

Shortnose Sturgeon Working Group Discussion
February 10, 2011
NMFS Sturgeon Workshop; Alexandria, VA

Summary of General Discussion:

Outreach

- no federal outreach, only SCUTES
- do states have programs? Outreach via signs, aquaria etc.?
- any other programs that NMFS could tag on to? Salmon is a potential;
- brochures/bookmarks, etc.?
- could we expand SCUTES to other areas?

-people seem to be interested in sturgeon, regardless of the species—intrigued by size, age, ancient lineage, etc.

-signs/visual aids

-sturgeon is the symbol of the Hudson lately on roadsides/over creeks, etc., getting information, signage, promotional materials into local aquariums and zoos, Audubon on the Merrimack or wherever potential exists—can draw attention to whole health of the system in question

-media:

-social media such as facebook, twitter, youtube video footage—live videos of sturgeon from researchers may be intriguing to people; perhaps soliciting researchers or videographers to capture this type of visual data may serve as a good outreach tool; NMFS has a youtube channel that could potentially be used

-media hype—newspapers, coverage by local media, etc....a lot of coverage has occurred in Maine and Delaware—people recognize sturgeon through these outlets; make coverage proactive rather than reactive

-education outreach

-SCUTES could be expanded and potentially Section 6 funding could be used to expand program?; provide outreach people from NMFS who concentrate on outreach/help train regional educators so that they feel comfortable teaching sturgeon biology, etc. to students

Overall, it's important to provide context of why sturgeon are being conserved and why attention is being brought to them—this could drive outreach programs

--consulting firms, riverkeepers, NGO's to be involved, TNC, Hydropower organizations

Data Collection and Tissue Sampling

Questions:

- are people comfortable with a database?
- are people concerned with confidentiality, etc? is a bigger govt database valuable?
- comfortable with tracking genetic info?
- who owns the tissue data, etc?
- tissue preservatives?

-so many databases that people enter data over and over again

-a need for centralized/standardized databases and protocols/access to other's databases and data conversion abilities

- problems arise if researchers use other researchers data before it has been analyzed, etc. (e.g. collecting tag data, requesting tissue samples before original researcher has received information back from the tissue archive
- for tissue samples—could information and disclosures be sent out with permits so that everyone is on the same page as far as how the data is handled and how it is disseminated—this may also allow various researchers to be able to discuss who owns what, etc.
- need to expand upon some of the established protocols to make things more clear
- tissue preservation: ethanol is easy to get, but training on different methods isn't very available, or very good at present; look into shipping; look into flexibility of sturgeon tissues and compatibility of alternative preservatives.

Research Questions:

No specific research questions were identified in this discussion

Action Items:

-Look into the options for alternative preservatives (besides EtOH) and the flexibility of sturgeon tissues to determine easiest/safest/most effective shipping methods