

**Bonneville Power Administration
Fish and Wildlife Program FY98 Watershed Proposal Form**

Section 1. General administrative information

Title Sturgeon Broodstock Protection Project
(SBPP)

Bonneville project number, if an ongoing project 8062

Business name of agency, institution or organization requesting funding
Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

Business acronym (if appropriate) WDFW

Proposal contact person or principal investigator:

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Subcontractors.

Organization	Mailing Address	City, ST Zip	Contact Name

NPPC Program Measure Number(s) which this project addresses.

NMFS Biological Opinion Number(s) which this project addresses.

Other planning document references.

Subbasin.

**Lower Columbia River (Bonneville Dam down river) & Upper Columbia
(Bonneville to McNary - Zone 6)**

Short description.

Enforce closed areas of sanctuaries in high catch areas. Conduct emphasis night patrols to document rate of illegal night fishing and covert contacts with caviar dealers. Mature sturgeon are vulnerable due to high value of caviar and sport fishers taking oversized fish from the sanctuaries.

Section 2. Key words

Mark	Programmatic Categories	Mark	Activities	Mark	Project Types
X	Anadromous fish		Construction	X	Watershed
	Resident fish		O & M		Biodiversity/genetics
	Wildlife		Production		Population dynamics
	Oceans/estuaries		Research		Ecosystems
	Climate		Monitoring/eval.		Flow/survival
	Other		Resource mgmt		Fish disease
			Planning/admin.		Supplementation
		X	Enforcement		Wildlife habitat enhancement/restoration
			Acquisitions		

Other keywords.

Safeguard broodstock, surveillance of sanctuaries, illicit sales, mishandling fish

Section 3. Relationships to other Bonneville projects

Project #	Project title/description	Nature of relationship

Section 4. Objectives, tasks and schedules

Objectives and tasks

Obj 1,2,3	Objective	Task a,b,c	Task
1	Reduce mortality of mature broodstock	a.	Weekly emphasis in high catch areas - overt and covert.
		b.	Design data base to identify catch,

			retention, release ratios, handling problems.
2	Stop night fishing	a.	Covert surveillance on high catch areas identified by Fish Mgt
		b.	Uniformed contacts of illegal fishers.
3	Stop illicit caviar sales	a.	Uniformed contacts of caviar dealers - data base tracking system
		b.	Covert contacts with identified traffickers to infiltrate illicit organizations
4	Educate public on SBPP	'a	Media contacts to publicize results of effort to reach objectives

Objective schedules and costs

Objective #	Start Date mm/yyyy	End Date mm/yyyy	Cost %
1	05/1998	06/1998	34
2	seasonal	seasonal	34
3	01/1998	12/1998	17
4	01/1998	12/1998	15

Schedule constraints.

Emergency regulations

Completion date.

1999

Section 5. Budget

FY99 budget by line item List FY99 budget amounts for each category. If an item needs more explanation, provide it in the Note column. If the project uses PIT tags, include the cost (\$2.90/tag). **Be sure to enter a total on the last line: this is the amount of your budget request.**

Item	Note	FY98
Personnel	20 to 40% of staff time from Dets, 4,5,6 for Obj 1,2; 20% of 4 FTEs - includes 2 FTE from SIU for Obj 3; 5% of 1 FTE for Obj 4.	55,000

Fringe benefits		13,700
Supplies, materials, non-expendable property	Repair and replacement of equipment as needed	5,000
Operations & maintenance	Patrol vehicles during activity	10,700
Capital acquisitions or improvements (e.g. land, buildings, major equip.)		
PIT tags	# of tags: NA	
Travel		
Indirect costs		16,036
Subcontracts		
Other		
TOTAL		100,436

Outyear costs

Outyear costs	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02
Total budget				
O&M as % of total				

Section 6. Abstract

Historically White Sturgeon freely migrated from the upper waters of the Columbia Basis to the coastal marine waters throughout their life history. Hydropower dams have now disrupted sturgeon migrations and limited spawning habitat and food availability in the reservoirs upstream of Bonneville Dam. Production has declined precipitously in the Columbia upstream of Bonneville Dam. Protection of broodstock is critical to maintain the health of the population. The Lower Columbia population reached record lows at the turn of the century due to over harvest of broodstock. The populations turned around after restrictions on broodstock harvest were adopted in 1950. Current harvest regulations have rebuilt the sturgeon populations downstream of Bonneville Dam to healthy levels. The key to maintaining the status of the resource is assuring the future production by emphasis on broodstock protection. Lower river populations can be considered a “safety bank” that can be used to rebuild depressed populations upstream of Bonneville Dam if necessary. This project will reduce mortality on broodstock and determine the market direction of illicit caviar. Protection will focus on contacting fishers in high catch areas to document catch, release, mis-handling ratios. Develop or adjust current data base systems to document outputs / outcomes and adjust protection effort. Night surveillance during closed periods and sanctuary areas to stop illegal take. Covert contacts through out the year with caviar dealers to stop illicit sales. Media contacts with documented results of law enforcement efforts to stop illegal take and sales of broodstock. Protection efforts will focus on the Columbia River below Bonneville Dam but will include efforts upstream to McNary.

NMFS and WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE data base systems will provide monthly, quarterly and a annual report. These will be monitored by Fish Mgt staff for evaluation.

Section 7. Project description

a. Technical and/or scientific background.

The SBPP is a focused effort to reduce mortality on lower Columbia River White Sturgeon Broodstock. Resource managers consider this stock healthier than stocks in the Mid-Columbia Mainstem Subbasin. Lower river stocks are actually identical and populations are increasing. Currently FWP #8605000 with ODFW is evaluating sturgeon populations throughout the basin and comments on potential for rebuilding depressed populations. Law enforcement effort in this proposal will directly contribute to that potential by reducing broodstock loss. Unformed emphasis in high catch areas and sanctuaries will make a difference on catch, retention and mis-handling ratios. Surveillance of these areas will document compliance rates when fishers are on their own. Strategies will then be adjusted to meet objectives. The covert law enforcement focus on dealers trafficking in illicit caviar will greatly reduce take on mature fish throughout the Columbia River basin.

Consider one subject arrested with possession of 3,200 pounds of caviar representing 2,340 oversized sturgeon. One gravid female sturgeon could be worth \$6,000.00 market value. Savings of one fish could amount to more than 1,000,000 viable eggs. Public education is part of this proposal. Using major media to inform people of the illicit take of a valuable white sturgeon resource and its value to the ecosystem of the basin is critical to public acceptance of reduced seasons and cooperation in protecting this resource.

b. Proposal objectives.

Consistent with FWP restoration planning: Reduce broodstock mortality by 50%.

- 1. Protect sturgeon sanctuary areas and monitor high catch areas identified by Fish Mgt.**
- 2. Stop illegal night sturgeon take by surveillance of selected high catch areas.**
- 3. Stopping dealers illegal trafficking in caviar from broodstock will be achieved by covert and uniformed officer contacts and documentation of records, product review and “set up” buys. Monthly activity reports would be summarized quarterly with an annual report.**
- 4. Develop media program on White Sturgeon survival. Introduce into public forum April 1998.**

c. Rationale and significance to Regional Programs.

Completion of this project will reduce mortality on broodstock in the lower main stem and Zone 6, enhancing FWP holistic effort resulting in lower river population protection as well as assuring a source for supplementation for depressed sturgeon populations in the up river subbasins. Current staff response to sturgeon complaints are reactionary. The SBPP would fund additional work focused on broodstock survival. FWP objectives to restore stocks have been directed at habitat requirements and artificial production. The SBPP provides a law enforcement effort that compliments habitat studies by assuring more mature sturgeon will use the habitat for spawning. This will provide an integrated, holistic approach of fish managers and law enforcement focused together to rebuild a critical fish resource. The market value of sturgeon and caviar gives incentive for illegal take. This species cannot survive against hydropower dams, negative habitat changes and illegal take by an increasing number of fishers focusing on sturgeon due to listings on salmonids. FWP managers must work with regional fish and law enforcement staff funding measures that address every aspect of mortality. Law enforcement does make a difference.

d. **Project history**

e. **Methods.**

Objective 1. Officers check all anglers in selected areas and document catch, release figures and mis-handling problems. Use statistical design developed by Fish Management to assess the effectiveness of overt activity to increase compliance to 95%. Assumption is that compliance rate is 40. This is a heavy use fishery. Sample size will vary from 25 to 50 anglers contacted per day; for 30 days. Sample size is based on what our staff checks in a normal eight hour day effort.

Objective 2. Officers will conduct uniformed patrol during closed hours and surveillance activity in selected sanctuaries. All suspect violators will be contacted and results documented.

Objective 3. Coordinate covert and overt contacts with wholesale dealers, commercial fishers, charters and guides to determine catch rates for sport fishers and illicit commercial fisheries. This is a routine effort today. The proposal will fund a emphasis on the lower Columbia River main stem. This effort will protect upriver stocks as well as lower river subbasin stocks.

Objective 4. Enforcement staff maintain regular contact with major media in the basin to inform the public on protection effort Raising the public awareness of sturgeon broodstock issues will result in increased public cooperation.

f. **Facilities and equipment.**

All specialized equipment was obtained through the first CBLEC grant. Routine maintenance is the on-going costs of vehicles, aircraft, boats, surveillance vehicle and cameras, night vision equipment and media equipment.

g. References. FWP #8605000. ODFW. White Sturgeon Productivity Status and Habitat Requirements. BPA/NPPC 1998 summary of subbasin projects. Pages 33 thru 36.

Section 8. Relationships to other projects

FWP funded the CBLEC grant for enhanced law enforcement work first on the main stem Columbia River and then expanded to the basin. Since 1995 certain resident species have been accepted as critical issues for BPA project requests, i.e., Bull Trout and White Sturgeon. This proposal continues the holistic strategy of protecting anadromous and resident stocks from gravel to gravel. The focused effort on the lower main stem will give FWP an updated picture of what is actually occurring with White Sturgeon broodstock. Officers responding to citizen complaints and detectives working illegal sturgeon and caviar sales recognize an increasing take of broodstock. Market values continue to provide incentives to risk illegal take. ODFW project #8605000 for evaluating sturgeon productivity and habitat requirements can be hindered if illegal take continues at the present rate. Broodstock must survive. The correct strategy for reducing mortality is integrated efforts of fish, habitat and law enforcement managers working together to reach the objective of increased broodstock availability. Law enforcement can stop illicit sales and illegal take in priorities areas. This compliments projects such as the ODFW sturgeon study and furthers FWP objectives of restoring anadromous and resident fish stocks.

Section 9. Key personnel

SW Region, Enforcement Program staff, 16 officers, 3 sergeants, 1 captain will be assigned tasks under this project for 1998/1999. Mainstem monitoring will be coordinated with Oregon State Police staff.

Section 10. Information/technology transfer

Work will be document using CBLEC Individual Officer Activity Reports and agency activity reports. NMFS maintains the CBLEC data base. Monthly, quarterly and annual reports are produced.