

## What should I do if I catch a tagged Lake Sturgeon?

Over 9,000 Lake Sturgeon have been tagged in Lake of the Woods and the Rainy River. These fish are tagged with a small yellow disc tag that is wired to the fish under its dorsal fin (on their back).

Recapture reports for tagged fish provide valuable information on the population. Using these recapture events, we can monitor mortality rates, movements, and the population size.

Much of our tagged-fish return information comes from anglers who inform us when they catch a tagged fish. In return for this information we provide anglers with some history of the fish, such as when and where the fish was originally tagged, how long it was when we tagged it, and whether the fish has been recaptured before.

But, in order for us to be able to use tag-return information, it must be accurate and complete, and it must be forwarded to the proper person. This handout is intended to provide some tips to help make sure anglers know what information to record, and where to send that information.

### Step one - Be prepared

Know where to look for the tag. It is a small yellow disc, and may be covered with algae, so you may not see the tag if you don't look closely. If it's covered with algae, you will have to scratch the algae off completely to see the entire tag number. Here are photos showing where we place the tags. If it appears a tag had been in this location, but it's not there now, check your dip net. They can get ripped off when you are netting them.

- Please do not remove the tag unless you plan to harvest the fish. Obviously, if the tagged gets accidentally ripped from the fish, there is nothing you can do about that.
- You should have some way to record the tag number and the information about the fish. A tablet and pencil will work, or you can take a picture of the tag to record the number.



*A Lake Sturgeon being tagged.*



*Close-up of the tag on a Lake Sturgeon*

## Step two – information to collect and record for reporting your tagged fish

- The complete tag number. It will have at least 5 digits, and it may have a letter in front of it. Examples of tag numbers are: 89702 and F89702. Record the numbers carefully. Even one incorrect digit will make it unusable for us. Some folks take a photo of the tag to record it. The number is only on one side of the tag.



*Disc tag, with tag number*



*Algae covered tag. The algae must be removed to read the tag number.*

## Step two (continued) – information to collect and record for reporting your tagged fish

- The date you caught the fish.
- The location you caught the fish. For example, "Rainy River near Frontier."
- Whether you released the fish or harvested it.
- Length of the fish
- Anything unusual about the fish, such as "fish was missing its tail fin."

## Step three – reporting the information about your tagged fish to us

There are several ways to report the information you have about your tagged Lake Sturgeon. However you choose to report your tagged fish information, please include your name, email address and a phone number. We need this information to contact you if we need more information about the fish, and so we can send you information about the history of the fish. An email address is the most efficient way for us to contact you.

## Ways to send in tag numbers include:

- The Minnesota DNR online tagged fish reporting page is the *best and most efficient* way to send your information, and for us to receive it. This page is located at this address: [Tagged fish page](#). You will be prompted to provide the species of the fish, the tag number, the location of capture, whether the fish was harvested or not, and your contact information. If you decide to report your tagged fish to this site from your smart phone while you are out fishing, please realize that there is poor cell phone coverage in some areas.

Alternately you can:

- Email our office at [Baudette.fisheries@state.mn.us](mailto:Baudette.fisheries@state.mn.us)
- Call us at 218-395-6040

## Things to consider:

We do our best to respond to anglers who report a tagged fish in a timely manner. Please realize we have a small staff, and when fishing is good, we have a lot of tag returns coming in at the same time, and we spend a lot of time on other issues. Please be patient. If you don't hear from us within a month, you should call us. Please do not report your tag number more than once before you contact us!

If the tag number is not accurately reported to us, we may not be able to provide any information on your fish. If you have provided your contact information to us, we will follow up with you to try to find out what went wrong. We get sent a lot of tag numbers that are incomplete or not accurate. It is critical to get the exact number from the tag. Make sure to scratch off algae from the tag if need be.



Finally, thank you for taking the time to report the capture of a tagged Lake Sturgeon. Cooperation from anglers is a major reason that we know as much about the sturgeon population as we do.