

Staff Summary for October 8-9, 2025

11B. Department Wildlife and Fisheries Division, and Department Ecosystem Conservation Division

Today's Item

Information ☒

Action ☐

Receive updates from Department divisions on items of note since the previous Commission meeting.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)

Background (N/A)

Significant Public Comments (N/A)

Recommendation (N/A)

Exhibits

1. [Department news release: "White Sturgeon Opener Kicks Off with a No-Fee Report Card for this Season," dated September 26, 2025](#)

Motion (N/A)



CDFW NEWS

September 26, 2025

White Sturgeon Opener Kicks Off with a No-Fee Report Card for This Season



The white sturgeon sport fishing season opens Oct. 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, for catch-and-release fishing in the ocean, San Francisco Bay, Delta and lower Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers (consult the current regulations to verify open areas and times). Catch-and-release fishing for white sturgeon will continue to be available for anglers under new regulations enacted by the California Fish and Game Commission in August 2025. Previously, catch-and-release fishing was permitted by emergency regulations that were set to expire in September 2025.

Though recent results from white sturgeon monitoring surveys by CDFW suggest the white sturgeon population has continued to decline, science indicates that non-lethal

take via a catch-and-release fishery will not harm the long-term viability of the white sturgeon population. Factors such as harmful algal blooms, poaching, poor river and Delta conditions and historical overharvest have been shown to have significant negative impacts on the population.

“With responsible catch-and-release angling and other conservation efforts, we can have world-class white sturgeon sport fisheries in California,” said Jay Rowan, Chief of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Fisheries Branch.

The enacted regulations also include changes to the [sturgeon fishing report card](#). Changes include shifting from a calendar-year approach to aligning with the sturgeon fishing season. Other changes to the card include the kinds of data anglers are asked to record. Anglers will be able to get a sturgeon report card at no fee this new season to help accommodate this change. Starting with the 2026-27 season, sturgeon report cards will be \$8.13, reduced from the previous fee of \$11.06.

“Since there is no fee for this year’s report card, this is a great opportunity for new and returning anglers to experience the thrill of catch-and-release fishing for this prehistoric giant,” said John Kelly, Statewide Sturgeon Coordinator for CDFW.

Report cards for the 2025 calendar year that have already been purchased will remain valid until Dec. 31, 2025, or anglers may choose to switch to the new card immediately. The old report cards may either be returned by mail to the address printed on the card prior to Jan. 31, 2026, or reported online between Jan. 1 and Jan. 31, 2026. Anglers may get the new 2025-26 card from a fishing license vendor or online at any time starting Sept. 27. (Note that cards ordered online may take two weeks to arrive by mail.)

While there is no fee for this season’s report card, card holders are still responsible for knowing and complying with all applicable regulations when fishing under the authority of the report card. For the complete regulations, including the summarized items above, and open and closed areas, see the 2025-26 California Freshwater Sport Fishing Regulations and the 2024-25 California Ocean Sport Fishing Regulations available at [CDFW's Fishing and Hunting Regulations page](#).

The data gathered from Sturgeon Fishing Report Cards supports fisheries management efforts that benefit sturgeon and sturgeon anglers in California. Anglers are required by regulation to return the new report cards or submit a report online by July 31, 2026, (CCR - Title 14, Section 1.74).

Helpful Resources on White Sturgeon

To find helpful resources on white sturgeon fishing, visit [CDFW's white sturgeon page](#). To learn how to fish for white sturgeon, you can view the [How To Fish For White Sturgeon \(opens in new tab\)](#) (video). To find Information on white sturgeon conservation efforts, visit [Conserve The Sturg.](#)

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