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Sturgeon For Tomorrow

Black Lake Chapter

1604 North Black River Road
Cheboygan, MI 49721



STURGEON GUARD



Dedicated to the Future of our Sturgeon

STURGEON FOR TOMORROW

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www.SturgeonForTomorrow.org



[www.facebook.com/
SturgeonForTomorrowBlackLakeChapter](http://www.facebook.com/SturgeonForTomorrowBlackLakeChapter)

Your Role as a Sturgeon Guard

For over a decade, the annual Sturgeon Guarding Program has proven that citizens who watch over the river have greatly reduced poaching while helping to ensure the protection and proliferation of the species. As a guard, you are charged with safeguarding one of Michigan's most valuable natural resources—the lake sturgeon.



When the six week long spawning season begins in late April, sturgeon guards are assigned in shifts to sites along the river to stand watch and, if necessary, use cell phones provided by Sturgeon for Tomorrow (SFT) to contact Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Conservation Officers actively patrolling the area in support of the guarding effort. Aerial surveillance is also deployed to secure the area and deter illegal activity. Because we are guests on the river, our assignment is to watch the spawning areas,

be visible, but remain as low key as possible. Each day, volunteers patrolling the river are kept up to date on how many fish have been seen or tagged and informed of action plans for the day. While we do our best to get all volunteers out on the riverbank to see fish, it is impossible to predict exactly when spawning will occur and invariably we must cancel some scheduled shifts if fish are simply not active. In case of inactivity, we make every attempt to reschedule volunteers into active periods. Coupled with our camping ambassador incentives, for many, the Sturgeon Guarding Program has become a family tradition.

Why Saving the Sturgeon is Vital

The lake sturgeon is considered a living fossil—a rare and threatened species throughout the United States. Each spring, as sturgeon migrate up rivers to spawn, a large percentage of adult sturgeon will be concentrated in a small spawning area along the rocky riverbanks where they are almost oblivious to nearby human activity making them susceptible to poaching. Conservation Officers, sturgeon guards and other conservation groups are concentrated in these areas 24 hours a day—devoting time and effort into protecting the spawning sturgeon from poachers. If poaching were left unchecked, this 136 million year old species would fall in population destroying the sport fishery.

What to Expect While on the River

If you are lucky enough to be on the river when the sturgeon spawn run is active, you may see biologists and researchers capturing, measuring, weighing and tagging sturgeon. When the researchers have time, they often stop and speak with students or guards along the river.



Important Checklists

- ✓ Patrol hat for identification (provided)
- ✓ Map and compass
- ✓ Cell phone (provided), ink pen
- ✓ 3 ring binder (pick up at base camp)
- ✓ Binoculars/Camera/Camcorder
- ✓ Polarized sunglasses
- ✓ Flashlight
- ✓ Warm clothing, layered for adding/removing throughout your shift as temperatures change
- ✓ Lawn chair/umbrella
- ✓ Insect repellent/Sun screen
- ✓ Cooler/water/food
- ✓ Toilet tissue/Port-a-John on site
- ✓ Sign in/out at base camp
- ✓ Camping Encouraged, Lodging nearby

Setting up traditional and respectful camps are welcomed. You may obtain a DNR camping permit at the base camp. Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- ✓ No loud music
- ✓ No littering tolerated. Take all trash with you
- ✓ NO FISHING IS ALLOWED
- ✓ Don't get involved in physically stopping illegal activity
- ✓ Use base camp cell phone to call DNR RAP Center at 1.800.292.7800
- ✓ Please record when, and how many fish are visible at spawning site
- ✓ If you find yourself at the spawning site with no visible fish, DO NOT LEAVE!
- ✓ ATV use is permitted only on marked trails

Your efforts are appreciated!

Camping Ambassador Incentive Programs

Camping incentives encourage sturgeon guards to set up camp along the river, serving as sturgeon ambassadors. There is a great need for camper ambassadors to greet arriving guards, distribute hats, and explain roles and expectations to ensure smooth transitions between shifts.

All sturgeon guards receive sturgeon guard identification hats, those who meet the following guidelines also receive:

3-6 Nights Camping Ambassador

- A one year honorary (free) SFT membership.
- One signature sturgeon key fob.

7+ Nights Camping Ambassador

- Items listed above, plus:
- Free, complimentary dinner(s) at Annual SFT Banquet, including banquet recognition.
- Identification vest

Important Information & Updates

You may encounter groups of students on the river participating in educational activities. Often they are involved in replanting native plants that will mitigate erosion on the banks of the river or collecting macroinvertebrates (mayflies, insects, etc.) in the river.

Mark or Ann Feldhauser,(906) 346-9511 home
Volunteer Coordinators(906) 201-2484 cell
Fire Department911 or (231) 238-7988
Sheriff Department911 or (231) 627-3155
Cheboygan Life Support911 or (231) 238-8375
Report All Poaching (RAP)..... (800) 292-7800



Sturgeon For Tomorrow Membership

Register Online

www.sturgeonfortomorrow.org/guarding-program.php

Directions To Guarding Site

- I-75 to exit 310 in Indian River.
- East on M-68, 18 miles to Black River Rd (F-05).
- North 5 miles to stop sign at F-05/UAW Corner.
- Turn left/west 1 mile. SFT trail marker on left.
- Turn left follow trail signs to sites B & C.

Report All Poaching (RAP)

1.800.292.7800

Witnessing a Violation

While we need your assistance in gathering information about illegal activity, remember, you are not a law enforcement officer. You should not attempt to enforce the law by making an arrest; simply get as much of the following information as possible and record it on the provided RAP card:

- ✓ Date and time of violation
- ✓ Location of violation
- ✓ Name of suspect if known
- ✓ Description of suspect(s):
hair color: height: weight: age: clothing
- ✓ Make, model, color of vehicle
- ✓ License number of vehicle
- ✓ Type of violation or suspicious activity
- ✓ Take photos and/or video of violation

	Member \$25	Partner \$50-\$99	Leader \$100-\$499	Sustainer \$500+
Card & Sticker	✓	✓	✓	✓
Subscription	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recognition		✓	✓	✓
Key Fob			✓	✓
Guided Sturgeon Viewing Tour				✓

If you would like to become a member, please select your membership level, fill out the form below and return with your dues to:

Kathy Bezotte, Secretary
9699 Helen Ave,
Atlanta, MI 49709

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

Email _____

Additional Contribution \$ _____

For more information on membership and membership levels, please visit our website:

www.sturgeonfortomorrow.org/membership-registration.php

