

# Atlantic Sturgeon, *Acipenser oxyrinchus*, in Chesapeake Bay

**What the Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
is doing to combat a dwindling population.**

**By Angel Bolinger and Steve Minkinen**



Atlantic sturgeons are a link to the past. Their prehistoric physical attributes are a visual reminder with [scutes](#), [spines](#), [bony plates](#), ventral mouth, and four barbels. Large sturgeons have been estimated to live for as long as 60 to 70 years. Historically, this anadromous species entered the Chesapeake Bay from the Atlantic Ocean and headed into tributaries to spawn. Some residents of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed have never seen or knew that Atlantic sturgeon were in the Bay. Sturgeons in the Chesapeake are now

rarely seen because of overfishing, dam construction, and pollution. The caviar demand contributed to the overfishing of this species in the Chesapeake Bay area. They have been rare in the Bay since the early 1900's. Since 1993, and last amended in 1996, Maryland regulations have prohibited the catch or possession of Atlantic sturgeon except for scientific investigation.

[Click here to learn more about sturgeon restoration in Chesapeake Bay.](#)