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Fishing Scenario ID #10

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FRASER RIVER STURGEON

Third cousins to sharks—and sharks are among the few fish to grow as big—species of sturgeon swam with dinosaurs; and individuals alive today may have hatched before the World War I. Boneless, scale-less, virtually toothless, these omnivores are partly armored by sharp plates along their sides, and equipped with an “inferior,” sucker-style mouth that can vacuum invertebrates and vegetation from a silty bottom, or inhale, whole, a spawned-out sockeye.



Just as that menu suggests, baits vary depending on local availability of food. Knowing the prey of the day is one reason to use a guide. Others include expert boat handling, tackle rigging and “large-fish-landing-with-lasso skills,” along with an intimate knowledge of changeable river conditions. Then there’s the issue of rods and reels adequate to fighting a fish that may outweigh the angler clinging to the other end of the line.

Vic Carrao of STS Guide Service has a long history on this great river, fishing sturgeon and championing fish conservation in this area. Spring is a time of year when action can be “furious” for two- to four-footers: expect between six and 15 hook-ups of fish this size per boat. There’s a reasonable chance you’ll see a fish of five feet, even seven...and the Fraser does harbor monsters more than 11 feet long...

We’ll remind you again: *bring a camera.*



Fraser River Sturgeon Timing Details

- 1. **DATES: MAY 1- 10**
- 2. For information about conditions contact STS Guide Service (toll free) at 1 866 771-3474 or email: sts@guidebc.com
- 3. Fishing is via jet boat, size depending on the number of anglers, from one to four.
- 4. While May provides some of the finest weather of the year in BC, do not cross the border without a raincoat.



Special Regulations/Conditions

- 1. Depends on location fish: if the trip is to the upper Fraser, anglers will need a BC Freshwater License: expeditions on the lower river require a Saltwater License. Both are available at <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/index.html> or any BC tackle store, but check first with sts@guidebc.com. In all cases, be sure to pick up **and read** the BC regulations booklet. See www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/documents/Region%202.pdf
- 2. To find out what you may bring into Canada, check *in advance* at Canadian Customs. Adults must carry a US Passport for return, children 15 and under a birth certificate: see [US Customs](#) to review current regulations. At crossings on either side of the border, roll down tinted windows. All occupants of vehicle should remove sunglasses and answer questions directly and honestly. Attempts at humor, sarcasm and wisecracks can *easily* set your trip back an hour, longer if an agent decides to remove seats, wheels, gas tank and camper shell.. **Often overlooked:** If you have a child or juvenile in your vehicle, he or she should have a permission-to-travel note signed by any parent(s) not in the car, stating where parent(s) expect the child to go, and for how long.
- 3. STS Guide Service 2007 rates are per six hour or eight hour day, and vary by the number of anglers. For more information see <http://guidebc.com/> or contact STS Guide Service toll free: at 1 866 771-FISH (3474) or Email: sts@guidebc.com
- 4. Fishing Coaches strongly recommends that members commit themselves to learning as much as possible from a guide. In simplest terms, this means asking many as many questions as you can think of, and following directions as carefully as possible!

While the goal at Fishing Coaches is to provide information that will lead members to become more expert at every level, in some cases a guide's services provide a large advantage; and, on occasion fisheries require such unique knowledge, skills and tackle that a guide is all but mandatory.

Fishing Coaches does not receive commissions or compensation of any kind for recommendations of equipment, tackle or services.



Fraser River Sturgeon

Equipment

- 1. All fishing gear is provided, although anglers may bring their own—check with STS.
- 2. Expect beautiful weather with cool to moderate temperature; come prepared for rain and temps from cool to cooler.
- 3. As on any trip, bring polarized sunglasses, and—for certain—*and a camera*.
- 4. On one day trips bring a lunch and beverage, or purchase from STS. On multiple day bookings, STS will provide.

Rigging/Techniques

- 1. **While you should enjoy the luxury of having all tackle set up for you, Fishing Coaches** urges Members to ask about rigging or techniques unfamiliar to them. Guides typically know plenty about best practices, and have often developed variations specific to their own waters or personal styles. And guides like Vic Carrao can also answer important questions about conservation issues on their rivers, and how anglers can help.
- 2. Patience is important when fishing for these beasts, and many are lost when excited anglers strike too quickly. There will be action enough when the fish is hooked. For a description, see Carrao's "Fishing the Fraser River Marlin, the Mighty White Sturgeon," at guidebc.com/articles

"For sturgeon we use a method called plunking, this method is most effective while fishing the river bottom. We anchor our boat in various locations on the river, cast our weighted lines to the river bottom and place our rods in rod holders..."



STS Guide Services



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More than one river—hundreds now—owe their "lives" to the activism of guides, and to anglers these guides have informed. **If you hope to have excellent fishing—and that your kids will have any fishing at all—advocate for the resources fisher's value most.** (See "Beyond Basics," page 4...or go directly to [/www.frasersturgeon.com](http://www.frasersturgeon.com) for The Fraser River Sturgeon Conservation Society



Fraser River Sturgeon Location Details

- 1. For Sturgeon fishing STS Guide Service meets anglers near Mission, BC, about two hours north of Seattle, less than 30 minutes from the border crossing at Sumas, WA. STS offers an unusually comprehensive and detailed set of driving directions on their website, under FAQ (frequently asked questions). See <http://www.guidebc.com/faq.asp>



- 2. **From the US, traveling north on I-5**, exit in Bellingham, WA, at the Guide Meridian. Take a right.
- 3. Continue north following signage to Sumas and the US /Canada border.
- 4. After crossing the border drive north to Hwy #1. Follow Hwy # 1 east to Hwy #11. Note: (Hwy # 11 is the 3rd and final exit to Abbotsford and is called the Sumas exit).
- 5. Drive north on Hwy 11 to Mission, follow signs to Hwy 7 east.
- 6. Travel east on Hwy # 7 approx 30 km to the Harrison Bay Store. Harrison Bay Store is on your right hand side, watch for the large blue and yellow STS Guiding Service sign on the side of the highway.
- 7. Call 1 866 771-3474 if you have any problems. (Note: check with your cell phone service about coverage in southern BC before leaving the US).
- 1. **From Vancouver, BC:** Take Hwy 1 east from Vancouver to Abbotsford
- 2. Take the Sumas exit and drive north. At the 3rd set of lights the road turns into Hwy 11, which travels north to Mission. (There are good signs on the Hwy that will help you find Mission.) The travel time from Hwy 1 to Mission is approx 10 to 15 minutes by car.
- 3. On Hwy 11 you will come to a large bridge that crosses over the Fraser River, once you cross the bridge you're in Mission. Turn right on the first off ramp.
- 4. The road will curve to the right, then go straight for approx 200 yards to a juncture that requires you to turn left on Mission or right to the Boat ramp.
- 5. Turn right then right again at the stop sign. Follow the riverside road to the end and park in the parking lot on your left. Mission Marine is a land mark that is visible from the bridge and is across the street from Mission Boat launch.
- 6. Call 1 866 771-3474 if you have any problems.

Saving Our Own

The Caspian Sea in Russia is the largest inland water in the world. But dams and damned poachers' unrestrained slaughter of Beluga Sturgeon, a species closely related to the sturgeons of Canada and the US, has reached a point where scientists are now uncertain if enough of these giants survive to sustain their existence. Most of the trade is illegal, and controlled by the Russian Mafia...which profitably services North American, European and Asian markets.



Fraser River Sturgeon Conservation Society

<http://www.frasersturgeon.com/>

The FRSCS was founded in 1997 by a group of dedicated sturgeon enthusiasts from several sectors in BC. The founding and current chairman of the FRSCS, Rick Hansen, has provided leadership and motivation to a talented set of directors, made up of community representatives from provincial, federal, and First Nation governments, industry, science, education, the environment. The Society's mandate is to conserve and protect Fraser River white sturgeon and their habitat. This is addressed through: the development and implementation of stewardship activities, public education and awareness initiatives; conducting research and communicating the results; and professionally addressing key issues facing sturgeon with appropriate actions.



Over the last five years, the Society has made great progress in identifying and addressing issues affecting the recovery of white sturgeon in the Lower Fraser River. In order to produce reliable estimates of the population of Fraser River white sturgeon, novel life history and migration information for the species, and heightened awareness levels in the public regarding the state of this culturally and ecologically significant species, the Society designed a cost-effective monitoring and assessment program. This significant, volunteer-driven program has coordinated activities and in-kind contributions from true stewards of the resource: sport fishing guides, recreational, commercial, and aboriginal fishermen, test fishery and enforcement personnel, and various fishery monitors. The program has gathered sponsorship and support from provincial, federal, and aboriginal governments, plus non-government institutions, associations, and foundations.

Program volunteers tagged and released over 21,000 live white sturgeon during the first four years of the program within a study area that spans over 180 linear kilometers of river from the Fraser Canyon to the Fraser estuary. The program has resulted in one of the best baseline datasets on sturgeon in the world, creating an internationally recognized population model.

Vic Carrao and his STS guides participate in the Society's tagging operations.