

California reacts to sturgeon decline

March 22 2006

California officials, having enacted emergency fishing rules to protect sturgeon, are considering long-term rules to become effective next year.

The emergency rules that went into effect March 2 restrict anglers to smaller white sturgeon, placing green sturgeon off-limits, the Sacramento (Calif.) Bee reported Wednesday.

The state Fish and Game Commission adopted the emergency limits in response to a decline in the sturgeon population. California officials estimate there might be only 2,000 spawning-age female white sturgeon remaining, and even fewer green sturgeon.

The emergency rules will remain in effect for 120 days, mainly to protect spawning fish in waters upstream of the Golden Gate Bridge, including the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, the Bee reported.

The restrictions allow anglers to keep only white sturgeon 46-56 inches long. They may not keep any green sturgeon, while catch-and-release fishing for both species is allowed.

Public meetings are scheduled to consider long-term rules.

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Citation: California reacts to sturgeon decline (2006, March 22) retrieved 20 April 2024 from

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