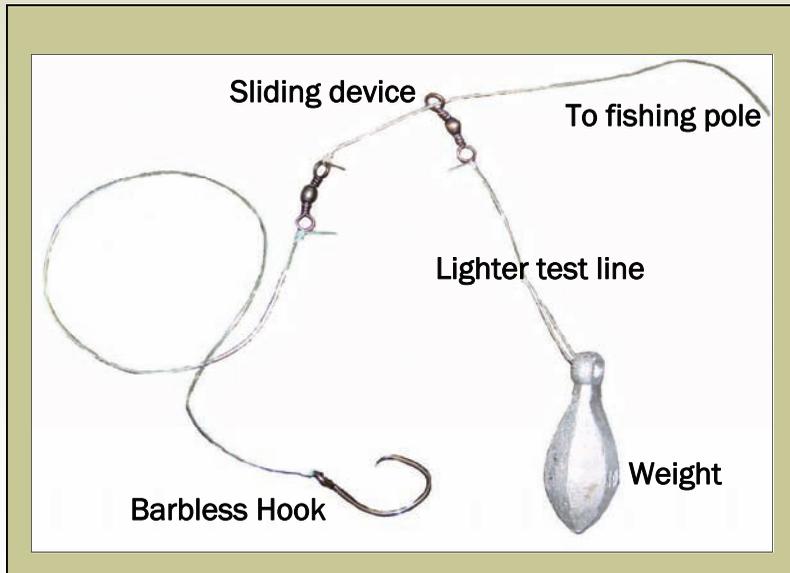


Idaho Sturgeon Fishing Rules

- All sturgeon must be released unharmed.
- Barbless hooks are required.
- It is illegal to remove a sturgeon from the water. Do not drag the fish up onto the shore for picture taking. Fish need water flowing over their gills for respiration, especially after the exertion of being caught.
- Sliding sinker rigs will be required beginning in 2011 (see below). This regulation is intended to reduce the amount of fishing gear left in the river.



<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov>

It is illegal to remove a sturgeon from the water !

If you see someone mishandling a sturgeon please call the Citizens Against Poaching (CAP) hotline at 1-800-632-5999 and report it.



A number of dead and emaciated sturgeon have been found with fishing gear in their systems.



WHITE STURGEON

“Low Impact” Fishing Rules & Tips



How you can enjoy this unique fishery and ensure that it is sustainable into the future

As the popularity of Idaho’s catch and release sturgeon fishery grows, so does the importance for all anglers to minimize their impacts to both the fish and to their environment. This includes using the appropriate gear, treating hooked fish properly, and leaving the river as clean or cleaner than we found it.

This fishery is sustainable only if everybody does their part to make certain every fish hooked and released has the maximum chance to survive.

In this brochure you will find some tips, techniques, and a list of rules to help you be a “low impact” sturgeon angler.

Idaho's White Sturgeon



While the sturgeon's size and strength makes them a world-class game fish, sturgeon fishing in Idaho is strictly a catch and release affair.

The white sturgeon is the largest and longest lived freshwater fish in North America. Some individuals can live up to 100 years and grow to over 12 feet long. It can take a female sturgeon up to 20 years to become reproductively mature.

This longevity and slow maturity makes each adult sturgeon more important for the long-term health of the population than other faster growing fish species.

As the people who enjoy these fish the most, anglers can take the lead in ensuring that these fish and this fishery are available to the next generation of Idahoans.



RIG IT RIGHT to keep the fish from swallowing the hook and minimize the amount of gear you leave behind

Use non-offset circle hooks. Non-offset circle hooks offer three big advantages over traditional J-hooks:

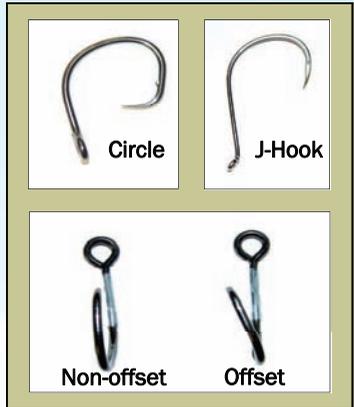
- Fish are seldom hooked deeply with non-offset circle hooks because their unique shape rarely lets the hook embed until it catches on the corner of the fish's mouth.
- Once solidly hooked, fish rarely become unhooked.
- Circle hooks are less likely to snag on rocky river bottoms.

Because circle hooks are very different than J-hooks, anglers should use some different techniques for them to work properly: First, "hang" the bait on the hook and leave the point exposed (**A circle hook needs to be free to pivot for it to function properly**). Second, when a fish starts to bite, let it mouth the bait a few seconds longer than you would with a J-hook. Lastly, do not set the hook. Instead, simply start reeling until you come tight on the fish. The hook will catch on the corner of the mouth as you smoothly tighten the line.

When using a regular J-hook, it is important to stay attentive to the rod and hook the fish quickly before it has a chance to swallow the bait.

Use barbless hooks (it's the law!). Pinch or file the barb down to ease removal of the hook and minimize the damage to a sturgeon's fleshy mouth.

Use a sinker slider (a law beginning in 2011) Tie your sinker to a dropper line on a sliding device, using at least ten pound test lighter line than your main line. This will minimize the chances of leaving a baited hook snagged to the bottom if you break off.



PLAY 'EM FAST to avoid overstressing the fish during the fight

Use 50 lb test monofilament or 130 lb test "superbraid" line at a minimum.

Monofilament has advantages in that it has high abrasion resistance, its thick diameter makes it unlikely to cut into a fish, and its stretch makes it forgiving when fighting large fish.

Use heavy gear—properly sized to fight large, powerful fish in heavy currents. A good sturgeon reel needs to be very strongly built, have a very smooth drag, and hold at least 250 yards of the proper line. Land the fish as quickly as possible, as fish that are fought to exhaustion can be at risk of not being able to recover.

Choose your fishing spot carefully. Be realistic about the chances of landing a large sturgeon when choosing a fishing hole, especially when fishing without a boat. Being "spooled" by a big fish makes a great fish story, but leaving a couple of hundred yards of line hooked to the fish puts its survival at risk.



RELEASE 'EM EASY to give the fish the maximum chance to survive

Keep the fish in the water. (it's the law!). Never pull the fish up on the rocks for a photo — Pulling the fish on the rocks will remove the fish's layer of protective mucus and often will open cuts in the fish's skin, which can lead to an infection. The best way to get a great sturgeon photo is to get in the water with the fish. In cold weather, this usually means having some waders handy. Keep water flowing over the gills as much as possible when removing the hook or snapping a picture.

Never tie the fish by the tail. A tail-roped fish can easily be injured, especially if it starts thrashing.

Revive a tired fish by holding its mouth open in the current so water flows over its gills until it wants to swim away. A tired sturgeon will usually remain calm when you hold them by the mouth upside down in the water. Keep your hands out of their gills.