



Rearing Lake Sturgeon at Great Lakes Aquarium

A Collaborative Conservation Program

Great Lakes Aquarium is excited to launch a new lake sturgeon rearing program and exhibit to restore a stable, genetically diverse population to the St. Louis River, honor their cultural significance to Indigenous communities, and engage the public in place-based conservation work.

One of the Great Lakes' most iconic species, lake sturgeon once spawned in the St. Louis River, a federally designated Area of Concern. In the early 1900s their populations were extirpated due to loss of habitat from pollution and the construction of dams.

Today, they are designated as a Species of Special Concern in Minnesota. Despite more than 40 years of ongoing restoration effort, their population densities and spawning ratios remain below fishery management goals.

This new partnership will support International, Federal, Tribal, and State goals and provide juvenile lake sturgeon to the MN Department of Natural Resource and Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa for their respective St. Louis River stocking programs. Rearing lake sturgeon along the St. Louis River Estuary will help imprint these migratory fish on their historic spawning waters, guiding them back from Lake Superior as part of their dynamic life cycle.

The public-facing exhibit will engage guests with lake sturgeon ecology and St. Louis River restoration efforts, while highlight the importance of re-establishing this culturally significant population.

