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cc. Fraser Valley Angling Guides Association
cc. Fraser River Sportfishing Alliance
cc. Erin Stoddard
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Fraser River White Sturgeon

The British Columbia Federation of Drift Fishers supports management restrictions when supported with scientific data and the opinions of industry experts. However, we do not support limiting recreational opportunities due to poor management or lack of provincial funding. Firstly, let it be clear, that the BCFDF supports the closure of the Jesperson's Side Channel, Herrling Island Side Channel and north Seabird Island Side Channel, May 15-July 31. These spawning grounds should be not only be sheltered from recreational anglers, but from external industrial activities such as gravel extraction and development. It is our hope that the province will rally to the defence of any local or federal initiatives that may interfere with these vital habitat staging/spawning areas.

It is the hope of the BCFDF, that the Province of British Columbia will try and ascertain the true cause of any population decline, and not simply restrict recreational/guided anglers in a blind attempt to remedy the underlying issues. Until habitat degradation, riverside development and stronger industrial control measures are implemented, we can't truly begin to know the cause of the juvenile decline. Both resident and guided non-resident anglers are increasingly becoming more sophisticated in their use of larger tackle to target larger Sturgeon, and therefore having less of an impact on the juvenile fish. Furthermore, the "Better Handling Practices" initiative is gaining momentum, and social media is seeing fewer mishandled fish than in years past. With all this being said, the recreational sector has little impact on the sustainability of White Sturgeon from the larger perspective. The onus is on the province to investigate the other possible external factors, such as gill net by-catch and pinniped predation, particularly on the juvenile fish.

The social and economic benefit to this fishery reaches far and wide, and is one of the last recreational fishing opportunities anglers can enjoy on the Fraser River. It is the hope of the British Columbia Federation of Drift Fishers, that the province will make every effort to build strong, tangible data with the INPUT OF ALL USER GROUPS, to maintain and grow the current population of White Sturgeon, while not limiting recreational opportunities.

The BCFDF remains committed to working with all fisheries managers, First Nations and other stakeholders toward protecting and enhancing these iconic creatures.