FRASER RIVER STURGEON CONSERVATION SOCIETY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why do we still see very large White Sturgeon?

White Sturgeon are among the longest-lived freshwater fish in North America. Many adults alive today hatched decades ago under different environmental conditions.

Seeing a giant fish is exciting and encouraging—but it does not mean everything is ok or necessarily reflect how many young fish are entering the population today. There are still too few juvenile fish in the population to sustain or grown the

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Why has the ISAMR abundance estimate changed with the 2025?

The updated abundance estimate reflects the addition of another year of monitoring data and improvements to the model. This is a normal part of long-term scientific assessment. More information allows scientists to refine estimates and improve confidence in the results. It does **not** necessarily mean the population has suddenly increased.

Does this mean White Sturgeon are recovering?

Not yet.

While the updated estimate is slightly higher than earlier estimates, the overall long-term trend remains one of gradual decline. The model forecasts continued population decline if current levels of juveniles are still unchanged.

Why are juvenile White Sturgeon so important?

Healthy populations require new generations.

Scientists are particularly concerned that too few juvenile fish are surviving to replace today's adult population. Long-term recovery depends on improving juvenile numbers and overall survival.

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What factors may be affecting recovery?

Research suggests several factors may be contributing, including:

- Reduced food availability, particularly salmon and eulachon
- Loss or degradation of important habitats
- Climate-related changes to river conditions
- Capture, handling and bycatch impacts
- Other cumulative environmental pressures.

How do we know the model is accurate?

The abundance model is based on more than 25 years of monitoring and nearly 200,000 sturgeon sampling events.

Importantly, independent data collected through the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' Albion Test Fishery shows similar long-term trends, providing additional confidence in the findings.

Should people feel discouraged?

No.

The purpose of long-term monitoring is to understand what is happening so informed conservation decisions can be made.

The better we understand the challenges, the better equipped we are to address them.

What can people do?

- ✓ Everyone has a role to play.
- ✓ Support evidence-based conservation.
- ✓ Practice responsible angling.
- ✓ Protect river habitats.
- ✓ Support organizations conducting long-term monitoring and stewardship.
- ✓ Share accurate information.
- ✓ Recovery is possible—but it depends on sustained collaboration and commitment.