TL’AZT’EN NATION / UFFCA
NECHAKO WHITE STURGEON
ATK PROJECT
FNFC INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE FORUM
OCTOBER 29, 2019
This map shows the distribution of the Nechako White Sturgeon.
BRIEF HISTORY

- Ranked as critically imperiled by the BC conservation data centre
- Listed as “Endangered” by the Committee on the Status of Endangered wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) in November 2003
- Listed as “Endangered” by the Species At Risk Act (SARA) on August 2006
Under the Species At Risk Act it is illegal to:

1. Kill, harm, harass or take individuals of extirpated, endangered or threatened species
2. Possess, sell, buy, sell or trade individuals or parts of them
3. Damage or destroy an individual's residence
4. Destroy any part of the species' legally identified critical habitat
In the last 50 years Population has dropped from over 5000 down to approximately 644.

Vast majority of these fish are over 40 yrs old.

Juveniles are not being successfully recruited.

Survived for over 175 million years without being disturbed.

Overfishing before the 1994 prohibition may have contributed to this sharp decline.
HEALTHY POPULATION
POPULATIONS THEN AND NOW
The graphs suggest that the demographics of the Nechako White Sturgeon has more adults than any other age group.

There is a low number of juveniles.

This is a concern because the number of spawning sturgeon is becoming less and more gaps between juveniles and adults.
UFFCA/TL’AZT’EN ATK PROJECT

Purpose:

- Initiate dialogue with Tl’azt’en Members to gather Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge concerning Nechako White Sturgeon
- Promote Educate or raise awareness about conservation issues related to Nechako White Sturgeon
- Conduct a minimum of 10 interviews with community members (Chief and Council, Elders, Fishers etc....)
ATK CONTINUED....

- Summarize information collected and obtain community review and approval of final report
- Create a draft ATK Framework protocol, that would assist in gathering ATK that could fill data gaps and priorities that exist pertaining to Nechako White Sturgeon
- Identify potential projects or areas of interest that could arise from information that is gathered
CHALLENGES

- Trust
- Language barriers
- Development of a questionnaire that is clear and concise about the information we were trying to gather
CHALLENGES ADDRESSED

- Trust
  - ATK protocol and Sharing agreement with UFFCA
  - Sharing Agreement is with a First Nation organization and not directly with the Government
  - Final report is reviewed by First Nation before being submitted anywhere
  - Consent form signed before doing any interviews
  - Information gathered is owned by the First Nation, and will not be released without its consent
Language Barriers

- Some of the elders were confused at points during the interviews
- Hired an interviewer fluent in the Carrier language
- Asking questions in Carrier made them clearer
- Interviewer was well known in the community, made interviewees feel more “comfortable”
CHALLENGES ADDRESSED CONT'D

- Questionnaire
  - Was initially developed to have open ended questions
  - Was quickly realized that questions needed to be more specific on information being requested
  - Mock interviews were conducted to test the fluidness of the questionnaire
PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Getting prior informed consent
  - Project concept was presented to Chief and Council before moving ahead.
  - Consent was received from each interviewee prior to each interview

- Developing the ATK protocol and Sharing agreement
  - No need to re-invent the wheel,
    - Previously developed ATK protocols and sharing agreements were reviewed prior to development for use in this project
    - All protocols and agreements were reviewed by both parties
THE INTERVIEWS

- Year One
  - 10 interviews were completed
  - Identified ways to better collect the data
- Year Two
  - Total of 18 interviews were completed
  - Revised questionnaire to be gather specific data
  - Followed up with interviewees with new format
  - Tape recorder was used during the interviews
  - Individual maps for each interview were used
RESULTS

- Maps of locations identified in interviews have been created
- Interviews have been fully transcribed
- A final report has been produced
- The maps produced will assist in further investigative work on identifying additional habitat for Nechako White Sturgeon
Tl’aht’en Nation hires two (2) sturgeon Monitors during the fishing season to monitor and if necessary release live sturgeon from fishing nets.

- Work with Carrier Sekani Tribal Council to report all encounters with Nechako White Sturgeon.
- Reduce mortality of Nechako White Sturgeon by catch during the FSC fisheries.
- Provide supplies to help Members repair damaged nets through the boat kit program.
STURG EO N RELEASE
ENGAGING OUR YOUTH

- Hatchery Release
- Eugene Joseph participates in a yearly hatchery release of Nechako White Sturgeon.

Mussi Cho !!