Lake Roosevelt white sturgeon fishery update

Action: Opens additional harvest opportunity for white sturgeon in Lake Roosevelt upstream of the China Bend Boat Ramp.

Effective dates and Locations:

1) Lake Roosevelt, from Grand Coulee Dam to China Bend Boat Ramp (including the Spokane River from Highway 25 Bridge upstream to 400 feet below Little Falls Dam, Colville River upstream to Meyers Falls Dam and the Kettle River upstream to Barstow Bridge). Open seven days per week, June 15, 2020 through Sept. 30, 2020.

2) Lake Roosevelt, from China Bend Boat Ramp upstream to the Canadian Border. Open seven days per week beginning Sept. 1 through Sept. 30, 2020.

Species affected: White sturgeon.

Rules: Daily Limit 1 sturgeon. Annual Limit 2 sturgeon. It is legal to retain sturgeon between 50 inches and 63 inches fork length. Fork length is measured from the tip of the snout to middle of the fork in the caudal fin (tail). All harvested sturgeon must be recorded on a Catch Record Card (Catch Code 549). Two-pole fishing is allowed. Closed to night fishing. Anglers may continue to catch and release after obtaining a daily limit but must cease fishing after the annual limit has been taken. All other statewide rules for white sturgeon must be observed.

Anglers are asked to use heavy gear (50-lb. test mainline and leader at a minimum) and use 14/0 hooks or smaller to avoid catching and/or injuring large wild adult sturgeon. The request to use heavier gear will ensure anglers hook and land sturgeon effectively, but also is protective of large wild adult sturgeon that, if hooked, should be played to hand quickly and released without being removed from the water. WDFW recommends that any fish that will not be legally retained should not be removed from the water prior to release.

Reason for action: White sturgeon hatchery programs began in 2001 in British Columbia (B.C.) and 2004 in Washington. Stocking ranged from 2,000-12,000 juvenile sturgeon per year from 2001 to 2010 (including both Washington and B.C. releases). Survival of hatchery-produced juvenile sturgeon was much higher than anticipated. As a result, there is a surplus of hatchery-origin sturgeon available for harvest from Lake Roosevelt. The portion of Lake Roosevelt between China Bend and the Canadian border is managed as a spawning sanctuary for white sturgeon. Sturgeon spawning is completed by Sept. 1, so a one-month harvest fishery will be opened in this
area. The previously opened section of Lake Roosevelt from Grand Coulee Dam to China Bend boat launch will remain open during this time, as well.

**Additional information:** The Lake Roosevelt sturgeon fishery (Grand Coulee Dam to the Canadian border) will close as of Oct. 1, 2019.

Size restrictions and other fishery rules will be strictly enforced. The Lake Roosevelt co-managers (WDFW, Spokane Tribe and the Colville Confederated Tribes) will all be conducting sturgeon fisheries.

Non-tribal anglers are asked to be respectful of tribal angling and both tribal and non-tribal sturgeon research that is occurring on the reservoir.

Anglers are reminded that fishery dates, times, slot limits, daily limits and annual limits may be adjusted to ensure a sustainable population of sturgeon is maintained in Lake Roosevelt and that equitable access to the fishery amongst the three co-managers is achieved.

**Information contact:** Bill Baker, WDFW Region 1 Fish Program Manager, 509-563-5499.

Fishers must have a current Washington fishing license, appropriate to the fishery. Check the WDFW "Fishing in Washington" rules pamphlet for details on definitions and regulations. Fishing rules are subject to change. Check the WDFW Fishing hotline for the latest rule information at (360) 902-2500, press 2 for recreational rules. For the Shellfish Rule Change hotline call (360)796-3215 or toll free 1-866-880-5431.

Individuals who need to receive this information in an alternative format, language, or who need reasonable accommodations to participate in WDFW-sponsored public meetings or other activities may contact the Title VI/ADA Compliance Coordinator by phone at 360-902-2349, TTY (711), or email (Title6@dfw.wa.gov).