

Shortnose Sturgeon Salvage Network

The Shortnose Sturgeon Salvage Network was formed to improve documentation of endangered shortnose sturgeon found dead in the wild, and to capitalize on research and educational uses from salvaged specimens. Until recently, there were missed opportunities to investigate, collect or sample dead shortnose sturgeon found opportunistically in the wild due to the limited number of permit holders that are authorized to handle them.

In 2007, an Endangered Species Act Section 10 permit (#1614) was obtained from the National Marine Fisheries Service Office of Protected Resources to salvage dead shortnose sturgeon from several sources: 1) those found deceased in the wild, 2) those euthanized in permitted captive-rearing facilities and 3) those taken lethally in permitted research activities.



This shortnose sturgeon was deceased when it was found. It was determined through necropsy that the mortality was due to ship strike.

The permit currently authorizes more than 50 co-investigators, four captive breeding facilities and 14 cooperating diagnostic laboratories to sample and retain dead shortnose sturgeon and their parts for education, research and diagnostic analyses. This initiative increases the chances that dead sturgeon will be documented, examined for signs of what may have caused the mortality, scanned for tags, and sampled for genetics and age structures. This information is recorded on a sturgeon salvage form and entered in an electronic database maintained at NOAA Fisheries Service's Northeast Regional Office. The dataset that results from these efforts will prove useful in future management objectives.



Sturgeon carcass that was found on Little Tinicum Island on the Delaware River. The carcass appeared to have been chopped in half.

Additionally, this work will help to promote conservation of shortnose sturgeon by enabling educators to receive and maintain shortnose sturgeon specimens including whole preserved fish and scutes. Exhibits that include "hands-on" learning are especially effective in encouraging appreciation for this unique, endangered fish.

For more information about the Shortnose Sturgeon Salvage Network, please contact Jessica Pruden at (978) 282-8482 or email at Jessica.Pruden@noaa.gov