

**Meeting Date:** November 16, 2023

**Agenda Item No. 5. B.**

**Agenda Item:** Snake River White Sturgeon Management Plan Final (ACTION)

**Bureau Chief Approval:** LH

**Prepared by:** Brett Bowersox, Fisheries Coordinator

**Background:**

Staff will present the Snake River White Sturgeon Management Plan and recommend Commission approval of the plan. The plan is an update to the 2008 document and was first presented during the July 2023 Commission meeting. The public comment process has been completed, and staff will summarize comments received, Department responses, and associated changes to the draft plan. The updated plan describes major factors affecting Snake River White Sturgeon and will guide the Department in annual work plan development, program prioritization, and development of regulatory recommendations.

**Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:**

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission administers state wildlife policy through supervision and management of the Department (Idaho Code 36-104). Species management plans are guiding documents to manage wildlife and are a direct reflection of the Department's Strategic Plan. The Snake River White Sturgeon Management Plan will function as the action plan for White Sturgeon within the Snake River drainage, Idaho.

**Public Involvement Process:**

Public input on the draft Snake River Sturgeon Management Plan was collected from August 21 to September 24, 2023. The comment period was announced via press release, email newsletter, and social media. Fisheries staff conducted a virtual open house for the public on August 30, 2023 to present the plan and field questions from the public. In addition, the plan was sent for review to agency partners including the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Idaho Power Company, Nez Perce Tribe, Shoshone Bannock Tribe, Shoshone Paiute Tribe, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Idaho Department of Water Resources, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, County Commissioners, and other relevant agencies. Staff have reviewed the comments received and considered them in developing this final draft of the plan. A summary of the comments and associated changes to the draft plan to reflect relevant comments will be presented.

**Justification:**

This agenda item presents the Snake River Sturgeon Management Plan. The Commission sets policy and provides direction, considers input from the public, and has the authority to adopt, amend, or reject Department-recommended plans.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff seeks Commission approval of this final Snake River Sturgeon Management Plan to set the conservation direction for this species.

Suggested Motion: That the Commission approve the Snake River Sturgeon management plan as presented.