

Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance Statement on Dead Sturgeon

Date: 08/28/2020

The Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance (LFFA) regrets to confirm that on August 27th, a Conservation and Protection Officer from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) contacted our organization to inform us that 16 sturgeon were found dead in a gill net at the confluence of the Harrison and Fraser Rivers.

First Nations in the Lower Fraser have held a moratorium on killing sturgeon for almost 30 years. Sturgeon, who are protected under the federal *Species At Risk Act*, are of enormous spiritual and cultural to Stó:lō people and we are devastated to hear of this report from DFO.

In 2017, the LFFA worked in collaboration with the Fraser River Sturgeon Society to conduct a highly successful ghost net removal program. It is a priority of this organization, in partnership with the Fraser Valley Aboriginal Fisheries Society, to secure funding to continue removal of abandoned nets from our waters. We also regularly advocate for increased enforcement and the strengthening of Indigenous Guardianship programs in our region.

Further inquiries about this week's incident are being made in nearby Sq'ewlets First Nation, where community members are being asked to report any usual fishing activity. In the meantime, we stand in unanimity with all those who are saddened by this wasteful and tragic incident.

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