

# COULD ENDANGERED ATLANTIC STURGEON MAKE A COMEBACK IN OUR CONNECTICUT WATERS?



Atlantic sturgeon captured in the Connecticut River, circa 1940s.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Atlantic sturgeon are large, ancient fish that were once common in Long Island Sound and even spawned east of Hammonasset Beach State Park in the Connecticut River. But unsustainable fishing, pollution and habitat loss decimated the population dramatically and ended the iconic spawning runs more than 100 years ago. Now, however, due to strict protections and research, there are signs that sturgeon may become more abundant again and rediscover their historic spawning grounds. You can help by carefully releasing accidentally caught sturgeon and reporting any sightings to CT DEEP!



## WHAT YOU SHOULD DO WHEN ACCIDENTALLY CATCHING A STURGEON

- If possible keep the fish in the water
- Remove or cut the hook
- Support the belly of the fish until it swims away
- Report the sighting to DEEP by phone at 860.434.6043 or online by scanning the code or visiting: [arcg.is/11GfCr1](https://arcg.is/11GfCr1)



SCAN CODE TO REPORT A SIGHTING

## HOPES FOR RE-ESTABLISHING SPAWNING POPULATION

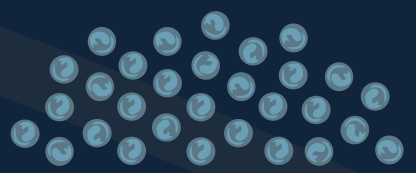
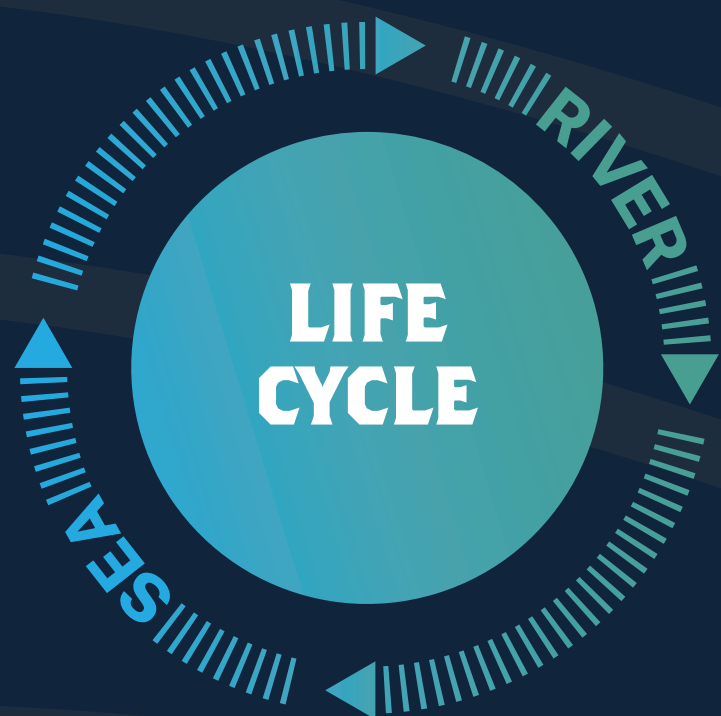
Baby sturgeon were first caught by DEEP in 2013 and 2020 during routine river surveying. Research also shows that large adults are using upriver, freshwater stretches, which could potentially be due to spawning behavior. These two discoveries give us hope for an Atlantic sturgeon comeback in the Connecticut River!



**ADULTS**  
migrate coastally, go into freshwater rivers to spawn  
Age: 15 yrs, Size: 5+ ft



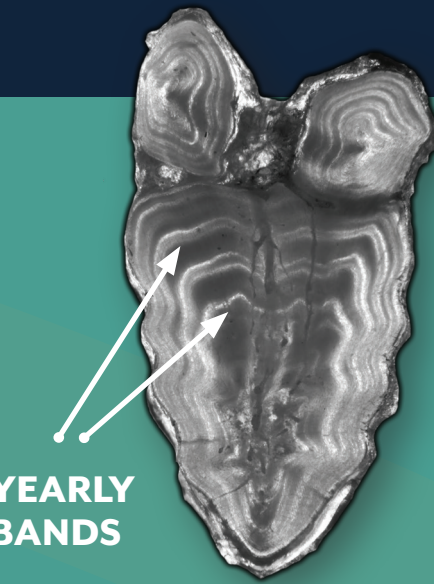
**SUB-ADULTS**  
migrate along the coast, form coastal aggregations. Most fish in Long Island Sound and the CT River mouth are sub-adults  
Age: 5-15 yrs, Size: 20 in-5 ft



**EGGS**  
spawned in fresh water  
Age: 0-3 mos, Size: 0.08 in



**JUVENILES**  
migrate out of fresh water into salt water  
Age: 0-5 yrs, Size: 6-20 in



## ONGOING RESEARCH ON ATLANTIC STURGEON

Since 1988, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) has monitored the occurrence of sturgeon in Long Island Sound and the Connecticut River under a federal Endangered Species Act permit (NOAA Permit No. 19641). All fish are routinely examined, measured & weighed and provided with a small tag before being released. More recently, a select few fish receive surgically implanted acoustic transmitters, which allow scientists from CT DEEP and other institutions to track their movements in Long Island Sound (e.g., the important sturgeon habitat around Falkner's Island, only 5 miles offshore from Hammonasset Beach), the Connecticut River, and in fact all along the US Atlantic coast. Other fish have a small sample taken from their pectoral fin so researchers can count the number of annual bands in the bone and thereby estimate the age of the fish. Ultimately, the goal is to acquire as much information as possible to better protect this iconic and endangered species that is roaming Long Island Sound and may even form a spawning population in the Connecticut River again.

For more info scan or visit: [arcg.is/LW1j0](https://arcg.is/LW1j0)

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