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New Distributional Records for Arkansas Surgeons

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Of the three species of sturgeons known to occur in Arkansas, only the shovelnose sturgeon, *Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus* (Rafinesque), is common in the state (Robison and Buchanan, *Fishes of Arkansas*, Univ. Arkansas Press, Fayetteville, 1988). Prior to 1988 only three records for the lake sturgeon, *Acipenser fulvescens* Rafinesque, were known from Arkansas; two records were reported for the pallid sturgeon, *Scaphirhynchus albus* (Forbes and Richardson). The two *S. albus* records were based on reports from commercial fishermen who provided accurate descriptions of this species, but no vouchered specimens were available from the state. Robison and Buchanan (loc. cit) also included *S. albus* in Arkansas' ichthyofauna because of valid records from the Mississippi River of Missouri and Louisiana.

An increase in the sturgeon fishery of Arkansas in the last few years has resulted in more reports of a large white sturgeon (6.8 kg or more) by commercial fishermen. These reports, which occur during the peak of the sturgeon spawning run from early March to mid April, come mainly from the Mississippi River and more rarely from the lower White River. We report the first vouchered record in Arkansas of *S. albus* and two new records for *A. fulvescens*. The two new records for *A. fulvescens* are the first from the White River. On 19 May 1989, a 1245 mm TL, 3.63 kg female *A. fulvescens* was caught by a commercial fisherman in the White River, Desha County. It was caught in a trammel net fished in the eddy of the junction of the two rivers. The specimen was freeze-dried and is on display in the Westark Community College fish collection. On 29 April 1992, one of us (K. S.) examined a live lake sturgeon at Prince's Fish Market in Brasfield, Arkansas. It was approximately 1524 mm TL (not measured), weighed 21.34 kg, and was caught in late March 1992 by Mr. A. D. Adcock in the White River at Devalls Bluff, Prairie County. This specimen was subsequently released into the White River.

The first vouchered record of *S. albus* for Arkansas was taken in April 1988 (exact date not known) from the Mississippi River at Mile 665 near Helena, Phillips County, by a commercial fisherman using a trotline baited with worms. It was 1090 mm TL, weighed 3.75 kg, and con-

formed completely in morphological and meristic features to *S. albus*; i.e., the belly was naked, the bases of the outer barbels were situated 5 mm posterior to the bases of the inner barbels, and it had 37 dorsal rays and 25 anal rays. This freeze-dried specimen is also on display at Westark Community College.

Sturgeons are among the poorest known Arkansas fishes because of the difficulty of collecting in their big river habitat and the rarity in the state of two of the three species. The shovelnose sturgeon, *S. platyrhynchus*, currently supports a commercial fishery in the Mississippi and lower White rivers and is not endangered or threatened at this time. However, we recommend that *S. albus* and *A. fulvescens* be categorized as endangered in Arkansas because of their apparent rarity.