

Atlantic sturgeon

Acipenser oxyrinchus

Family: Acipenseridae

Omnivore



The Atlantic sturgeon is an ancient fish found along the Atlantic coastline from Florida to New Brunswick, Canada. Like salmon, they are an anadromous species, living in the ocean as adults and returning to freshwater rivers to spawn. The fry and young fish spend several years in freshwater before migrating into the ocean to mature. Sturgeon eggs are a highly sought delicacy known as 'black gold' or caviar, and overfishing, the construction of dams, and pollution have caused sturgeon species to plummet world-wide. All populations are now considered either threatened, endangered, or extirpated from their native waters.

Fun Facts

- Sturgeon were the first cash crop for the settlers at Jamestown.
- Atlantic sturgeon can live for 60 or more years, can reach lengths of 16 feet, and can weigh more than 800 pounds.
- Five rows of bony plates known as scutes help to protect the sturgeon from predation.
- Sturgeon have electroreceptors called *ampullae of Lorenzini* on their snout and gill covers that help them detect weak electrical currents.
- Four barbels hang in front of the sturgeon mouth and help the fish feel it's way along the bottom to find food.