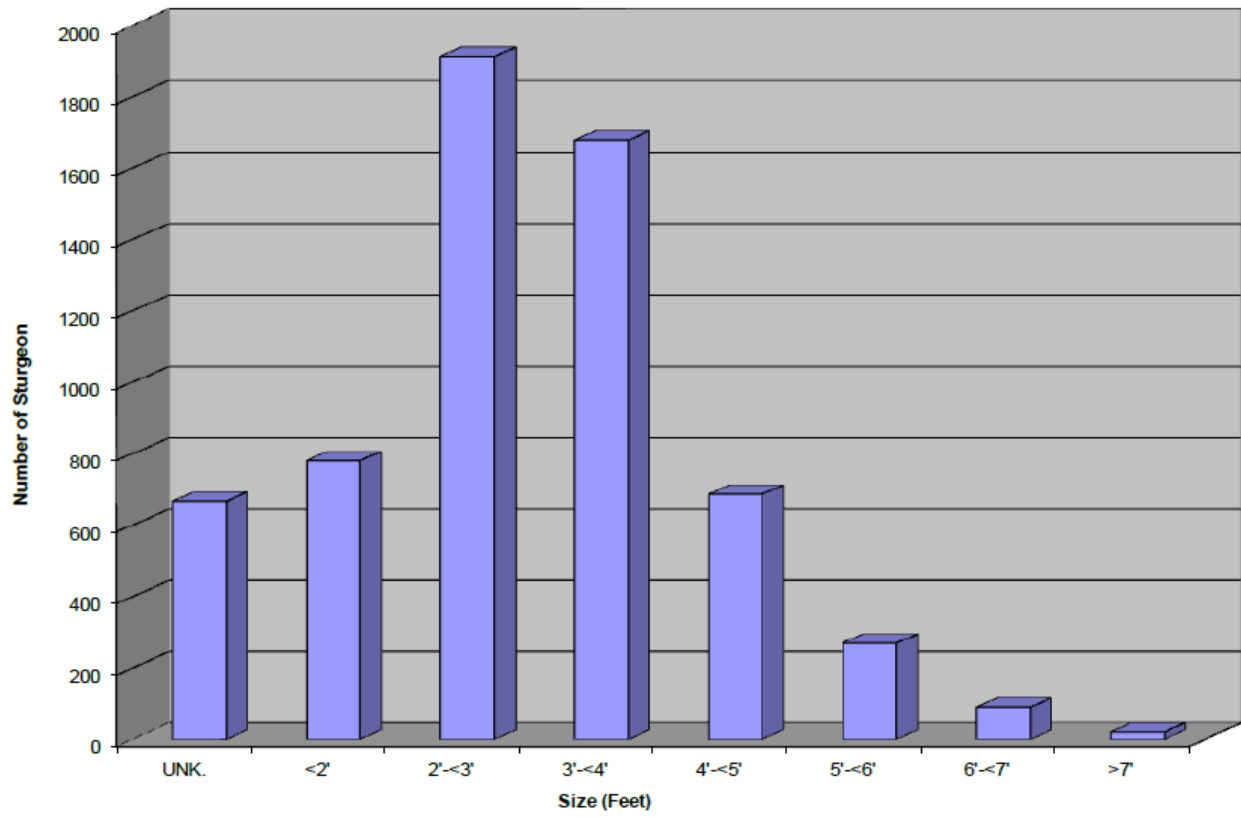


Figure 12. Estimate total lengths of white sturgeon consumed by Steller and California sea lions at Bonneville Dam from January 1 through May 31, 2006-2013. USACE data.



# Appendix

## Harvest and Monitoring Data

Appendix Table 1. Annual recreational catch of white sturgeon in the lower Columbia River and comparisons to catch guidelines, 1993-2013<sup>1</sup>.

Year	Below Wauna <sup>1</sup>		Above Wauna <sup>1</sup>		Combined		
	Catch	Guideline <sup>2</sup>	Catch	Guideline <sup>3</sup>	Catch	Guideline	Percent
1993	20,107	N/A	17,780	N/A	37,900	N/A	
1994	15,578	N/A	17,893	N/A	33,500	N/A	
1995	29,714	N/A	15,423	N/A	45,100	N/A	
1996	27,694	N/A	15,068	N/A	42,800	N/A	
1997	24,511	N/A	13,646	N/A	38,200	53,840	71%
1998	30,303	N/A	11,293	N/A	41,600	53,840	77%
1999	29,238	N/A	10,561	N/A	39,800	40,000	100%
2000	24,267	N/A	16,238	N/A	40,500	40,000	101%
2001	21,619	N/A	19,597	N/A	41,200	39,500	104%
2002	26,234	N/A	12,045	N/A	38,300	38,300	100%
2003	18,367	19,200	13,565	12,800	31,932	32,000	100%
2004	15,050	16,000	10,519	12,800	25,569	28,800	89%
2005	17,911	17,783	11,891	11,560	29,802	29,343	102%
2006	15,726	16,000	8,545	12,800	24,271	28,800	84%
2007	19,131	16,274	10,675	13,852	29,806	30,126	99%
2008	13,614	13,143	7,959	12,387	21,573	25,530	85%
2009	13,109	15,529	4,599	11,430	17,708	26,959	66%
2010	6,491	9,600	4,831	4,835	11,322	14,435	78%
2011	6,117	6,800	2,908	3,410	9,025	10,210	88%
2012	4,466	4,160	1,859	2,080	6,325	6,240	101%
2013	4,559	4,042	1,942	2,021	6,501	6,063	107%

<sup>1</sup> Recreational catch estimates for 1993-2002 are above and below the western tip of Puget Island (RM 38).

<sup>2</sup> The switch to a 45-inch min. (TL) size limit in 2004 required a 17% reduction in the base guideline.

<sup>3</sup> Actual in-season guidelines were different than represented here. Beginning in 2010, the guideline for the area above Wauna excludes the separate Willamette guideline.

Appendix Table 2. Annual recreational catch of white sturgeon in the lower Willamette River and comparisons to catch guidelines, 2003-2013.

Year	Estimated annual catch <sup>1</sup>	Baseline <sup>2</sup>	Catch in excess of baseline <sup>3</sup>	Guideline <sup>3</sup>	Percent of Guideline
2003	1,142	1,225	0	Na	
2004	4,099	1,225	2,874	Na	
2005	2,327	1,225	1,102	Na	
2006	3,348	1,225	2,123	Na	
2007	6,555	1,225	5,330	Na	
2008	9,148	1,225	7,923	Na	
2009	7,346	1,225	6,121	Na	
2010	3,529	735	2,794	2,865	98%
2011	2,690	520	2,170	2,030	107%
2012	1,535	520	1,015	1,248	81%
2013	1,410	520	890	1,213	73%

<sup>1</sup> Harvest estimates revised November 2011 based on updated punch card and existing creel information.

<sup>2</sup> Baseline harvest levels for the lower Willamette River were based on average harvest during 1986-1996 (1,225 fish). The lower Willamette River baseline was decreased to 735 fish in 2010 and 520 fish in 2011 consistent with reductions in the overall harvest guideline.

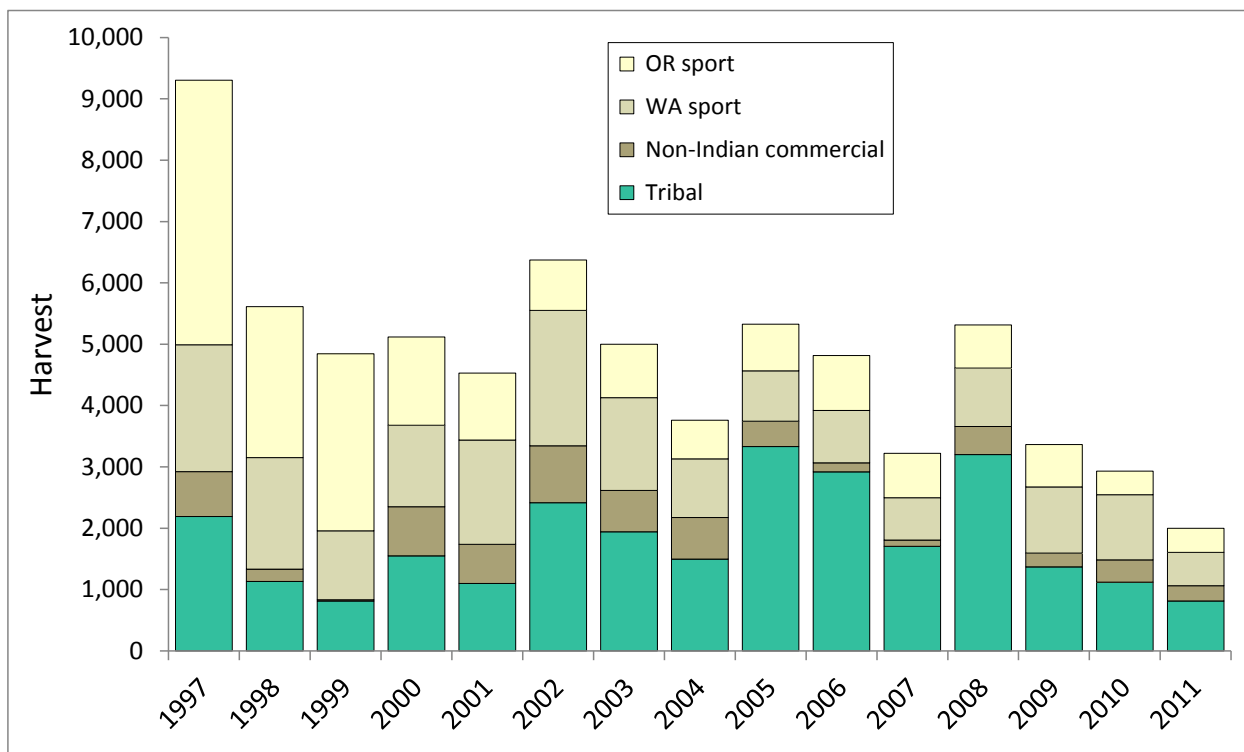
<sup>3</sup> During 2003-2009, harvest in excess of the baseline was applied to the above Wauna recreational harvest guideline. Beginning in 2010, a separate harvest guideline was established for the lower Willamette River.

Appendix Table 3. Commercial catch of white sturgeon in the lower Columbia River by season, annual commercial catch, and comparisons to catch guidelines, 1993-2013.

Year <sup>1</sup>	Mainstem							Select Area			Grand Total	Guide-line	%
	Winter Sturgeon <sup>2</sup>	Winter Salmon	Summer	Early August	Late August	Late Fall	Total	Spring/Summer	Fall	Total			
1993	990			0	0	7,010	8,000	30	20	50	8,050	6,000	134%
1994	2,990			0	0	3,380	6,370	30	0	30	6,400	6,000	107%
1995	0			0	0	5,980	5,980	110	70	180	6,160	8,000	77%
1996	800			0	330	6,580	7,710	580	110	690	8,400	8,000	105%
1997	2,710			1,740	140	7,790	12,380	350	100	450	12,830	13,460	95%
1998	2,680			2,540	90	8,060	13,370	360	170	530	13,900	13,460	103%
1999	1,780			2,770	60	4,180	8,790	520	190	710	9,500	10,000	95%
2000	2,260			2,490	300	5,130	10,180	540	160	690	10,870	10,000	109%
2001	3,060			4,720	1,020	0	8,800	490	20	510	9,310	9,100	102%
2002	2,720			1,340	380	4,200	8,640	650	330	980	9,620	9,800	98%
2003	1,490	27		2,170	410	3,430	7,527	250	170	420	7,947	8,000	99%
2004	1,696	174	9	1,550	917	3,219	7,565	184	117	301	7,866	8,000	98%
2005	473	70	1,369	1,129	965	3,793	7,799	279	74	353	8,152	8,200	99%
2006	288	1,651	544	1,548	363	3,492	7,886	317	109	426	8,312	8,000	104%
2007	1,424	47	414	2,646	91	2,734	7,356	257	148	405	7,761	7,850	99%
2008	869	17	523	2,706	103	3,170	7,388	337	134	471	7,859	7,927	99%
2009	1,697	21	624	2,213	756	2,001	7,312	311	114	425	7,737	8,000	97%
2010	518	28	289	1,578	297	1,348	4,058	211	116	327	4,385	4,800	91%
2011	50	125	504	967	353	1,187	3,186	201	0	201	3,387	3,400	100%
2012	40	14	281	592	410	344	1,681	225	0	225	1,906	2,080	92%
2013	15	267	340	0	693	319	1,634	235	92	327	1,961	2,021	97%

<sup>1</sup> Data since 2003 preliminary.

<sup>2</sup> Prior to 2003, values reflect all winter fisheries.



Appendix Figure 1. Estimated annual harvest of white sturgeon from Oregon coastal estuary and river recreational fisheries, Washington coastal estuary and river recreational and commercial fisheries, and from Puget Sound recreational fisheries, 1997-2011. Comparable data is unavailable for some 2012 and all 2013 fisheries.

Appendix Table 4. Onboard observations made during 2012 lower Columbia River non-Indian August and fall commercial gillnet fisheries. All catches equate to total encounters; due to vessel retention limits, a subset of legal-size white sturgeon was released.

			Sturgeon			
Date	Zones Observed	N Drifts Observed	Sublegal	Legal	Over Legal	Green
Aug. 5-6	1,2,5	17	27	29	6	0
Aug. 12-13	4,5	22	5	5	5	0
Aug. 14-15	4,5	23	6	14	0	0
Aug. 16-17	4,5	13	5	8	2	0
Aug. 19-20	4,5	21	5	2	3	0
Aug. 21-22	4,5	38	9	8	3	0
Aug. 23-24	4,5	46	20	5	4	0
Aug. 26-27	4,5	39	12	26	5	0
Aug. 28-29	4,5	42	6	4	5	0
Sept. 19-20	4,5	45	31	5	6	0
Sept. 23-24	4,5	18	23	6	1	0
Sept. 25-26	4,5	44	32	11	6	0
Sept. 27-28	4,5	14	9	1	0	0
Sept. 30- Oct. 1	5	6	7	3	4	0
Oct. 2-3	4,5	22	24	6	0	0
Oct. 4-5	5	5	2	0	0	0
Oct. 7-8	5	2	2	0	0	0
Oct. 9-10	NA	0	0	0	0	0
Oct. 10	1,3	15	7	0	0	0
Oct.11-12	5	4	6	0	2	0
Oct. 14-15	5	1	2	2	0	1
Oct. 16-17	NA	0	0	0	0	0
Oct. 18-19	NA	0	0	0	0	0
Oct. 21-22	NA	0	0	0	0	0
		<b>N Drifts</b>	<b>Sublegal</b>	<b>Legal</b>	<b>Over Legal</b>	<b>Green</b>
	<b>Total</b>	437	240	135	52	1

Appendix Table 5. Observations versus reported landings for 2012 lower Columbia River fall non-Indian commercial gillnet fisheries. Note that the legal sturgeon value displayed in this table only includes retained fish, whereas Appendix Table 4 includes retained plus released fish.

Date	Number Vessels Observed	Legal Sturgeon Observed	Number Comm. Deliveries	Number Sturgeon Landed	% Landings Observed
Aug. 5-6	4	8	139	585	1.4%
Aug. 12-13	6	5	34	17	29.4%
Aug. 14-15	5	14	38	29	13.8%
Aug. 16-17	3	8	46	47	4.3%
Aug. 19-20	5	2	77	48	4.2%
Aug. 21-22	7	8	72	42	9.5%
Aug. 23-24	7	5	96	40	7.5%
Aug. 26-27	7	26	100	98	11.2%
Aug. 28-29	7	4	115	88	4.5%
Sept. 19-20	7	5	119	70	4.3%
Sept. 23-24	4	6	96	44	13.6%
Sept. 25-26	8	11	65	57	19.3%
Sept. 27-28	4	1	92	151	0.0%
Sept. 30-Oct. 1	2	3	55	0	---
Oct. 2-3	4	6	41	0	---
Oct. 4-5	2	0	46	46	0.0%
Oct. 7-8	1	0	32	0	---
Oct. 9-10	0	0	12	0	---
Oct. 10	2	0	54	0	---
Oct.11-12	2	0	15	0	---
Oct. 14-15	1	2	17	0	---
Oct. 16-17	0	0	10	0	---
Oct. 18-19	0	0	7	0	---
Oct. 21-22	0	0	11	0	---
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>1,389</b>	<b>1,362</b>	<b>4.7%</b>

## FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION POLICY DECISION

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**POLICY TITLE: 2011-2013 Lower Columbia  
Sturgeon Management**

**POLICY NUMBER: C-3001**

Supersedes: 2010 Lower Columbia  
Sturgeon Management C-3001

Effective Date: January 1, 2011  
Termination Date: December 31, 2013

See Also: C-3608

Approved by: *Miranda Wecker*, CHAIR  
Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission, 01/21/2011

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for management of the Lower Columbia River white sturgeon population and fisheries.

### **Definition and Intent**

The Lower Columbia River white sturgeon population inhabits the waters of the Columbia River and tributaries downstream of Bonneville Dam and migrates into ocean and coastal estuaries. The intent of the policy is to provide consistent management guidelines that promote a healthy population.

### **General Policy Statement**

Manage the Lower Columbia River white sturgeon population with conservation and fishery management objectives that are consistent with a healthy population.

### **Policy Guidelines**

#### **Lower Columbia Sturgeon Conservation Objectives:**

- Provide recruitment and regulatory protection to increase the abundance of the spawning population.
- Manage with a precautionary approach due to uncertainties in population parameters.
- Manage for an annual combined sport and commercial harvest of white sturgeon to provide measurable population growth to achieve the goals of: (1) fully seeded habitats and (2) full representation of each age class within the population.
- Population Monitoring:
  - Continue young-of-the-year (YOY) sampling to track spawning success.
  - Evaluate legal-size abundance methodology to improve accuracy of estimates.
  - Continue to monitor sea lion predation for incorporation into stock status evaluations.

#### **Fishery Management Objectives:**

- Manage Lower Columbia River sturgeon fisheries through a three-year agreement with Oregon for 2011-2013.
- Maintain concurrent Washington and Oregon regulations in the Columbia River.

- Manage fisheries over the next three years in a manner that takes into consideration projected recruitment, with the objective of increasing abundance of the legal size segment, and increasing escapement into the spawning segment of the population. Management should be based on consideration of all mortality factors, including sea lion predation and both recreational and commercial fishery related mortalities.
- The harvest level for 2011-2013 fisheries will be reduced from the 2010 level to the extent that the reduction:
  - Addresses the downward trend in legal size abundance expected through 2011.
  - Accounts for increased predation by sea lions.
  - Addresses uncertainty in expected increased recruitment to legal-size in the near term (2012-2014).
  - Addresses expected low recruitment to legal-size beginning in 2015-2016.
  - Provides for fishery stability.
- Maintain the 80/20 sport/commercial harvest allocation.
- Maintain viable and diverse recreational and commercial fishing opportunities.
- Develop sport fishery regulations consistent with the following objectives:
  - Minimize emergency in-season action.
  - Balance catch between estuary and non-estuary fisheries and maintain a diverse array of sturgeon fishing opportunity.
  - Maintain fishery monitoring and management capabilities.
- Develop commercial fishery regulations consistent with the following objectives:
  - Optimize economic value (adjust to market needs).
  - Spread harvest opportunity throughout the year.
  - Minimize impacts to green sturgeon listed under the Endangered Species Act.
- Provide sufficient sturgeon spawning sanctuaries or other protection measures where and when appropriate.
- Conduct research, within available resources, to assess spawner and sublegal abundance and to quantify impacts of commercial and recreational fisheries on these abundances.
- Manage sturgeon harvests outside the mainstem lower Columbia River consistent with Lower Columbia River sturgeon conservation and management needs.
- Provide appropriate added protective measures to prevent further decline of green sturgeon.
- Limit incidental impacts on other species.

## **Annual Review**

Given the degree of uncertainty about the current state of the Columbia River white sturgeon, including the impact of population stress factors such as increased predation and decreased food base, the Commission is adopting a precautionary approach to management. The Director will provide an annual review for the Commission, as an essential component of this precautionary approach, to include updated information on:

- stock status;
- predation rates;
- review of in-season management actions;
- accounting of fish left unharvested;
- review of sturgeon harvest in areas outside the mainstem lower Columbia River;
- by-catch in all fisheries;
- recommended management changes; and
- other pertinent information.



## **Delegation of Authority**

The Commission delegates the authority to the Director to develop and negotiate a new three-year (2011-2013) Lower Columbia Sturgeon Management Accord that is consistent with these policies and objectives. Additionally, the Commission delegates the authority to the Director, through the Columbia River Compact, to set seasons for recreational and commercial fisheries in the Columbia River, and to adopt permanent and emergency regulations to implement these fisheries. The Director shall work with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to achieve implementation of this Commission action in a manner that results in concurrent regulations between the two states. The Director shall consult with the Commission Chair if it becomes necessary to deviate from the Commission's policy to achieve concurrent regulations with Oregon.



Attachment 3.

## FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION POLICY DECISION

**POLICY TITLE:** ~~2011-2013~~ Lower Columbia  
Sturgeon Management

**POLICY NUMBER:** C-3001

Supersedes: ~~2010-2011-2013~~ Lower Columbia  
Sturgeon Management C-3001

Effective Date: ~~January 1~~ March 1, 2014, ~~2014~~  
Termination Date: December 31,  
~~2013~~ 2018

See Also: C-3608

Approved by: *Miranda Wecker*, CHAIR  
Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission, 01/21/2011

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### Purpose

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### Definition and Intent

The Lower Columbia River white sturgeon population inhabits the waters of the Columbia River and tributaries downstream of Bonneville Dam and migrates into ocean and coastal estuaries. The intent of the policy is to provide consistent management guidelines that promote a healthy population.

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Manage the Lower Columbia River white sturgeon population with conservation and fishery management objectives that are consistent with a healthy population.

### Policy Guidelines

#### Lower Columbia Sturgeon Conservation Objectives:

- Provide recruitment and regulatory protection to increase the abundance of the spawning population.
- Manage with a precautionary approach due to uncertainties in population parameters.
- Manage for an annual combined sport and commercial harvest of white sturgeon to provide measurable population growth to achieve the goals of: (1) fully seeded habitats and (2) full representation of each age class within the population.
- Population Monitoring (within available resources):
  - Continue young-of-the-year (YOY) sampling to track spawning success.
  - Evaluate legal-size abundance methodology to improve accuracy of estimates.
  - Continue to monitor sea lion predation for incorporation into stock status evaluations.

#### Fishery Management Objectives:

- Provide sufficient sturgeon spawning sanctuaries or other protection measures where and when appropriate.
- Conduct research, within available resources, to assess spawner and sublegal

abundance and to quantify impacts of commercial and recreational fisheries on these segments of the population.

- Provide appropriate protective measures to prevent further decline of green sturgeon.
- Limit incidental impacts on other species.

### When Retention Fisheries are Allowed:

- Manage Lower Columbia River sturgeon fisheries through an ~~three-year~~ agreement with Oregon ~~for 2011-2013~~.
- Maintain concurrent Washington and Oregon regulations in the Columbia River.
- Manage fisheries ~~over the next three years~~ in a manner that takes into consideration projected recruitment, with the objective of increasing abundance of the legal size segment, and increasing escapement into the spawning segment of the population. Management should be based on consideration of all mortality factors, including sea lion predation and both recreational and commercial fishery related mortalities.
- ~~The harvest level for 2011-2013 fisheries will be reduced from the 2010 level to the extent that the reduction:~~
  - ~~Addresses the downward trend in legal size abundance expected through 2011.~~
  - ~~Accounts for increased predation by sea lions.~~
  - ~~Addresses uncertainty in expected increased recruitment to legal size in the near term (2012-2014).~~
  - ~~Addresses expected low recruitment to legal size beginning in 2015-2016.~~
  - ~~Provides for fishery stability.~~
- Maintain the 80/20 sport/commercial harvest allocation.
- Maintain viable and diverse recreational and commercial fishing opportunities.
- Develop sport fishery regulations consistent with the following objectives:
  - Minimize emergency in-season action.
  - Balance catch between estuary and non-estuary fisheries and maintain a diverse array of sturgeon fishing opportunity.
  - Maintain fishery monitoring and management capabilities.
- Develop commercial fishery regulations consistent with the following objectives:
  - Optimize economic value (adjust to market needs).
  - Spread harvest opportunity throughout the year.
  - Minimize impacts to green sturgeon listed under the Endangered Species Act.
- ~~Manage sturgeon harvests outside the mainstem lower Columbia River consistent with Lower Columbia River sturgeon conservation and management needs.~~

~~Provide sufficient sturgeon spawning sanctuaries or other protection measures where and when appropriate.~~

- ~~Conduct research, within available resources, to assess spawner and sublegal abundance and to quantify impacts of commercial and recreational fisheries on these abundances.~~
- ~~Manage sturgeon harvests outside the mainstem lower Columbia River consistent with Lower Columbia River sturgeon conservation and management needs.~~
- ~~Provide appropriate added protective measures to prevent further decline of green sturgeon.~~
- ~~Limit incidental impacts on other species.~~

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Given the degree of uncertainty about the current state of the lower Columbia River white sturgeon population, including the impact of population stress factors such as increased predation and decreased food base, the Commission is adopting a precautionary approach to management. The Director will provide an annual review for the Commission, as an essential component of this precautionary approach, to include updated information on:

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- other pertinent information.

### Delegation of Authority

The Commission delegates the authority to the Director to develop and negotiate ~~a new three-year (2011-2013)~~ Lower Columbia Sturgeon Management Accords with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife that ~~is-are~~ consistent with these policies and objectives. Additionally, the Commission delegates the authority to the Director, through the Columbia River Compact, to set seasons for recreational and commercial fisheries in the Columbia River, and to adopt permanent and emergency regulations to implement these fisheries. The Director shall work with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to achieve implementation of this Commission action in a manner that results in concurrent regulations between the two states. The Director shall consult with the Commission Chair if it becomes necessary to deviate from the Commission's policy to achieve concurrent regulations with Oregon.