

LAKE STURGEON

(*Acipenser fulvescens*)

Oneida Lake Status:
Uncommon

- 8,000 juveniles stocked in Oneida Lake
- Most unique looking fish in Oneida Lake
- Sturgeon can live for more than 100 years

Lake sturgeon are one of the most unique looking fish in Oneida Lake. Adults are a dull grey color that is darker on the back than on the belly. Juveniles are a brownish grey with green tones on the underbelly. Lake sturgeon have distinctive rows of “shields” down their back and sides, and have two smooth lobes on the lower lip. The sturgeon’s mouth is sharp, wide, and cone-shaped, and 4 smooth barbels grow around it (see photo at right).

Lake sturgeon prefer areas in Oneida Lake with clean sand, gravel, or rock bottoms where food is abundant. Here, they eat a variety of organisms including amphipods, isopods, caddisflies, leeches, zebra mussels, crayfish, snails, clams, small fish, and even algae.

The lake sturgeon is an ancient species that was once abundant throughout the Great Lakes. Sturgeon can live for more than 100 years, making them one of the longest-lived freshwater fish. Sturgeon records from Oneida Lake date back to the 1800’s, and this fish is currently listed as “threatened” in Oneida Lake. In an effort to restore the lake sturgeon in Oneida Lake, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation stocked nearly 8,000 juveniles between 1995 and 2004. The growth of these fish has been exceptional, and as of 2005, the largest sturgeon recorded measured over 50 inches and weighed well over 40 pounds.



Sturgeon swimming near shore



Oneida Lake researchers collect diet data by analyzing stomach contents



Sturgeon research on Oneida Lake



Lake sturgeon detail drawing

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Underside of a lake sturgeon's mouth and snout:
www.tnfish.org/PhotoGalleryFish_TWRA/FishPhotoGallery_TWRA/pages/LakeSturgeonBarblesFr enchBroadNegus_jpg.htm