

FRSCS Position Statement: First Nation Net Fisheries and Incidental Bycatch

Background

Founded in 1997, the FRSCS' vision is: *'White Sturgeon are wild, healthy, and naturally sustaining throughout the Fraser River watershed.'* We achieve this vision through our mission to work collaboratively with First Nations, provincial and federal governments, and other partners, by leveraging science and knowledge to accelerate the recovery of White Sturgeon throughout the Fraser River ecosystem.

The FRSCS provides expertise regarding Fraser River White Sturgeon biology, life history, and habitat use for consideration in the decision-making processes regarding the recovery and management of White Sturgeon, including in-river fisheries.

First Nations Gill Net Fisheries and Incidental Bycatch of White Sturgeon

The FRSCS recognizes that First Nations have inherent and treaty rights protected in the Canadian Constitution. These rights include the right to traditional and customary governance of traditional lands, waters, and resources, including fisheries.

The FRSCS also recognizes the spiritual and cultural importance of White Sturgeon to First Nations peoples and supports the ongoing integration of sustainable fishing and harvest methods that target salmon to help mitigate incidental bycatch.

FRSCS Position

The FRSCS believes in the importance of sustaining a relationship with First Nations and taking steps to mitigate the potential impacts to White Sturgeon that can result from net fisheries. Potential impacts to sturgeon include (but are not limited to) physiological (non-lethal) impacts interception events, and other events that may result in mortality, reduced fecundity, and/or spawning success. The FRSCS is dedicated to working with First Nations and collaborating on efforts to develop and integrate selective harvest methods for salmon net fisheries.

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