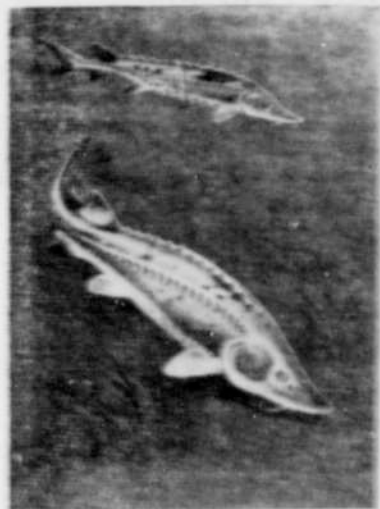


THE LAKE STURGEON



Lake Sturgeon
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Adapted from an article by
John Van Oosten

The lake sturgeon is the giant of our fresh-water fishes. Of the seven species of sturgeon found in North America, this one, which ranges up to 310 pounds and attains a length of over eight feet is considered to be the most seriously endangered. In the Great Lakes, it has suffered the greatest depletion of any one of the once-abundant varieties of sturgeon that are found in the United States.

The Great Lakes Sturgeon, like all other sturgeons, is a primitive fish. It has retained the cartilaginous skeleton of its ancestors. It is easily recognized by its elongated, cylindrical body covered partly by five longitudinal rows of heavy, bony shields (many disappear with age) and by the numerous, inconspicuous, spiny scales. The snout is conical and flattened on the top. Beneath it are four fleshy barbels that are used to locate food on the bottom. Behind them is a protrusible, thick-lipped mouth adapted for sucking up bottom materials from which mollusks, crayfish, insect larvae, worms and other food items are strained. The upper lobe of the tail like that of a shark, is much longer than the lower.

The oldest lake sturgeon on record reached the age of 152 years when it was caught in 1953 in Lake of the Woods. It measured 6 feet, 9 inches and weighed 215 pounds. It is astounding to reflect that this individual was hatched in 1801 and managed to escape the fishermen and its enemies until 1953. In 1943, a fish which was in all probability even older than this, weighing 310 pounds and measuring 7 feet, 11 inches, was taken from Lake Michigan.

The lake sturgeon may reach sexual maturity when about 22 years old (males may attain it earlier). Spawning usually takes place in May and June, either in the larger rivers or in the shallow water of the lakes. A large female may produce 300,000 eggs or more in one season.

Although once considered a nuisance in the commercial nets, the Great Lakes sturgeon is now the highest priced fresh-water fish on the market, bringing the fishermen about \$1.25 per pound. Current profits, however, are inconsequential because of the small annual production. The recent average yearly take of United States and Canadian fishermen from all of the Great Lakes amounted to only 40,820 pounds, of which the former produced 14,250 pounds and the latter 26,670 pounds. In earlier years (1879-1890) the combined yield averaged 6,358,300 pounds. Ever since the early nineties this total production gradually declined until the fishery virtually disappeared, the catch having been reduced some 99.4 per cent.

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This tremendous reduction took place in every one of the Great Lakes.

A telling factor in the decline of the Great Lakes sturgeon was the deliberate efforts of the commercial fishermen to wipe out the species, not only because it had no market value in those early years, but primarily because the monsters ripped and tore the nets every time they got into them. Later, when a market developed for caviar and smoked sturgeon, the fishermen constructed special gear to take greater quantities of these expensive fishes, both mature and unfortunately, immature individuals. Spawners and the young were not given proper protection until it was too late to be very effective. Even then, illegal fishing was so extensive that protective measures were of little avail. Early and very destructive over-fishing and man-made changes in the sturgeon's environment became important decimating factors. Among the latter pollution, dredging and damming of those rivers used for spawning were the most serious.

No one can say with assurance that the sturgeon populations of the Great Lakes can be brought back to normal, even if complete protection is provided by law. It is a well-known biological fact that when a population is reduced beyond a certain threshold it is virtually impossible to restore. The lake sturgeon seems to have reached this point, at least in some of the Great Lakes.

The near extirpation of the species prior to 1930, and the fact that it requires some 20 years, more or less, to attain adulthood makes it obvious that a significant increase in population would require more than two decades, even if a big survival of the progeny was obtained every year. However, the normal survival of fishes in nature is very small, and the female sturgeon does not spawn every year.

The restoration of the Great Lakes sturgeon is a difficult if not hopeless task. Drastic action is required. Year-round protection on both sides of the international boundary and heavy stocking of fish beyond the fry stage in suitable water seems to be the only methods by which it can be rescued from complete extermination. Sporadic fish-cultural efforts of the past have not been too successful, and the species has never been reared beyond the fry stage. Research is needed to overcome these obstacles.

The National Wildlife Federation centered attention on the plight of the Great Lakes sturgeon and other endangered animals during National Wildlife Week last March. This is a part of its continuing educational program to protect wildlife and other natural resources. For further information on endangered animals and the Federation's conservation activities, write to the National Wildlife Federation offices at 232 Carroll Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

School Meeting Is Monday Night

MIST—Mr. and Mrs. Sam Devine were in Hillsboro Friday evening where they attended a dance recital in which their granddaughter appeared.

The annual school meeting will be Monday from 2 till 4 p.m. for the election of one director for four years and one for five years.

Mrs. Nellie Eastman was here from Forest Grove on business recently.

Mrs. George Mathews has recently been a patient in the hospital in Hillsboro.

Mr. and Mrs. Clark Fenton from Castle Rock, Washington came Sunday to attend the pioneer meeting at Birkenfeld. He returned home, but Mrs. Fenton remained for a visit with friends.

Try your skill at gift first, and then in gold.

—John Ray

S.S. Account Data Available

Possibly you've wondered recently how your social security account stood. You may have noticed that the social security number on your income tax withholding slip was wrong. Or maybe a friend or neighbor has just qualified for social security benefits and a discussion with him has started you to wondering about your own social security record.

You're entitled to ask for a report from the Social Security administration telling you how much has been reported to your number. Wes Sherman, field representative of the Social Security administration's Portland office has a word of caution, however. He states that such a report will not show last year's earnings until after July 1 at the earliest.

Because of the size of the record-keeping job, Sherman commented that the posting of wages will always be from six to nine months behind the actual earnings of those wages. The Social Security administration suggests that you check on your account every three or four years, and to make this checking easy, will supply you with a post card form for this purpose.

If you want one of these post card forms, a letter to the Social Security administration, or a phone call will bring you one. But remember, your 1956 earnings will not be posted in full until after July 1.

New Granddaughter Is Visited by Mrs. Wolff

NATAL - PITTSBURG —Mrs. W. R. Wolff motored to Adams last Friday to spend the week end with her son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Turner and family and to make the acquaintance of the new granddaughter, Susan Beth. En route home Sunday, Mrs. Wolff was a dinner guest of Mrs. Lenora Frick of Hood River.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Lindsay and children of Redmond were visitors for a few days last week at the Robert Lindsay home.

DeeVeere Hershey motored to Portland last Saturday.

V. J. Short of Los Angeles is a guest for a few days at the Robert Lindsay home.

SKILL

Skill and confidence are an unconquered army.

—Herbert

He hath wisdom at will that brags not of his skill.

—Wodroephe

YESTERDAYS

FIVE YEARS AGO

From The Eagle, June 5, 1952
The high school board named Eugene Dove for principal of the high school to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Warner Empey.

A report on the recent sale of poppies by the American Legion auxiliary showed a total of \$110.60 taken in.

Girls chosen to attend Girls State at Salem June 9 to 15 were Faye Millis, sponsored by the American Legion auxiliary; Mildred Thacker, Rebekah lodge and Ora Mae Smith, V.F.W. auxiliary and F. L. Girls.

TEN YEARS AGO

From The Eagle, June 5, 1947
The city council passed an ordinance Monday night prohibiting both the sale and use of fireworks within the city limits.

Vernonia was without a fire chief due to the resignation of Cleve Robertson. Mayor George Johnson was authorized by the council to interview applicants for the job.

Vernonia was without power from 7:32 a.m. Tuesday until 6 a.m. Wednesday due to a break in the main transmission line from Bonneville between St. Johns and St. Helens.

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO

From The Eagle, June 4, 1942
Classes in chemical warfare were announced by J. W. Nichols, local civilian defense head, to be held Monday of each week from June 8 through 29 at the Washington school.

Sugar regulations which became effective May 20 specified one pound of sugar for four quarts of fruit and an additional pound of sugar for each member of a family for jam.



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Coyotes and Bear Are Trapped by Robert Berg

BIRKENFELD — Robert Berg has been doing some trapping. He has caught two coyotes and a bear.

Ronnie Nordstrom came home from college Saturday. He will remain home for a few days then go to Vancouver, Washington to work for the Bonneville administration on field construction.

Anna Hanberg went with Mrs. Ed Meier, Donald and Glenn to attend the wedding of Tommy Wage of Jewell at Seaside last week.

Mr. and Mrs. John Goodwin and four children of Portland visited with the Robert Bergs Sunday. They also attended the pioneer meeting.

Mrs. Winifred Hult and two daughters of Horton, Oregon came in to attend the pioneer meeting. Roger Berg, son of Mr. and Mrs. Russell Berg was also here from Eugene where he has been attending college. He will now go to his home at Fortuna, California.

The next regular square dance will be on Friday, June 14, at Vic Berg's barn.

Lawrence Jepson is under treatment for a strip throat but is not hospitalized.

Charles Thomas Taking Jet Mechanic Training

Charles A. Thomas Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Thomas, enlisted in the air force May 9 and was sent to Lackland Air Base near San Antonio, Texas for basic training which he completed June 5. He was then sent to Chinook Air Base, Illinois for jet mechanic training.

Friends will remember Charles as the boy who was hospitalized for so long with spinal injuries after a fall from a tree while picking cones in 1955.

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