



# Shortnose Sturgeon

*Acipenser brevirostrum*



## **Description:**

- ◆ olive-yellow to gray or bluish on the back
- ◆ milky white to dark yellow on the belly
- ◆ 5 rows of pale bony plates, called scutes
- ◆ (one on the back, two on the belly and one on each side)
- ◆ scutes are pale and contrast with background
- ◆ 4 barbels in front of its large underslung mouth
- ◆ short blunt conical snout

## **Size:**

- ◆ rarely exceeds 3.5 feet and 14 pounds

## **Range:**

- ◆ Atlantic seaboard in North America, from the St. John's River in New Brunswick to the St. John River in Florida

## **Facts:**

- ◆ listed as endangered, it is unlawful to kill or possess this fish
- ◆ long lived, like most sturgeon
- ◆ males spawn every other year, females spawn every third year
- ◆ semi anadromous (migrates from salt water to spawn in fresh water)
- ◆ eat sludge worms, insect larvae, plants, snails, shrimp and crayfish
- ◆ use barbels to locate food

## **SHORTNOSE STURGEON CATCH TOTALS**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>
2004	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1</b>

\*shortnose sturgeon were only caught during the years shown



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Historically, the Delaware Estuary has been an important habitat for two species of sturgeon: the shortnose sturgeon, and its cousin, the Atlantic sturgeon. Atlantic sturgeon primarily live in the ocean, and migrate through the estuary to spawn in freshwater. Shortnose sturgeon spend most of their time in the brackish water of the estuary, moving upstream to fresher water to spawn.

Over the duration of the Delaware River seine survey, only one sturgeon has ever been caught. In August 2004, a shortnose sturgeon was caught during a haul at the Oldman's Point station just down river from the Commodore Barry Bridge. The young-of-year sturgeon measured only 4.6-inches. With improving water quality and fishing regulations sturgeon populations may continue to grow in the Delaware River and possibly one day return to the population sizes of a century ago.

For the third year, the NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife deployed 19 acoustic receivers in Delaware Bay to track migration patterns of Atlantic sturgeon. Those fishing inshore waters may encounter white buoys marking the receivers which are set at water depths generally less than 20 feet. Buoys are labeled "NJDEP Research" and should be avoided. For more information on the research and buoy location, see [www.njfishandwildlife.com/news/2013/sturgeon\\_research13.htm](http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/news/2013/sturgeon_research13.htm)

The Shortnose sturgeon was listed as endangered on March 11, 1967 under the Endangered Species Preservation Act of 1966 and the Atlantic sturgeon was listed on April 6, 2012. Both of these Endangered listings remain in effect today. For more information, please refer to this website: [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2012/01/31\\_atlantic\\_sturgeon.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2012/01/31_atlantic_sturgeon.html)

For more information about the Endangered listing of Atlantic sturgeon, please view this article in the 2013 Marine Issue of the Fish and Wildlife Digest: <http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/pdf/2013/digmar6-11.pdf>

**For more information about sturgeon, please check out this article:**

Profile: Delaware River Sturgeon

<http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/pdf/2005/digmar16-27.pdf>