

For Immediate Release:

Oshkosh, WIThe 1990 sturgeon spearing season is "just around the corner", and many veteran spearers are getting their equipment ready, but are also keeping a sharp eye on on ice conditions.

Last year sturgeon spearers had to contend with exceptionally hazardous travel conditions. Large openwater areas in Lake Winnebago limited travel restricting spearers to near shore areas. As a result most sturgeon were taken in shallower water than usual. The opening weekend shanty count was only 1,400 compared to 3,425 in 1988, producing a lower harvest.

Fewer anglers participated in the 1989 season as license sales totalled only ~~3~~3,794 compared to an average of 8,100 over the past 5 years.

When the last sturgeon was registered at the close of the 19 day season, the final tally showed a harvest of 362 fish. This compares to an average of 577 sturgeon the previous 5 seasons. These fish averaged 55 inches in length and 39 pounds. The largest sturgeon taken in 1989 was a 111 pound, 76 incher registered by David Jurgensmier of Fond du Lac.

The sturgeon spearing season on Lake Winnebago opens February 10 and continues through March 1, 1990. There is no season on the Upriver Lakes (Poygan, Winneconne and Butte des Morts) in 1990.

The minimum size limit on sturgeon in this water is 45 inches and if there is any doubt as to whether or not the fish is of legal length - DO NOT THROW THE SPEAR.

All spearers must have a \$7.10 sturgeon spearing license and be at least 14 years of age. Spearers 14 and 15 years old are not required to have a hook and line fishing license in order to obtain a spearing license, but everyone else must have a current fishing license along with a sturgeon spearing license. The license must be carried by the person at all times while fishing for sturgeon by means of a spear. A sturgeon tag is furnished with each license and must immediately be locked to the tail of the fish after it is speared.

No sturgeon spearing licenses may be purchased after the season opens. Licenses may be obtained prior to the season at various license depots found around the lake, DNR offices or by mail by those persons not able to get to a license depot. License application forms are available at the DNR office in Oshkosh, P.O. Box 2565, 905 Bayshore Drive, 54903, or Madison, P.O. Box 7921, 53707. Any person losing their license may obtain a duplicate from the County Clerks or DNR for a \$3.60 fee.

GET YOUR LICENSE EARLY - NO LICENSES WILL BE SOLD AFTER THE SEASON
OPENS ON FEBRUARY 10.

On the same day a sturgeon is speared, it shall be registered at an official DNR registration station by no later than 7:00 p.m. at the station. Wundrows Station at Fairy Springs Road will not be registering sturgeon this year, instead R.K. Corral will be registering which is located at Fairy Springs Road and Hwy. 55. The Department of Natural Resources would like to acknowledge Harriet Wundrow who has registered sturgeon for the past 20 years. A registration tag will be attached to the fish and both that tag and the fisherman's own sturgeon tag shall remain attached until the fish is consumed.

The waters open to spearing contain a number of sturgeon that have DNR tags affixed to their dorsal fins. It is important that anyone spearing a tagged fish bring it to the attention of the registration station. The organization "Sturgeon for Tomorrow" is again offering a reward of \$10.00 for every fish that is registered that has a DNR tag, as the information gathered from these tags will be of considerable value in the management of the sturgeon population in the Lake Winnebago System.

In addition, there are also several sturgeon swimming around Lake Winnebago bearing radio transmitter tags. One of the sturgeon contains a radio tag inside the body cavity which can be identified by a red thread-like antennae (6" long) on the belly and an orange circular plastic tag on the dorsal fin. A number of other sturgeon have radio tags attached to the dorsal fin on the back of the fish. "Sturgeon for Tomorrow" is also offering a \$50.00 reward for the return of a radio tag, and should anyone spear one of these fish, please have the registration station call the DNR office (414-424-3059) or Wendt's Bar and Harbor in Van Dyne (414-688-5231) immediately so we can examine the fish.

Spearers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the pamphlet, "Wisconsin Spearing and Netting Regulations" - as all regulations will be strictly enforced. Should you have any questions, contact your local Conservation Warden.

For Further Information, Contact:
Fisheries Management staff
DNR Office
905 Bayshore Drive
P.O. Box 2565
Oshkosh, WI 54903
Phone: (414)424-3059