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threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Additionally, the Atlantic sturgeon is listed under:

• Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

> 2016 Atlantic and Shortnose Sturgeon

Commission: Atlantic Sturgeon [2]

- > 2011 Sturgeon Workshop
- Research and Management Workshop > Endangered Species Permits and

eries

Authorizations

Recovery Planning and Implementation

Recovery Outline

DPS, and South

NOAA Fisheries developed a recovery outline to commence the recovery planning process for Atlantic sturgeon. The outline is meant to serve as an interim guidance document to direct recovery efforts, including recovery planning, for the endangered New York Bight, Chesapeake Bay, Carolina, and South Atlantic DPSs of the Atlantic sturgeon and the threatened Gulf of Maine DPS until a full recovery plan is developed and approved.

Read the recovery outline >

- **Species Recovery Contacts**
 - > Carolina and South Atlantic DPSs: Andrew Herndon > Gulf of Maine, New York Bight, and Chesapeake Bay DPSs: Lynn Lankshear

Critical Habitat Designation

When a species is listed under the ESA, NOAA Fisheries evaluates and identifies whether any areas meet the definition of critical habitat. Those areas may be designated as critical habitat through a rulemaking process. The designation of an area as critical habitat does not create a closed area, marine protected area, refuge, wilderness reserve, preservation, or other conservation area; nor does the designation affect land ownership. Federal agencies that undertake, fund, or permit activities that may affect these designated critical habitat areas are required to consult with NOAA Fisheries to ensure that their actions do not adversely modify or destroy designated critical habitat. On August 17, 2017, we designated critical habitat for each of the five listed DPSs. The critical habitats

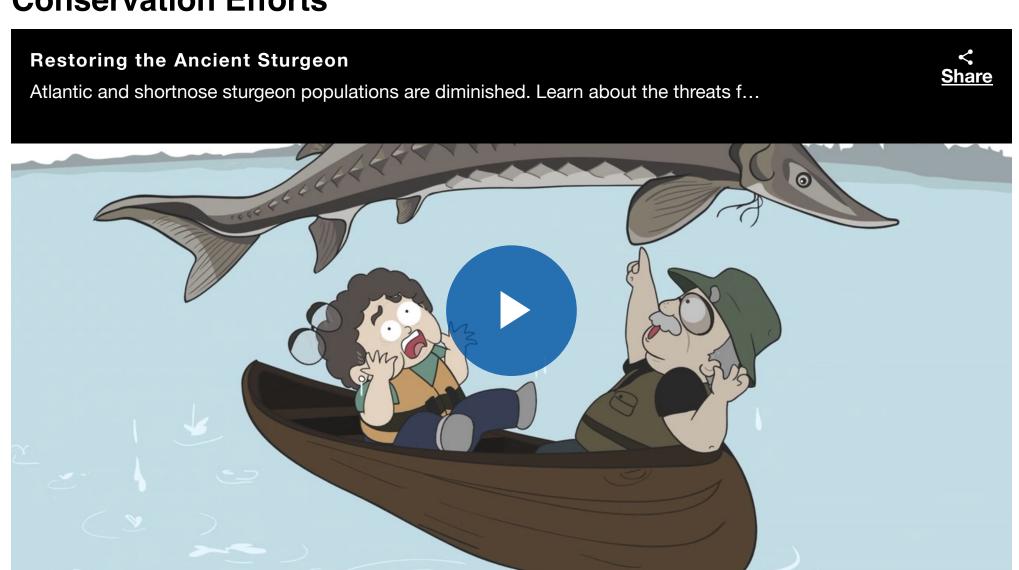
include spawning and rearing areas and essential water quality and water quantity features necessary for Atlantic sturgeon survival. > Maps of Designated Critical Habitat Rivers for the Gulf of Maine, New York Bight, and

- Chesapeake Bay DPSs
- > Maps of Designated Critical Habitat Rivers for the Carolina and South Atlantic DPSs



Atlantic sturgeon entangled in fishing line. Credit: NOAA Fisheries

Conservation Efforts



Restoring Habitat and Fish Passage

Sturgeon and other migrating fish, such as salmon, shad, and alewives, need access to freshwater habitat for spawning and rearing. In some cases, Atlantic sturgeon need to swim thousands of miles through the oceans and rivers to reach their destination, but they may be blocked from completing their journey by man-made barriers, such as dams. These barriers have had serious impacts on Atlantic sturgeon spawning runs along the entire East Coast, particularly in the Southeast. Removal of outdated dams or providing ways for fish to get around those dams can greatly improve Atlantic sturgeon access to historical habitats. NOAA Fisheries works with conservation organizations, energy companies, states, tribes, and citizens to evaluate barriers and improve fish passage. Most barriers have the same general impact on fish—blocking migrations—but each requires a specific set of conservation actions.

Learn more about improving fish passage > The Penobscot River—New England's second largest river—has been designated a NOAA Habitat Focus

Area, as human activities have caused adverse impacts to the watershed. Recovery of endangered and threatened Atlantic sturgeon, shortnose sturgeon, and Atlantic salmon are a key objective of the ongoing habitat improvement efforts.

Learn more about the Penobscot River Habitat Focus Area > **Providing Captive Breeding Programs**

Some Atlantic sturgeon are bred and held in captivity at research facilities, in accordance with specific permits. These captive-bred animals can provide important insight into the physical, chemical, and biological parameters necessary for the optimal growth, survival, and reproduction of Atlantic sturgeon in the wild. Some captive-bred animals are also used in permanent educational displays that promote public awareness of the plight of the species.

Educating the Public One of the best ways to help save this amazing species is through outreach. Our biologists work with

students and teachers to share information about the movements, behavior, and threats to Atlantic and shortnose sturgeons along the East Coast. The Students Collaborating to Undertake Tracking Efforts for Sturgeon (SCUTES) program provides lesson plans, educational kits, and an opportunity for classrooms to adopt a tagged sturgeon.

Learn more about the SCUTES program > **Cooperating Internationally**

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) protects Atlantic sturgeon and other sturgeons by regulating international trade in listed species of plants and animals.

Key Actions and Documents Actions & Documents Incidental Take

PUBLISHED 90-Day Finding on a Petition to List the Delaware River Atlantic May 31, 2024 **Sturgeon Population as an Endangered Distinct Population Segment** We, NOAA Fisheries, announce our 90-day finding on a petition to list the Delaware River population of Atlantic sturgeon as an endangered distinct population segment (DPS) of Atlantic sturgeon under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and to designate... > 90-Day Finding (89 FR 47089, 5/31/2024) > Petition (2023) Notice, New England/Mid-Atlantic **PUBLISHED Incidental Take Permit to the University of Massachusetts** January 8, 2025 **Dartmouth School for Marine Science and Technology (Sea Turtles and Sturgeon**) The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth School for Marine Science and Technology has submitted an application and accompanying conservation plan for the incidental take of Atlantic sturgeon (Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus), Kemp's ridley ... > Availability of a Draft Environmental Assessment; request for comments (90 FR 1... > Re-opening of public comment period (88 FR 55668, 08/16/2023) > Receipt of application (88 FR 43082, 07/06/2023) > Draft EA (PDF, 89 pages) > Permit Application (PDF, 54 pages) Notice, New England/Mid-Atlantic **PUBLISHED** 5-Year Review for the New York Bight, Chesapeake Bay, and February 17, 2022 **Gulf of Maine Distinct Population Segments of Atlantic** <u>Sturgeon</u> In 2018, NOAA Fisheries announced the initiation of a 5-year review for the threatened Gulf of Maine distinct population segment (DPS) of Atlantic sturgeon (Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus), the endangered New York Bight DPS of Atlantic sturgeon, the... > Notice of initiation of 5-year review; request for information (83 FR 11731, Ma... > Gulf of Maine DPS 5-Year Review (2022) > New York Bight DPS 5-Year Review (2022) > Chesapeake Bay DPS 5-Year Review (2022) Notice, New England/Mid-Atlantic **EFFECTIVE Critical Habitat Designation for Atlantic Sturgeon** September 18, 2017 We, NOAA Fisheries, are issuing this final rule to designate critical habitat for the threatened Gulf of Maine distinct population segment (DPS) of Atlantic sturgeon, the endangered New York Bight DPS of Atlantic sturgeon, the endangered Chesapeake Bay... > Final Critical Habitat Designation > Correction to Proposed Critical Habitat Designation for the Carolina and South

> Atlantic Sturgeon Critical Habitat Map and GIS Data > Impacts Analysis of Critical Habitat Designation for the Carolina and South

an...

> Proposed Critical Habitat Designation for the Carolina and South Atlantic DPSs

> Proposed Critical Habitat Designation for the Gulf of Maine, New York Bight,

Atl... > Designation of Critical Habitat for the Gulf of Maine, New York Bight, and

Ches... Final Rule, New England/Mid-Atlantic, Southeast



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