

Gulf Sturgeon

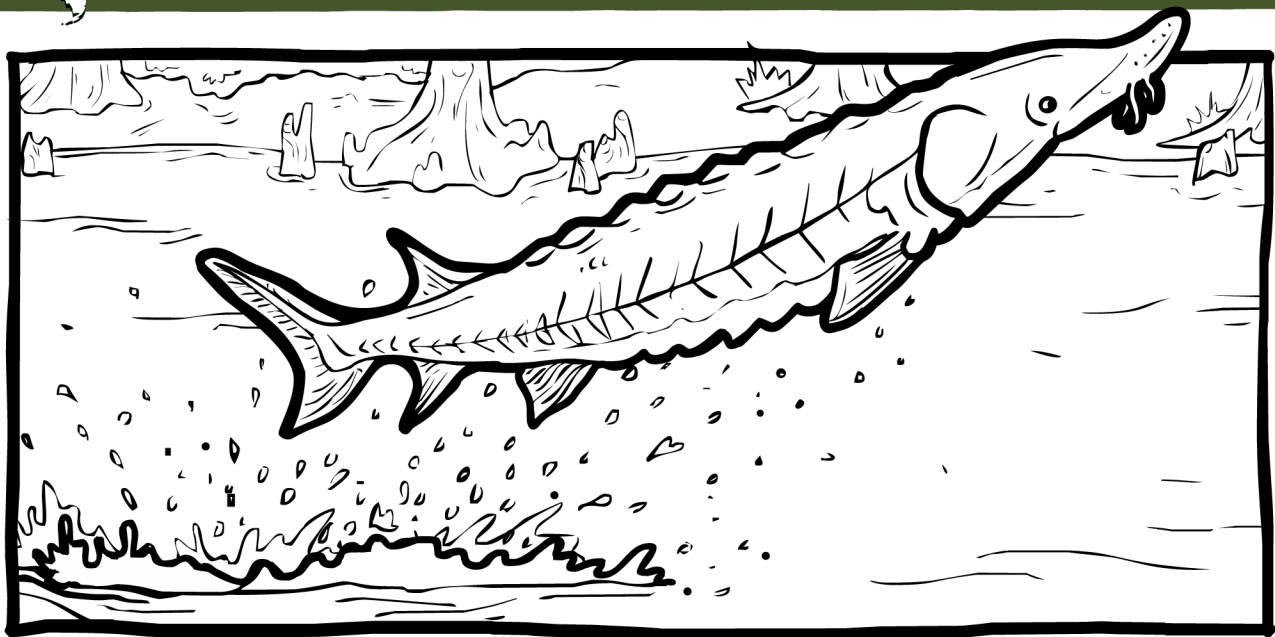
Gulf Sturgeon *(Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi)*

Instant ID

- A large, prehistoric-looking fish with 5 rows of bony plates
- Color ranges from olive to brown with lighter plates and belly
- Grows up to 8 feet long and can weigh over 200 pounds
- Has a long body when compared to its width
- Mouth points down on a long snout with barbels (whisker-like projections for sense of touch)

Native Niches

- Found in rivers and the Gulf Mexico from Florida to Louisiana
- During the spring and summer it utilizes tannic (acidic, tea-colored) rivers from the Suwannee westward
- Lives in near-shore, sandy-bottomed waters of the Gulf of Mexico during the fall and winter



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Favorite Foods

- Eats benthic (sea floor) animals

Critter Characteristics

- Differs from Atlantic sturgeon in eating habits and pancreas size
- Gulf sturgeon were the source of the caviar industry in Florida
- Anadromous (lives in salt and freshwater)
- Sturgeon anatomy is virtually unchanged since the time of the dinosaurs

Population Protection

- When boating, slow down for jumping sturgeon
- The former caviar industry, pollution, poaching and habitat destruction are reasons why it is a protected species