



Similarities and Differences Among New York's Sturgeon

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Description	Habitat	Reproduction	Feeding	Population Status/ Comments
Atlantic Sturgeon				
<p>6-10 ft. long (up to 14 ft)</p> <p>50-200 pounds (up to 800 lbs.)</p> <p>Olive green to blue-black on back and upper sides, white on belly</p>	<p>Young sturgeon spend the first 2-7 years in large freshwater streams</p> <p>Adult sturgeon spend the bulk of their lives at sea, returning to freshwater to spawn</p>	<p>Spawn April-June</p> <p>Anadromous; runs up freshwater river and streams to broadcast eggs upstream from the salt front. Males move into the river first</p> <p>Eggs are sticky and attach to stones and vegetation</p> <p>Females reach sexual maturity at 18-19 years old when they are 6-8 ft. and over 70 lbs. Males reach maturity at 12 years when they are 3.5-6.5 feet long.</p>	<p>Uses barbels to locate food</p> <p>Eat a variety of organisms including worms, amphipods, isopods, midge larvae, plants and small fishes</p>	<p>Largest of New York's sturgeon</p> <p>Lives up to 60+ years</p> <p>In New York found in the deepest portions of the Hudson River, occasionally found as far north as Albany</p> <p>Prior to 1900 were abundant in the Hudson River estuary especially south of Hyde Park</p> <p>So abundant, were nicknamed "Albany beef". Numbers are down considerably since then</p>
Lake Sturgeon				

<p>3-5 ft. long (up to 7 ft.)</p> <p>10-80 pounds (up to 300 lbs.)</p> <p>Adults are dull gray with scutes same color as body; with clear green on lower parts of body and head</p> <p>Angular and elongate snout; wide mouth</p> <p>Four barbels</p> <p>Bony plates absent along anal fin</p>	<p>Primarily found in freshwater lakes and large rivers. Prefers areas with clean sand, gravel, or rock bottoms.</p> <p>Can also occur in slightly brackish water.</p>	<p>Spawns in spring (May-June) in areas of clean, large rubble such as on windswept rocky shores of islands and in rapids in streams</p> <p>Prior to spawning, adult fish form groups in deep holes near the spawning site; fish sometimes seem leaping out of the water</p> <p>Eggs are scattered by currents and stock to logs and rocks</p> <p>Female lake sturgeon reach maturity at 14-23 years old; males mature at 8-19 years. Females only spawn every 4-6 years</p>	<p>Uses barbels to locate food</p> <p>Including: leaches, snails, clams, other invertebrates, small fish, and even algae</p>	<p>New York status: threatened. Lives up to 80-100 years old; one fish in Canada was 154 years old.</p> <p>In New York, lake sturgeon have been collected in the St. Lawrence River, Lake Ontario, Niagara River, Lake Erie, Lake Champlain, Cayuga Lake, Seneca and Cayuga canals, and the Grasse, Oswego & Oswegatchie rivers.</p> <p>Once abundant they were considered a trash fish; but as value for caviar, smoked meat, and isinglass became know the fishery exploded. In addition, pollution and construction of dams affected sturgeon and population numbers plummeted. Lake sturgeon are now protected</p>
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Shortnose Sturgeon

<p>Rarely exceed 3.5 feet and 14 pounds</p> <p>Olive yellow to gray or bluish on back; milky-white to dark yellow on belly</p> <p>Short, blunt, conical snout, large mouth</p> <p>Four barbels</p> <p>Bony plates absent along anal</p>	<p>Occurs in estuaries and large coastal rivers</p>	<p>Spawns April-May</p> <p>Semi-anadromous; migrates up the Hudson River from its mid-Hudson overwintering areas to scatter eggs in freshwater</p> <p>Spawns over rubble bottom with some gravel and large rocks; newly-hatched fry are poor swimmers and drift with the currents</p>	<p>Uses barbels to locate food. Eats sludge worms, aquatic insect larvae, plans, snails, shrimp and crayfish</p>	<p>New York status: endangered.</p> <p>Smallest of New York's sturgeon</p> <p>Lives up to 65+ years old in New York. It is found in the lower portion of the Hudson River from the southern tip of Manhattan upriver to the Federal Dam at Troy</p>
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fin		along the bottom Females first spawn at age 10, males at age 9. Females spawn every third year and males every other year	Protected by law Combination of factors is responsible for population declines; pollution, construction of dams, demands for sturgeon meat and caviar
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