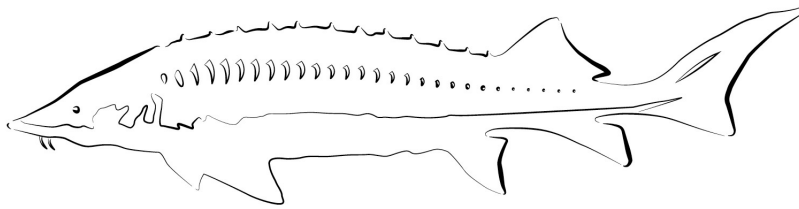


GREAT LAKES ALMANAC



MAY RESPONSES AT GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM

(May 9 and May 30, 2022)

Survey Questions:

What did you learn today about sturgeon that surprised you?

Tell me about an encounter you had with a sturgeon (or other fish) in the wild.

Responses:

- How hard they fight when caught. It takes roughly 20-45 min to reel one into the boat. I've caught 30" up to 60"+ Their skin almost feels like leather. - *Jeremy G, Grand Rapids, MN, age 36*
- They are humongous. I was going to touch them but didn't because they are scary. - *Anonymous, Port Wing, WI*
- I am surprised that they feel like slimy rock. I don't really know why, that's why it surprised me. Maybe because they hunt at the bottom of the lake and it might be slimy so that's why they are. - *Ryan R, Port Wing, WI, age 8*
- How big they get. - *Ryker D, Port Wing, WI, age 9*
- I didn't like the feeling. - *Henry H, Port Wing, WI, age 9*
- How they use cold water to swim in. - *Sadie J, Port Wing, WI, age 9*

- I can't believe how big sturgeons get. - *Mera B, Port Wing, WI, age 9*
- They have bones on the outside of their skin. - *Kaitlyn J, Pine City, MN, age 10*
- I found out that some are hard and some are slimy. If you keep your fingers out longer they come up more. If they're close to the glass they stay up and if they aren't and you touch them, they go down. - *Tanner A, Pine City, MN, age 11*
- The sturgeon was slimy. I was expecting bumpy. I thought it was going to be soft. It felt like I was touching slime. - *Xander S, Pine City, MN, age 10*
- They feel like any fish that I've touched. I have caught a sturgeon. It felt really cool because they're really rare since they're back from dinosaur times. It was a baby, about 1 foot. - *Harley K, Pine City, MN, age 10*
- The whole variety of sizes and coloration. They rely off of taste and smell. - *Devin D, Superior, WI, age 25*
- They can smell. They are bottom feeders. When long, bodies are full of "armor"; I just have a passion for learning about all kinds of fish. - *Rebecca D, Superior, WI, age 27*
- They aren't fully grown until 20 years; kids were able to touch the fish (at the aquarium). - *Yesica D, Grand Forks, ND, age 26*
- They live in cold water. - *Brad, Lakeville, MN, age 15*
- I love sturgeons; I caught my first fish on my birthday. It was a northern pike. It was as big as my foot. - *James W., Duluth, MN, age 4*
- They live a long time and take many years to become sexually mature; no sturgeon encounters but I saw a catfish once while swimming. - *Anonymous, Duluth, MN*
- Lake sturgeon get to 4 foot 8 inches! Don't know an in the wild story but we love coming to touch the sturgeon at the touch pool. - *William and Jalen L, Hermantown, MN, age 39 and 34*

- The longest is 26 feet; My daughter catching her first fish with uncle Brady - thrilling and memorable, catch and release style. - *Anonymous, age 38*
- They can grow to 26'-28' long!; Max and Hannah love to go fishing on the lake! - *Max and Hannah G, Superior, WI*

From Facebook and Instagram

Questions:

How do you interact with fish? Catch and eat, catch and release, study and observe or just leave well enough alone?

Responses:

I love watching fish too! And chickens. I'll be your camera bag holder if you want to do more research and need a chicken-watching assistant. Or penguins. - *Ann L, Duluth, MN*

I have always been fascinated by fish, mostly catching them. But since I started snorkeling I find them absolutely mesmerizing as a creature. - *Ryann S, Duluth, MN*

I grew up watching slide shows of my dad's underwater pics from scuba trips. Mesmerizing is right! We should go scuba diving.... - *Karen P, Duluth, MN*

Do they still have the sturgeon exhibit? It blows my mind that some of them seem to enjoy the sensation of being petted and will swim up to run their backs along an outstretched hand. - *Amanda H, Duluth, MN*

Personal observations from the visits:

May 9, 2022: A cold-ish 45 degrees, some rain.

- I arrived with the elementary school groups. The kids were excited to color the sturgeon pages but a little reluctant to answer the survey (another test!?) so instead I conducted “interviews” more than having them fill out the surveys.

May 30, 2022: While at the Aquarium: high of 45 degrees, heavy rain then very foggy.

- The first Viking cruise ship since 2013 visited Duluth harbor and disappeared in the fog mid-morning. Elsewhere in the Aquarium, the Lake Malawi cichlids were harboring their babies in their mouths and you could see their little eyes if you looked closely at some of the female ones (*Maylandia estherae*). They are known as “mouthbrooders.”
- Another exciting happening was in the lion fish tank where the resident starfish were spawning. Small clouds of sperm or eggs were being released from their backs. We know that one of them was a male (and releasing sperm) because the Aquarium scientist took a sampling while the clouds were still formed.