

Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative – Planning and Recovery

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White sturgeon in the Upper Columbia River basin have experienced recruitment failure since the late 1960's and are presently threatened with extinction. The timing of this problem coincides with the completion of three dams on the mainstem Upper Columbia River. Industrial contamination may also contribute to the problem. An international, intertribal, multi-agency Recovery Team of experts in white sturgeon biology was formed to develop a recovery plan and guide efforts to save this population. A larger, broader-based committee (Action Planning Group) was convened to assist the Recovery Team by acting as the public advocate for sturgeon recovery and developing a common vision for sturgeon recovery. Recovery actions are now well underway. Fish culture work has been initiated to prevent extirpation of the population in the short term. In addition, young, cultured sturgeon will provide research opportunities to understand why reproduction in the wild produces so few juveniles. Results of fish culture work and current research initiatives are discussed.