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A Record of the Lake Sturgeon, *Acipenser fulvescens* Rafinesque, from the Caddo River (Ouachita River Drainage), Arkansas

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Records of sturgeons in Arkansas are uncommon, especially for the lake sturgeon, *Acipenser fulvescens* Rafinesque. Prior to 1988 only three records of *A. fulvescens* were known from Arkansas (Robison and Buchanan, 1988), two from the Mississippi River and one from the Little Missouri River. Buchanan et al. (1993) furnished two additional localities for lake sturgeons within the state, both from the White River in Desha and Prairies counties.

Recently, information on another record of the lake sturgeon, which has escaped the notice of fellow ichthyologists and workers in the field including Robison and Buchanan (1988), has been discovered. In the April/May 1998 (Vol. 2, No. 2) of *The Old Time Chronicle* (p. 47), a picture and short paragraph appeared about the capture of a lake sturgeon in the Caddo River.

In 1945, J.T. LaFevers of Glenwood gaffed the specimen in the Caddo River at Glenwood, Pike County, Arkansas. The specimen was "hung up on a gravel bar" (Mr. J. T. LaFevers, pers. comm.) below the railroad bridge at Glenwood. Mr. LaFevers measured the specimen at 3 m in length (9 ft, 10 inch) and estimated its mass at about 136 kg (300 lb). The Little Missouri River specimen taken in 1956, weighed 61.2 kg. (135 lb) and was 1.98 m long (6 ft, 6 inch). Robison and Buchanan (1988) reported a maximum size for this species as about 2.44 m (8 ft) and over 136 kg (300 lb). This makes the Caddo River specimen the largest individual lake sturgeon ever documented from Arkansas waters.

The discovery of this specimen is important because it represents the largest known specimen of a lake sturgeon for Arkansas. Ichthyologists and fisheries biologists should be aware of the rarity of this species in Arkansas, as this specimen is only the sixth individual specimen ever captured from the state. Buchanan et al. (1993) recommended a conservation status of endangered for this species in Arkansas based on the paucity of specimens known from the state.

The fact that this Caddo River specimen represents only the second individual ever taken from the Ouachita River drainage is most interesting. The first specimen taken from the Little Missouri River was assumed to have wandered up the wrong river course while attempting to spawn

or move northward. This documentation of a large specimen from the Caddo River, along with the Little Missouri River record, provides evidence that lake sturgeon may have previously used the Ouachita River drainage more commonly than believed, rather than simply having been off course in this drainage.

Lake DeGray Dam on the Caddo River was constructed downstream from this site from 1963-1972. This historical pre-dam record provides more evidence of how man's over-enthusiastic construction of dams alters the fish fauna by preventing migration and/or spawning runs.

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Literature Cited

- Buchanan, T. M., H. W. Robison, and K. Shirley. 1993. New distributional records for Arkansas sturgeons. *Proc. Arkansas Acad. Sci.* 47:133.
- Robison, H. W. and T. M. Buchanan. 1988. *Fishes of Arkansas*. Univ. Arkansas Press. Fayetteville.