

External Sturgeon Take SOPs

You must follow the RPMs and T&Cs in your Biological Opinion for every take of a live or dead sturgeon. Within 24 hours of the take, you must send information and photos to nmfs.gar.incidental-take@noaa.gov. Follow the steps below and return live sturgeon to the water ASAP. Do not complete any step that is not required by the RPMs and T&Cs of your BiOp.

STURGEON PRESUMED ALIVE BUT UNRESPONSIVE

Resuscitate the sturgeon if it is alive and unresponsive. Follow procedures for "LIVE" once it is responsive or, if the fish is unresponsive after 30 minutes of resuscitation, follow procedures for "DEAD".

LIVE STURGEON

DEAD STURGEON

Check for any tags, including PIT tags, and record tag numbers.

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PIT tag sturgeon if none present and if authorized by the BiOp.

Measure and photograph sturgeon.

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Obtain fin clip sample.

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UNKNOWN

Do the BiOp T&Cs require a necropsy?

YES

NO

If authorized by the BiOp T&Cs, administer anesthesia and surgically implant internal tags.

Refrigerate sturgeon or put sturgeon on ice (do NOT freeze). Coordinate with Section 7 contact. Within 3 days, NMFS Section 7 contact will confirm whether a necropsy is required and, if yes, will send you (the Action Agency) the contact information for the pathology lab.

Refrigerate sturgeon or put sturgeon on ice (do NOT freeze). Then, follow the Necropsy Plan in the BiOp.

Freeze sturgeon for possible salvage. Within 7 days, NMFS Section 7 contact will: advise you to properly dispose of the carcass; OR notify you that a Salvage Network member will contact you for transport of the carcass or parts at their expense.

Ensure the sturgeon is responsive and return it to the water as described in the BiOp.

Within 24 hours of the take:

- Send Take Report Form and photos to nmfs.gar.incidental-take@noaa.gov (one form per fish). See Section 7 website for form: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/consultations/section-7-take-reporting-programmatics>
- Send PIT tag #, date, location, and length to mike_mangold@fws.gov.
- Store fin clips until designated time to send to USGS (see BiOp T&Cs for details).

Properly dispose of carcass if you do not receive a reply from the NMFS Section 7 contact within 3 days for refrigerated/iced carcasses or within 7 days for frozen carcasses.

SEA TURTLE TAKE PROCEDURES

Action Agency should refer to BiOp and always follow the RPMs and T&Cs. If BiOp does not include one of these steps, then you are not covered under the BiOp to perform that step. Skip that step and move onto the next step. See BiOp for specific instructions.

