

2015

WISCONSIN Winnebago System Sturgeon Spearing Regulations & Information



Matt Klein (13 years old; left) and his father Steve (right) proudly display Matt's 78.3", 139.5 pound lake sturgeon harvested on February 8, 2014.

Sturgeon Hotline
920-303-5444

E-mail Ryan.koenigs@wisconsin.gov if you would like to be added to the Winnebago System fisheries email distribution list and receive updates during sturgeon spearing seasons.

Dear Winnebago Sturgeon Spearer,

I don't know where the time goes, but here we are with another sturgeon spearing season quickly approaching! Some spearkers likely have already started strategizing for the 2015 season and many are just hoping for favorable conditions to safely participate in another memorable season. As a fellow sturgeon spearer, I always enjoyed the excitement of a new season and the anticipation that accompanied.

Most spearkers know that water clarity and ice thickness are the two factors that have the largest impact on spearing success. Fortunately for spearkers, we experienced favorable conditions for the 2014 season and those conditions translated into a successful harvest and a shortened season on both Lake Winnebago and the Upriver Lakes. In fact, the 6-day season on Lake Winnebago was tied for the 3rd shortest since 2002, while the 3 day season on the Upriver Lakes was the 2nd shortest season since the lottery fishery began in 2007. In total, spearkers harvested 1,854 fish during the 2014 season (1,513 from Lake Winnebago and 341 from the Upriver Lakes) before harvest caps were reached. The Lake Winnebago harvest was the largest since 2004 and 10th largest all time.

Similar to years past, the number of large, trophy sized fish was the real highlight of the 2014 season. From the infancy of the sport (1930s) through the early 2000s, fish larger than 100 pounds were quite rare in the harvest, with less than 1% of the annual harvest composed of these large fish. However, these trophy sized fish started to become more common in the mid-2000s and the record books have been completely rewritten over the last 10-15 years. Further, 8 of the top 11 heaviest fish on record (dating back to 1932) have been harvested within the last 5 years. The 2014 season didn't contribute any fish to the top 11, but a record 106 fish (95 from Lake Winnebago and 11 from the Upriver Lakes) 100 pounds and larger were harvested during the season. The largest fish was a 77.1", 161.0 pound female speared by John Skahen on February 12.

Looking forward to the upcoming season, there are a couple noteworthy items.

First, harvest caps have been raised by 6% over the 2012-2014 seasons and will now be set at 430 juvenile females, 878 adult females and 1,250 males. Also, a record 13,134 licenses (12,650 for Winnebago and 484 for Upriver Lakes) were sold for the 2015 season which is an 11% increase over last season. The increased popularity is likely due to the overall success and publicity of the 2014 season.

I wish all of you spearkers safe travels and good luck during the 2015 spearing season. Hopefully our paths will cross and I will be able to hear stories about more memories being created during the upcoming season. Let's make the 2015 sturgeon spearing season another season to remember!

Looking forward to the 2015 season,

Ryan Koenigs

Winnebago Sturgeon Biologist



John Skahen with his 77.1", 161.0 pound sturgeon registered at Quinney on February 12, 2014. John's fish was the largest harvested during the 2014 season! (DNR Photo)

Winnebago System Sturgeon Spearing Regulations and Information

CONTENTS

2015 Sturgeon Spearing Regulations page 3

Sturgeon Registration Stations page 6

Winnebago Lake Sturgeon Length at Age..... page 8

Summary of the 2014 Sturgeon Spearing Season... page 9

Winnebago Citizens Sturgeon Advisory Committee...page 10

Sturgeon Guard Volunteer Information.....page 11

Sturgeon for Tomorrow..... page 12



It was a season to remember for the Galicia family as the husband, wife, daughter, and son in law group tagged out on opening morning of the 2014 sturgeon spearing season on the Upriver Lakes Upriver Lakes

WINNEBAGO SYSTEM STURGEON SPEARING REGULATIONS

Please take a few minutes to carefully read through this regulation pamphlet.

To report violations call: **1-800-TIP-WDNR (1-800-847-9367)**
or cell #367

2015 OPEN SEASON – Winnebago System Sturgeon Spearing

Lake Winnebago

February 14, 2015 through March 1, 2015 on Lake Winnebago or until any of the pre-set harvest caps for Lake Winnebago are reached, OR any of the pre-set Winnebago System-wide harvest caps are reached, whichever comes first (as per trigger closure rules).

Upriver Lakes (Lakes Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan)

February 14, 2015 through March 1, 2015 on the Upriver Lakes or until any of the pre-set harvest caps for the Upriver Lakes are reached, OR any of the pre-set Winnebago System-wide harvest caps are reached, whichever comes first (as per trigger closure rules).

An annual lottery sturgeon spear fishery began on the Upriver Lakes in 2007. Spearers need to apply for an Upriver Lakes sturgeon lottery tag by August 1 and are notified if they were successful in receiving authorization to purchase an Upriver Lakes sturgeon spearing license by October 1. Group lottery applications of up to four persons are accepted and the group will carry the preference points of the group member with the fewest points. Spearers that applied for an Upriver Lakes license but were not authorized to purchase an Upriver Lakes license receive a preference point, and can still purchase a license for Lake Winnebago before the October 31 license sales deadline (spearers can only buy a license for either Lake Winnebago or the Upriver Lakes, not both). Sales for both Lake Winnebago and Upriver Lakes sturgeon spearing licenses end October 31. The Upriver Lakes sturgeon lottery fishery limits participation to 500 tags in 2015 (numbers of tags in future seasons may vary) and will have a small allotment of the overall sturgeon harvest caps (see below).

Total harvest of sturgeon will be limited through pre-set harvest caps. Harvest caps for the 2015 Winnebago System spearing season are 430 for juvenile females, 878 for adult females and 1250 for males. Portions of the system-wide harvest caps have been allocated to the fisheries on Lake Winnebago and the Upriver Lakes as shown below:

	Juvenile Females	Adult Females	Males
Lake Winnebago	344	790	1000
<u>Upriver Lakes</u>	<u>86</u>	<u>88</u>	<u>250</u>
Winnebago System	430	878	1250

The Department will close the sturgeon spearing season on Lake Winnebago before the maximum 16 days when the following conditions occur:

- At the end of the fishing day in which 100% of any one of the three Lake Winnebago harvest caps is reached or exceeded, or
- 24 hours from the end of the fishing day within which a harvest of 90% to 99% of any one of the three Lake Winnebago harvest caps is reached.

The Department will close the sturgeon spearing season on the Upriver Lakes before the maximum 16 days when the following conditions occur:

- At the end of the fishing day in which 100% of any one of the three Upriver Lakes harvest caps is reached or exceeded, or
- 24 hours from the end of the fishing day within which a harvest of 90% to 99% of any one of the three Upriver Lakes harvest caps is reached.

The Department will close the sturgeon spearing season on all waters of the Winnebago System before the maximum 16 days when the following conditions occur:

- At the end of the fishing day in which 100% of any one of the three Winnebago System-wide harvest caps is reached or exceeded, or
- 24 hours from the end of the fishing day within which a harvest of 90% to 99% of any one of the three Winnebago System-wide harvest caps is reached.

BAG LIMIT: One lake sturgeon per licensee

MINIMUM LENGTH LIMIT: 36 inches

LICENSE REQUIREMENT: To spear sturgeon, residents must purchase a sturgeon spearing license and tag for \$20.00 and nonresidents must purchase a sturgeon spearing license and tag for \$65.00

Only persons 12 years of age and older are eligible to spear sturgeon. No sturgeon spearing license may be issued or purchased after October 31, 2014 except for Wisconsin residents that turn 12 between November 1, 2014 and the last day of the 2015 spearing season, or for Wisconsin residents serving in the Armed Forces that are home on leave during the 2015 spearing season.

The sturgeon spearing license and tag must be carried by the licensee at all times while fishing for sturgeon with a spear. A sturgeon spearing license and tag is nontransferable and no person may use or carry the tag or license of another.

No person may possess a validated sturgeon carcass tag unless attached to a legal sturgeon.

SPEARING HOURS: 7:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

LIGHTS, UNDERWATER CAMERAS, DEPTH LOCATORS

Use of artificial lights of any kind is prohibited while spearing. Underwater cameras may be used, but any lights on the camera must be disabled (turned off, taped over, or non-illuminating). Use of depth Locators is permitted.

POSSESSION AND USE OF A SPEAR

No person may have under his or her control any spear or similar device in any enclosure on the ice or waters of the Winnebago System except when authorized during established sturgeon spearing seasons.

No person may take, capture, kill or attempt to kill sturgeon on the Winnebago System by any means other than spearing with a spear thrown by hand from inside a fishing shelter placed on the ice during the open spearing season.

ICE HOLE RESTRICTIONS

No person may cut, use, or maintain an ice hole larger than 12 inches in diameter or square for the taking of fish in any manner through the ice except spearing sturgeon on the Winnebago System during the open season. The total area of a sturgeon spearing hole, or combination of holes, may not exceed a total of 48 square feet through the ice. Ice holes larger than 12 inches cut, used, or maintained may not be covered by a shelter, shanty, or similar device, except during the period from 48 hours before and continuing through the open sturgeon spearing season.

ICE HOLE MARKING

Sturgeon spearing ice holes must be marked with at least 2 strips of wood that extend at least 3 feet above the ice. The wood strips must not exceed 1.5 inches in width and .25 inches in thickness (wood lathe meets the requirement). When you first set your shanty, cut a hole and freeze the lathe into the ice for better marking of sturgeon holes. Lathe markers stuck in snow banks are **NOT** adequate because the lathe no longer marks holes when warm weather conditions melt snow.



Lath properly cut into ice on two sides of spearing shanty. © Bob Rashid

SPEARING OF ROUGH FISH

Spearing of any species of fish other than sturgeon from the Winnebago System is prohibited during the sturgeon spearing season.

TAGGING REQUIREMENT

A spearer with a valid, unused sturgeon license and tag who spears a lake sturgeon must **immediately** validate and attach their carcass tag to the sturgeon (just forward of the tail). Any harvested sturgeon must be present at a registration station by 2:00 PM of the same day it was speared.

It is illegal for any person to possess any sturgeon, or part thereof, without the carcass tag validated and attached.

GROUP BAGGING is not legal and occurs whenever the person who tags the sturgeon is different from the person who speared the sturgeon.

TRANSPORTATION

It is unlawful for any person to transport any unregistered sturgeon in or on any motor driven vehicle unless the sturgeon is carried openly exposed and placed so the carcass tag cannot be handled by anyone. **"Openly exposed" means open to view by a person in a passing vehicle.**

The successful spearer must accompany a harvested sturgeon until the fish is registered.

It is illegal to possess an unregistered sturgeon speared from Lake Winnebago outside the highway boundary area delineated as follows: from the intersection of highways 10 and 114 in Menasha, east on highway 114 to highway 55; south on highway 55 to U.S. highway 151; south on U.S. highway 151 to Scott street in Fond du Lac; west on Scott street to highway 45; north on highway 45 to Main street in Oshkosh; north on Main street to Waugoo avenue; east on Waugoo avenue to Bowen street; north on Bowen street to North Shore drive; north on North Shore drive to county highway A; north on county highway A to highway 114 in Neenah; east on highway 114 to the intersection of highways 10 and 114 in Menasha.

It is illegal to possess an unregistered sturgeon speared from Lakes Butte des Morts, Winneconne or Poygan outside the highway boundary area delineated as follows: from the intersection of highways 45 and 21 in Oshkosh west on highway 21 to highway 116; north on highway 116 to county highway B; west on county highway B to county highway D; west on county highway D to highway 49; north on highway 49 to county highway H; east on county highway H to highway 10; east on highway 10 to highway 110; south on highway 110 to county highway M; south on county highway M to highway 116; east on highway 116 to highway 110; south on highway 110 to highway 45; south on highway 45 to highway 21.

REGISTRATION

A person who spears a sturgeon must accompany and exhibit the tagged sturgeon at an official sturgeon registration station (see map page 6) no later than 2:00 PM of the day speared. **To avoid the "end of the day" rush please bring your fish in as soon as possible after spearing it. You must be at the registration station and in-line to register your fish by 2:00 PM.**

Any fish harvested from Lake Winnebago must be registered at one of the sturgeon registration stations on Lake Winnebago. Any fish harvested from Lakes Butte des Morts, Winneconne or Poygan (the Upriver Lakes) must be registered at one of the sturgeon registration stations on the Upriver Lakes.

Department Fisheries staff at the registration stations will collect biological information on the size, sex and age of your fish, and will attach a metal sturgeon registration tag.

Both the sturgeon carcass tag and registration tag must be retained until the carcass is consumed.

STURGEON REGISTRATION STATIONS

Stations are operated daily throughout the season by DNR Fisheries staff. Depending on spearing activity and volume of sturgeon registrations, some stations may be closed before the end of the season. Any necessary early closures will be posted at registration stations.

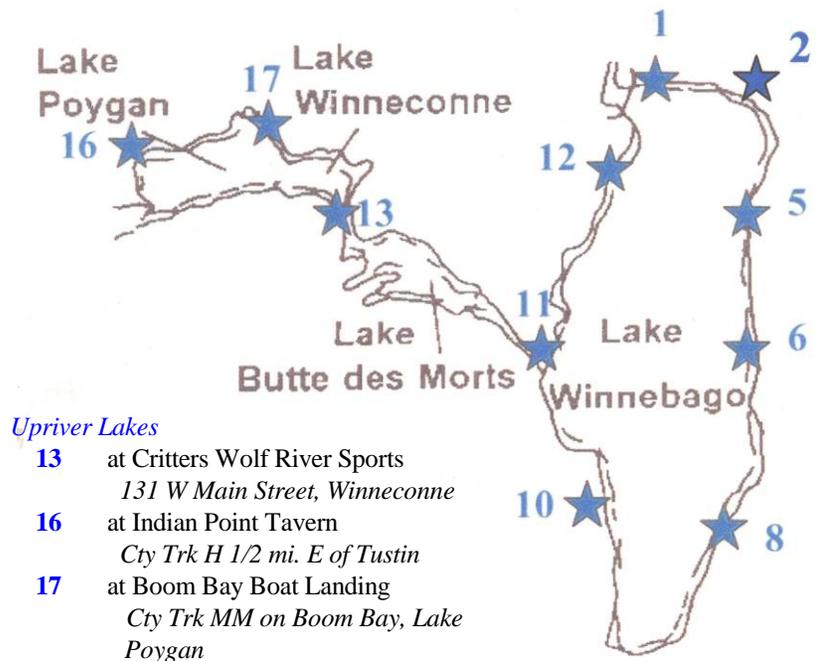
Winnebago System Sturgeon Registration Stations:

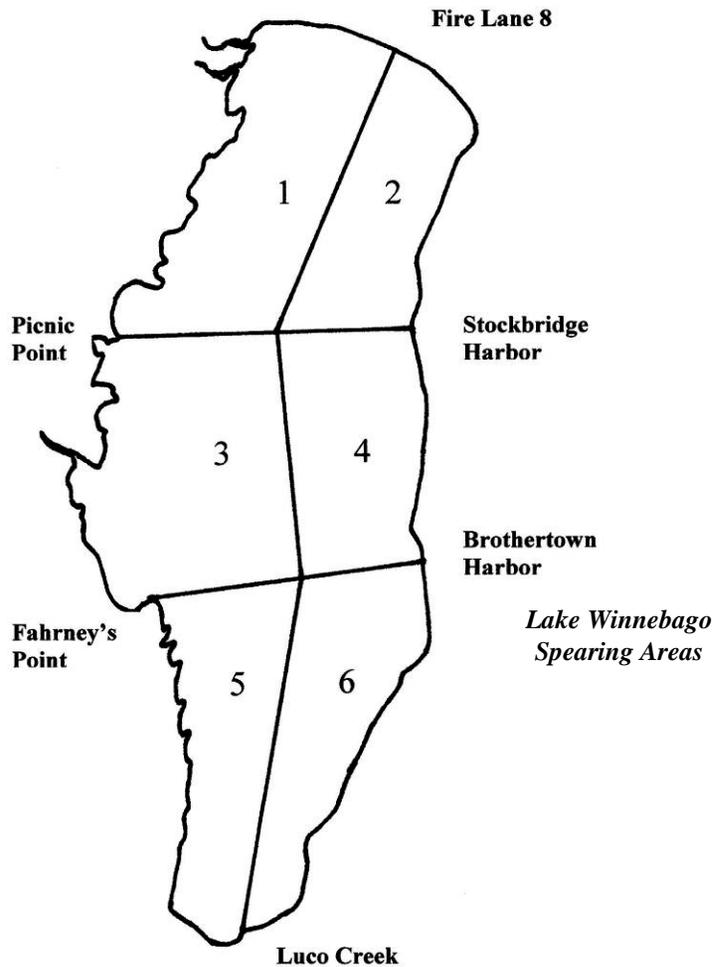
Station No. Station Location

Lake Winnebago

- 1** at Waverly Beach Resort
Junction of U.S. Hwys 10 & 114
- 2** behind Harrison Town Hall
Junction of U.S. Hwys 114 and State Park Rd
- 5** at Harbor Bar
Stockbridge on the lake
- 6** at the Quinney Quencher
Quinney on the lake
- 8** at Jim and Linda's Supper Club
Pipe on the lake
- 10** at Wendt's Bar & Harbor
Hwy 45, 8 mi. N of Fond du Lac
- 11** at Jerry's Tavern
1210 Ceape St., Oshkosh
- 12** at Payne's Point Tavern,
Cty Trk A 3 mi. S of Neenah

Note – Some station numbers are missing, (i.e.: 3 , 4, etc) due to changes in the number and location of stations over the years.





LITTER

It is illegal to place or deposit any materials (including biodegradable fish or fish parts) on the lake bed that cannot be retrieved. Any material used in a sturgeon spearing hole must be removed by the sturgeon spearer when the hole is abandoned, or if requested by a warden.

Any material that is left on or frozen in the ice or waters is the responsibility of the person who left the material (including tar paper, wood, cardboard or any other litter used adjacent to shanties).

FISHING EQUIPMENT OR GEAR

It is unlawful to possess a fishing pole, hook and line angling equipment, or other similar devices that could be used to catch fish in an ice fishing tent, shanty, or other ice fishing enclosure with ice holes larger than 12 inches in diameter or square.

ICE SHANTIES AND SHELTERS

The door of any occupied shanty/shelter shall be such that the door can be readily opened from the outside.

All shanties/shelters must have the name and residential address of the person owning or using the shanty. The name and address must be painted or permanently affixed on the outside with a minimum of 1" lettering.

All shanties/shelters must be removed from the ice (for all inland waters south of Hwy 64) by the first Sunday following March 1.





A memorable season for the Doepker family as three generations were fortunate enough to harvest a fish in 2014. Father (Bob, left), son (Steven, middle), and grandson (Scott, right) all speared fish larger than 60 pounds. (Doepker family photo)

Lake Sturgeon Ave Length at Age – Winnebago System

Total Length (in)	Male Estimated Age (yrs)	Female Estimated Age (yrs)
36	9	9
38	10	10
40	12	12
42	14	13
44	15	15
46	17	17
48	20	19
50	22	21
52	24	23
54	27	26
56	30	29
58	33	31
60	36	34
62	40	37
64	43	41
66	47	44
68	51	48
70	55	51
72	60	55
74		60
76		64
78		69
80		73
82		78
84		83

2014 Winnebago System Sturgeon Spearing Season: A Season That Lived Up to the Billing

The 2014 sturgeon spearing season on the Winnebago System began with high expectations of a successful, potentially historic season in terms of the number of big fish that could be harvested. The water was clear and Mother Nature had blessed us with cold weather that produced strong ice for safe travels. In fact, conditions leading into the season were the best that they had been since the 2008-2010 seasons, all of which lasted 4-8 days. So spearkers had high hopes of spearing bounty as they traveled onto the ice on February 8, and the season did not disappoint.

The harvest of 878 sturgeon (636 from Lake Winnebago and 242 from the Upriver Lakes) on February 8 made opening day of the 2014 season one of the more successful openers since the current regulation package was implemented. In fact, the 242 fish harvested on the Upriver Lakes was the highest opening day harvest since a lottery fishery was implemented in 2007 and matched the total harvest from the 2-day season in 2012. The 636 fish harvested from Lake Winnebago on opening day was the 2nd highest opening day harvest since the 6-hour spearing day was implemented in 2002.

Although harvest numbers did decrease following opening day, spearkers were still able to harvest large numbers of fish leading to closure of the season after just 3 short days on the Upriver Lakes and 6 days on Lake Winnebago. The 3-day season on the Upriver Lakes is the 2nd shortest since 2007, while the 6-day season on Lake Winnebago is tied for the 3rd shortest since 2002. In total there were 341 fish harvested during the season on the Upriver Lakes, meaning that 72.7% of license holders successfully harvested a fish during the lottery fishery. The high success rate on the Upriver Lakes (50-65% in a normal year) has really elevated the popularity of this fishery to the point that there are now more than 5,000 sportsmen and sportswomen applying for the 500 licenses that are awarded annually. The Lake Winnebago fishery closed with a total harvest of 1,513 fish (13.3% success rate), which is the largest harvest since the 2004 season (1,854 fish registered) and the 3rd highest since 2000.

The big fish trend that has emerged in harvests spanning the last 5-10 years continued in 2014 as well. A record 106 fish tipped the scales at 100 pounds or larger. 95 of these fish were harvested from Lake Winnebago and 11 were taken from the Upriver Lakes. The largest fish of the season was the 161.0 pound, 77.1" fish that was registered at Quinney on February 12 by John Skahen. There were numerous fish in the 130-160 pound range, but none of the fish harvested as part of the season were large enough to enter the top 10 on record. The record books have been rewritten for the most part since 2004 and fish now need to be larger than 171 pounds to enter this exclusive

company. The fact that there weren't any of these very large (top 10) fish harvested was surprising to DNR staff because of the more frequent encounters with these very large fish in recent harvest and spawning assessments. The most noteworthy being the 87.5 inch fish that DNR crews captured during spawning assessments on the Wolf River in 2012. This fish was estimated to weigh 240 pounds and would easily break the current 212 pound state record. However, fish don't reach these old ages and large sizes by having high harvest rates. Either way, those fish are still out there in the population and I am confident that they will continue to show up in future harvests.

This season, like all others, was one where many memories were made and streaks were broken. Anyone who is even vaguely familiar with the sport of sturgeon spearing knows that the odds are stacked against the spearkers. The old expression is that sturgeon spearing is like duck hunting out a chimney and this analogy is actually pretty close to the truth. Even in a year with good spearing conditions, similar to this season, the success rates on Lake Winnebago remain low. The long term average success rates are around 10-12% meaning that the "average" spearker will go 8-10 years between fish. Now there are people who defy these odds and harvest fish more regularly, but there are also those spearkers that defy the odds with bad luck. For example, Allan Kraemer registered his first ever sturgeon at Stockbridge Harbor this year. He had been spearing almost every year (claims to have missed maybe 5-6 seasons) since 1972 and this was the first fish that he had ever even seen in the hole. What a story and I'm glad to hear that Allan's persistence finally paid off.

Those who spear, or have experienced the sturgeon spearing culture, know that it's the stories like the one above that make this sport truly unique and keep people coming back year after year. We are blessed to have such a great resource in our back yard, a sturgeon resource that is unmatched anywhere else in the world. The robust population provides the opportunity for an annual spear harvest, but it's the social aspects that make the sport special. Another prime example is the 139.5 pound sturgeon that was speared by a 13 year Matthew Klein on opening day. Matt comes from a family of dedicated sturgeon spearkers, but this was the first fish that he had ever speared on his own. Further, this was the 9th largest fish harvested during the 2014 season and the largest fish harvested by a 12-13 year old since the minimum spearing age changed in advance of the 2013 spearing season. Now that's a memory that young sportsman and his family will never forget.

There are many more great stories from the 2014 spearing season, a season that was short but certainly lived up to the hype. Conditions were prime for a great season, and the population did not disappoint. After three straight seasons of poor conditions, it was nice to have clear water and safe ice conditions so that the sturgeon population on the Winnebago System could

once again be showcased on center stage. Just like many spearers, I was sad to see the season come to an end early, but I take comfort in knowing that we are less than a year away from the start of the 2015 season!

2014 Sturgeon Harvest by Registration Station

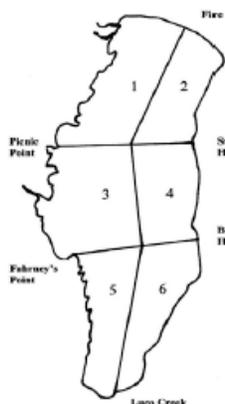
Station	Females		Males	Station Totals
	Juvenile	Adult		
Waverly	9	27	24	60
Harrison Town Hall	15	31	28	74
Stockbridge	25	97	89	211
Quinney	27	90	60	177
Lakeview/Jim and Linda's	35	135	130	300
Wendt's	60	149	176	385
Jerry's	11	91	49	151
Paynes	10	93	52	155
Indian Point	16	40	83	139
Boom Bay	6	12	39	57
Critters	18	36	91	145

L. Winnebago	192	713	608	1513
Upriver Lakes	40	88	213	341
Total Harvest	232	801	821	1854

2014 Sturgeon Harvest by Lake and Lake Area

Station	Females		Males	Area Totals
	Juvenile	Adult		
L. Winnebago Area 1	15	91	53	159
L. Winnebago Area 2	37	100	105	242
L. Winnebago Area 3	16	142	68	226
L. Winnebago Area 4	34	127	93	254
L. Winnebago Area 5	50	127	171	348
L. Winnebago Area 6	40	126	118	284
L. BD Morts	6	20	37	63
L. Poygan	29	65	151	245
> Winneconne	5	3	25	33

L. Winnebago	192	713	608	1513
Upriver Lakes	40	88	213	341
Total Harvest	232	801	821	1854



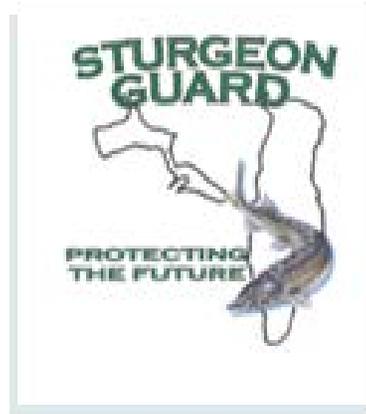
Winnebago Citizens Sturgeon Advisory Committee Members, 2015:

- Mike Arrowood, Winnebagoland Conservation Alliance.
- Jeff Atkinson, Riverside Hunting and Fishing Club
- Randy Bauman, Lower Cliff Fishing Club
- Pat Braasch, West-Central Chapter, Sturgeon for Tomorrow
- Ben Burg, Stockbridge Fishing Club
- Dennis Cook, Stockbridge Fishing Club
- Doug Cox, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin
- Bob Doepker, Lake Park Fishing Club
- Bruce Fischer, Brickyard Fishing Club
- Chuck Freund, Brothertown Fishing Club
- Jim Gehrke, Payne's Point Hook & Spear Fishing Club
- Ron Goldapske, West Shore Fishing Club
- Pat Gorshals, Poygan Sportsman's Club
- Dan Groeschel, Main Chapter, Sturgeon for Tomorrow
- Wayne Hoelzel, Northern-Half Chapter, Sturgeon for Tomorrow
- Andy Horns, Main Chapter, Sturgeon for Tomorrow
- John Jenkins, Pipe Fishing Club
- Al Jolin, Southwest Chapter, Sturgeon for Tomorrow
- Harry Kachur, Montgomery Beach Sportsman's Club
- Mike Kachur, Montgomery Beach Sportsman's Club
- Dick Koerner, Twin City Rod & Gun Club, WI Conservation Congress
- Don Lisowe, Brothertown Fishing Club
- Bill Marcks, Shadows on the Wolf
- Bill McAloon, Otter St. Fishing Club
- Dick Mengel, Fishermen's Road Fishing Club
- Don Mielke, Lower Cliff Fishing Club
- Stuart Mucbe, West Shore Fishing Club
- Gary Olson, Berlin Conservation Club
- Mike Pfankuch, WI Conservation Congress
- Jim Propson, Brickyard Fishing Club
- Don Reiter, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin
- Dan Rudebeck, Poygan Sportman's Club
- Rich Scheffler, Quinney Fishing Club
- Andy Seibel, East Shore Conservation Club
- Wally Seibel, Dotyville Hunting & Fishing Club
- John Thull, Poygan Conservation Club
- Dave Vogds, Main Chapter, Sturgeon for Tomorrow
- Mike Will, Upper Lakes Chapter, Sturgeon for Tomorrow
- Marvin Woelfel, Quinney Fishing Club
- Matt Woods, Upper Lakes Chapter, Sturgeon for Tomorrow
- Lance Ziemer, Southwest Chapter, Sturgeon for Tomorrow

The Winnebago Citizens Sturgeon Advisory Committee was formed in 1992 and since has worked closely with Ron Bruch, Ryan Koenigs, and the DNR to review Winnebago sturgeon harvest and population data and recommend new rules and management actions when needed.

Sturgeon Guard Volunteers Needed In Spring

Each spring hundreds of volunteers have an opportunity to guard sturgeon and protect the fish from poaching at their spawning sites on the Wolf River. Sturgeon are very susceptible to illegal harvest when they are spawning along the river's rocky shorelines. Therefore, "Sturgeon Patrol" volunteers guard the spawning fish 24 hours a day throughout the spawning season. The program is coordinated and directed by DNR Law Enforcement staff, while Sturgeon for Tomorrow and sturgeon spearing license fees fund the guard program.



Once spawning has begun, pairs of sturgeon guards are assigned to the sites for twelve hour shifts. Prior to assignment, guards check in at "Sturgeon Camp", just north of Shiocton, where they receive a good meal, a generous sack lunch, a cell phone, an identification hat (that they keep), and a map that directs them to their site. At the end of their shift, guards return to camp for another hearty home cooked meal before they make their way home.



Guards for 2015 will be scheduled from April 1st through May 1st. Spawning generally occurs over a 5 to 10 day period within that time window. We do our best to get all scheduled guards out on the riverbank to see fish, although we cancel some scheduled shifts if the fish are simply not active. In those cases, we try to re-schedule guards during an active period.

Interested volunteers for the 2015 Sturgeon Guard program can find

more information on the Wisconsin DNR website by searching "Sturgeon Guard". The sturgeon guard registration process is available on-line at <http://dnr.wi.gov/SGsignUp/>. Interested volunteers can also register by calling the DNR call center at 1-888-936-7463 and having DNR call center staff input information into the on-line database. You will receive an email or call to schedule a day or night in spring 2015 that is convenient for you. If possible, make it a family outing by bringing a son, daughter or your spouse. For many it has become a family tradition.



Allen Kraemer won the perseverance award for 2014. Allen has been spearing almost every season since 1972 (missing 5-6 years during that span) and this is the first fish that he has even seen in the hole. Congratulations Allen! (DNR photo)

Sturgeon for Tomorrow

In 1977 a group of sturgeon enthusiasts from the Lake Winnebago area founded Sturgeon for Tomorrow to help preserve, protect and enhance the sturgeon resource of the lake system. That group quickly grew into the largest citizen advocacy group for sturgeon in the world, currently made up of five chapters and over 3,000 members. Through tremendous dedication and hard work Sturgeon for Tomorrow (SFT) has raised and donated to date over \$850,000 for sturgeon research and management. SFT has funded a wide variety of projects over the years including the sturgeon guard program, the Sturgeon History Project, purchase of sampling equipment, spawning and nursery site construction, sturgeon population assessments, sturgeon propagation, and the Upper Fox River sturgeon rehabilitation project. SFT also provided the support necessary to ensure the enactment of the \$1,500 fine for possession of an illegal sturgeon, and actively participates in Winnebago and statewide sturgeon management advisory committees.



If you are interested in further information about Sturgeon for Tomorrow or are interested in attending one of their five fund raising banquets held each year, please call:

Jim Patt SFT Southwest Chapter President **920-922-7136**
 (Fond du Lac)
 Banquet January 10, 2015 in Fond du Lac

Dan Groeschel SFT Main Chapter President **920-923-1077**
 (East Shore)
 Banquet January 24, 2015 in Kiel

Wayne Hoelzel SFT Northern Half Chapter President **920-725-1206**
 (North Shore)
 Banquet February 7, 2015 in Darboy

Pat Braasch SFT West Central Chapter **920-231-4708**
 (Oshkosh-West Shore)
 Banquet March 21, 2015 in Oshkosh

Matt Woods SFT Upper Lakes Chapter President **920-582-0113**
 Banquet September 11, 2015 in Orihula

Call now to get your Sturgeon for Tomorrow banquet tickets!



Sherwood Lions Sturgeon Derby

The Sherwood Lions Club will once again be selling Sturgeon Derby tickets for the 2015 sturgeon spear fishery. Ticket proceeds benefit Sturgeon for Tomorrow and various Lion's Club Charities such as the Wisconsin Lions Camp in Rosholt. The Rosholt Lions camp is dedicated to providing a quality camping experience, free-of-charge, to eligible Wisconsin resident

residents who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, and youth who have mild cognitive disabilities or diabetes.