

Site Assigned: \_\_\_\_\_

Rover: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_

### WELCOME TO STURGEON CAMP

As a volunteer sturgeon guard on the Wolf River, We're sure you will find your stay a unique experience. For those making a return visit, you already know there is no predicting what the weather or fish activity will be. Be assured your contribution is highly appreciated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Sturgeon For Tomorrow and especially the Lake Sturgeon.

As you would expect an operation this size requires a great deal of organization to run smoothly. There are just a few camp rules that we ask you to follow. These rules are to make your time at sturgeon camp as comfortable as possible.

- Food and lodging are provided to you free of charge
- The evening meal is served for the night shift guards going to their assignments and for the guards returning to camp after their day shift is over from approx. 5:30-8:00 p.m.
- There will be a breakfast prepared and will be served for the guards going out for the day shift and also for guards that are returning from their night shift assignments.
- Everyone needs to clean up after themselves.
- When you are preparing your sack lunches please take all that you will eat but we don't want to see food wasted. Because of the cost of running the camp we want to be as efficient as we can. Your assistance will make it possible to accomplish this.
- The rock pile assignments are made by the Sturgeon Camp Coordinator and the Warden Rovers. We will try to accommodate your requests for rock pile assignments but we need to prioritize the active rock piles. While you may have a favorite place to go there could be a new spot that you haven't been that'll be just as great if not better.

### AT THE SPAWNING SITES

- Your Shift is scheduled from 7 to 7. During the day and night spawning sites will vary in activity. Depending on the priority of the sites that are active, replacement guards may not be sent to your site. If replacement guards do not arrive, please do not remain at the site after 7. You're invited back to camp after your shift for a warm meal.
- Be sure that you know where you can park your vehicles. The site maps have a diagram showing the site, road directions and on some sites where you should park. If you don't know if you can drive somewhere please park and walk.
- The majority of the sites are on private lands. We are their guests. We want you to enjoy your stay at the site but ask that you remain as low key as possible. Setting up camping equipment, loud music, cooking, dogs, etc. are all things that we ask that you refrain from doing at the sites.
- Due to the high fire danger during the spring there are NO FIRES unless specifically authorized by the property owner.
- Please pick up your litter and any other litter that you find. Let's leave the sites clean.
- You are at the site to be visible to everyone that may be at the site. You should wear your Sturgeon Guard hat.
- You are there to watch for any illegal activity. Your presence at the site is normally enough to deter any illegal activities from occurring.
- Please DO NOT INTERVENE with someone committing these acts. The best thing that you can do is be an observer and gather as much information as possible. This information will be relayed to a Conservation Warden for follow-up. The Violation Hotline # is 1-800-847-9367. The DNR Call Center Information # is 1-888-936-7463.
- At active spawning sites Fisheries Staff may be netting sturgeon to measure, determine gender, ripeness of the females and placement of ID tags in the fish. At the public access sites this will draw large crowds.
- You will likely be asked many questions by the public if you're at one of the public property sites. Information is included on the back side of this sheet. If you are comfortable with answering their questions please use this information and thank you for providing this service.
- Due to the danger to the public in descending the banks of the river we ask that no person descend down by the river. Repeated journeys up and down the riprap also cause the rocks to be pushed into the river.
- The fish are there to be seen but not touched. While we encourage people to come and watch the sturgeon, you may be asked if touching the fish is allowed. We can not allow the fish to be handled by the public in any way and that includes touching.
- We have never had a physical encounter between a guard and the public. If you find that you feel threatened please leave the site and contact the Warden Rover at the cellphone # listed. A Conservation Warden will respond to the scene.
- Please record information about the sturgeon activity at the spawning site. We'll record this information for future reference.
- If you do not see fish DO NOT leave the site unless reassigned. The fish will move onto and off of the rocks during the spawn. They could likely return at anytime depending on water temperature and females present.
- One of our primary goals is for you to see spawning fish and enjoy your time as a Guard. If your site is no longer active we will try to move you to another site so you can see active spawning. This may mean there will multiple teams of guards at one site but we want you all to enjoy your time out on the river.

We hope that you will enjoy watching the sturgeon. This is the only place in the world that this can be so easily seen. The Department of Natural Resources, the citizens of Wisconsin and the Lake Sturgeon thank you for your assistance.

Hope to see you next year!!!

Your Wisconsin Conservation Warden and Fisheries Management Staff

## Lake Sturgeon - Life Cycle

Lake Sturgeon migrate to their annual spawning grounds between late March and early May, preferring to spawn in shallow, rocky areas along river banks. Sturgeon **spawning is dependent on water temperature and flow**. During seasons when water temperatures rise slowly spawning begins when water temperature approach 50 degrees F or less. In contrast, during seasons of rapid water temperature rise, spawning does not begin until water temperatures reach 58-59 degrees F or more.

Males arrive at the spawning sites ahead of the females, cruising in groups of eight or more, often so close to the surface that their tails, backs, or snouts are out of the water. **Spawning** begins as soon as a ripe (sexually ready) female arrives at the site. The males swim alongside the female, usually against the current, vigorously thrashing their tails as they release milt (sperm) while the female drops her eggs. The fertilized eggs, each about one-eighth inch in diameter, are sticky and cling to rocks and other solid materials in the water until they hatch. There is considerable variation in the number of eggs produced by the females for each of their spawning years ranging from 50,000 to 700,000 eggs depending on size.

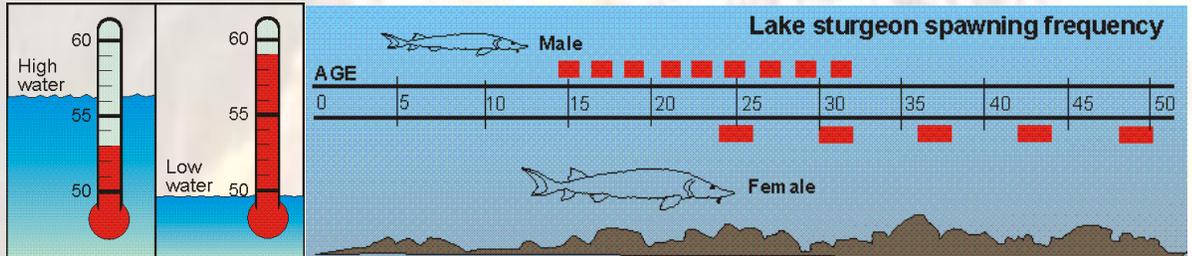
The eggs hatch in about 10 days, depending on the water temperature. In 12 to 14 days, the fry (newly hatched fish) are one inch long and have fully developed mouths and barbels.

**Spawning frequency** - A female Sturgeon reaches sexual maturity when she is 21 to 34 years old or 48 to 63 inches long, and will spawn once every 3 to 5 years thereafter. Males mature at age 14 to 29 years, when they are 38 to 56 inches long. Most males spawn every other year, while some do so every year.

Lake Sturgeon grow larger and live longer than any other fish in Wisconsin. Females typically live longer than males and make up most of the very large fish in the population. Lake sturgeon in the Winnebago System can live in excess of 100 years.

At first, Lake Sturgeon grow more rapidly in length than in weight, but this trend is reversed as the fish ages. Growth depends on several factors, including water temperature and available food.

Age (years)	Length (inches)
1	8.5
5	26
10	35
20	47
50	65
75	74
100	80



## Lake Sturgeon - Habits and Habitat

Although they have no teeth, Lake Sturgeon can eat hard items such as large clams and crayfish, but generally prefer to feed on **small organisms** such as snails, insect larvae, leeches, small clams, and other invertebrates. To locate these delectable creatures, the lake Sturgeon typically linger at the bottom of lakes with extensive areas of shallow water (less than 30 feet) and in river pools, foraging where food is abundant.

When it is searching for food, a lake Sturgeon will drag its barbels lightly over the bottom. As soon as these sensitive feelers touch food, the fish protrudes its **tubular mouth** and sucks up the food along with silt, gravel, and other bottom materials. The debris is expelled through the gills and the food items remain.

Lake Sturgeon have the curious but spectacular habit of leaping completely out of the water until they appear to be standing on their tails, then landing with a resounding splash. Fish experts theorize that the Sturgeon may be trying to communicate, exchange gas in or out of their swim bladder, or shake off **lampreys**; most adult Sturgeon have one or more old lamprey scars and it is not uncommon to see six or more lampreys attached to one fish. The Sea Lamprey is not present in the Winnebago System. Naturally occurring lampreys include Silver and Chestnut and do not harm the Lake Sturgeon.

