



*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations
for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful
restoration well in progress by 2015*

Atlantic Sturgeon Delisting Petition





ESA Petition

- Board tasked the TC to develop a delisting/downlisting petition for their review at Annual Meeting
- Federal TC members recused themselves
- Request for volunteers to form a subcommittee
- TC members from ME, NY NC, and SC as well as the TC Chair
 - Representation from 4 of 5 of the DPSs





ESA Petition

- Petition subcommittee met via conference call and email to discuss and develop draft
- Reviewed required format and elements for a petition
- Discussed delisting and downlisting alternatives for each DPS, and available supporting data





ESA Petition

- The following information is relevant to a determination as to whether a petition provides substantial information that indicates the petitioned action may be warranted:
 1. Information on estimates of current population status, trends, sizes, and distributions, both in captivity and the wild;
 2. Biological information on the species that is relevant to determining whether a species may be endangered/threatened;
 3. Identification and description of the Act's five factors that the petitioner believes are affecting the species, including where these factors are acting upon the species, the magnitude and imminence of these factors, and whether, either singly or acting in combination, these factors may cause the species to be an endangered or threatened species





ESA Petition

- The petition subcommittee has not yet developed recommendations by DPS
 1. Gulf of Maine DPS - XX
 2. New York Bight DPS - XX
 3. Chesapeake Bay DPS - XX
 4. Carolina DPS - XX
 5. South Atlantic DPS - XX





ESA Petition

- For each DPS:
 - Development of delisting criteria/metrics
 - Assessment of listing factor threats with updated data





Recovery Plan and Delisting Examples

- Shortnose sturgeon – Listed 1967
- Shortnose sturgeon recovery plan (NMFS 1998)
 - **Endangered threshold** when species reaches a min. population size that: 1) is large enough to prevent extinction, and 2) will make the loss of genetic diversity unlikely. Min. pop size has not yet been determined.
 - **Threatened threshold** should reflect sturgeon reproductive potential and represent a population of sufficient size that levels of natural mortality likely to be experienced will not depress the population below the endangered threshold.





Recovery Plan and Delisting Examples

- Gulf Sturgeon – listed 1991 ; recovery plan 1995
 - **Short-term recovery objective** will be considered achieved when CPUE during monitoring is not declining from baseline level over a 3 to 5-year period.
 - **The long-term recovery objective** will be considered achieved when the population is demonstrated to be self-sustaining and efforts are underway to restore lost or degraded habitat.
 - **A self-sustaining population** is one in which the average rate of natural recruitment is at least equal to the average mortality rate in a 12-year period.





Resources

- Most subcommittee members will be directed to work on assessment
- Will need representation/lead from all DPSs at a minimum
- Additional technical staff will be necessary as the petition moves forward to conduct analysis
- Legal advice and review of the document





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Atlantic Sturgeon Habitat Addendum





Habitat Addendum

- A habitat addendum was developed for Atlantic Sturgeon by the Habitat Committee
- Approved for Public comment by the Board in August





Habitat Addendum

- Description of habitat by life stage
- Habitats of Special Significance and Trends for Atlantic Sturgeon
- Recommendations
- Research Needs





Habitat Addendum

- Public comment period ended October 9th
- No comments were received

