

Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*)

Status review and listing determination process

Why did NOAA Fisheries Service conduct a status review?



What is a status review?

In 2003, a workshop sponsored by the NOAA Fisheries Service and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was held to review the status of Atlantic sturgeon. The workshop provided an opportunity to gain additional information to determine if a new review of the status of the species was warranted. The 2003 workshop attendees concluded that some populations seemed to be recovering while other populations continued to be depressed. As a result, NOAA Fisheries Service initiated a second status review of Atlantic sturgeon in 2005 to reevaluate whether this species required protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

A status review is an evaluation of the available information about the biological vulnerability of a species, subspecies, or distinct vertebrate population segment (DPS). Information considered during a status review includes demographic information such as abundance, reproductive success, age structure, and distribution. A status review considers both historical and recent trends in these parameters, to the extent that this information is available. The status review must also evaluate the current and potential threats facing the species and ongoing efforts to protect the species, sub-species, or DPS.

What is a Distinct Population Segment (DPS)?

Section 3 of the ESA defines the term “species” to include any subspecies of fish or wildlife or plants, and any distinct population segment of any species of fish or wildlife which interbreeds when mature. NOAA Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have developed policy guidance regarding the recognition of DPSs (61 FR 4721; February 7, 1996).

What are the additional requirements for a status review for a DPS?

A status review for a potential DPS must evaluate the available information to determine whether policy requirements regarding discreteness and significance of the DPS are satisfied. A status review for a DPS must also describe its geographic boundaries.



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Who was involved in preparing the status review report?

A status review team (SRT) of biologists from NOAA Fisheries Service, USFWS, and US Geological Survey reviewed and evaluated the available information. The team was supplemented by eight state and regional experts who provided their individual expert opinions on the information contained in the status review report and provided additional data to ensure the report provided the best available data.

Has the report been peer reviewed?

Yes, the status review was peer reviewed by six independent reviewers prior to it being finalized. The charge to the peer reviewers as well as the individual reviews are posted on the following NOAA website:
www.cio.noaa.gov/itmanagement/prplans/ID61.html.

What happens now that the status review report is complete?

NOAA Fisheries Service will consider the information in the status review report and any other available information in order to make a formal finding regarding listing under the ESA. If listing is found to be warranted, then a proposed rule to list the species either as threatened or endangered will be published in the *Federal Register*. NOAA Fisheries Service will seek public comment on the proposed rule and will hold at least one public hearing if requested.

Who should be contacted for more information?

For more information on Atlantic sturgeon in the Northeast Region, please contact:

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