



The Rooster Tails Fishing Club of Northern California, Inc.

Educate ~ Entertain ~ Enhance

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It's All About Fishing

- Fishing for White Sturgeon
- Sturgeon are literally living dinosaurs
- Prized for their quality table fare as well as their roe
- Green Sturgeon are illegal to keep
- 'Bones' fishes at night

The Rooster Tails Fishing Club is proud to have several full-time pro fishing guides as club members offering professional advice to members and guests on catching a variety of fish species. Pro Guide Brett 'Bones' Brady, owner of Bare Bones Fishing Guide Service, is one of the club's skilled guides. The Rooster Tail's monthly third Friday Breakfast meeting on January 20, 2017, is open to the public will host Brett 'Bones' Brady for a special presentation on fishing for white sturgeon. Sturgeon can live more than 100 years and weigh over 500 pounds reaching in length of 15 feet or more! Sturgeons have been referred to as 'primitive fishes' since their characteristics have remained relatively unchanged since their earliest fossil records and are literally living dinosaurs. They are prized for their quality table-fare as well as for their roe (caviar) and their rod-bending fight when hooked. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife regulates the harvesting of all sturgeon, including prohibiting catching the threatened green sturgeon that are protected and illegal to keep. Anglers may take or possess any legally caught white sturgeon between a 'slot target' between 40 and 60 inches long measured from the nose to the tail-fork, all others must be immediately released unharmed.

One of 'Bones Brady' specialties is fishing for sturgeon on the Sacramento River from Verona to Colusa when they start moving up the river in January to spawn.



These illusive fish are cautious and difficult to catch during daylight hours and the reason 'Bones Brady' prefers to fish for them at night. His clients enjoy top of the line equipment including a fully equipped 21' Design Concepts Jet Boat powered by a fuel-injected 350 hp Chevy engine cranking out 330 horsepower to get his clients to where the fish are in a hurry. Using state-of-arts electronics, 'Bones' locates holding-fish and provides quality gear including Gloomis and Lamiglas rods, Pflueger reels, and variety of lures and baits. He limits his evening boat trips to just two anglers providing all tackle, bait, special tags, and accommodations necessary for a successful trip. The boat limit is two sturgeon, however this could relate to multiple pounds of fish! Watch one of

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Calendar of Events

January 20
Rooster Tails Breakfast
Brett 'Bones' Brady
Fishing for White Sturgeon

January 19 -22
ISE Show at Cal Expo
Sacramento
Caravan with RT Members
see page 3

January 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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A Sturgeon Sleepover

Article by Denis Peirce Columnist, The Union Newspaper, Nevada County, CA

If you want a chance to catch the largest fish that swims in California Rivers, winter nights are your best bets. Sturgeon spend most of the year in San Francisco Bay and the lower Delta. They migrate up the valley-rivers beginning in January to spawn in the spring. The trigger to move upriver is rising water flows that come with heavy winter rains. Each storm series that raises the Sacramento River substantially, will bring another surge of fish moving upstream. The time to fish for sturgeon is not during the high water. It is too dangerous to be out on the river then. Sturgeon fishing involves anchoring above a deep hole where fish will tend to hold. The Sacramento River is known for the number of large dead trees that are swept along with the current in high water. If a tree washes onto your anchor rope, it can pull your boat under in a manner of seconds.

Prime time for sturgeon is after the storm surge recedes and the river level stabilizes. A typical sturgeon trip with **Rooster Tail Fishing Club Member, Brett Brady, owner of Bare Bones Guide Service**, begins in the late afternoon at the launch ramp. Brett launches anywhere from Verona up through Colusa depending on where the best bite has been. He will head for the deep holes along the river and anchor above. The object is to present a bait on the bottom adjacent to the hole where feeding fish will be looking for food.

Sturgeon are bottom feeders much like catfish. They root in clam beds, eat crawdads and will not pass up smaller fish dead or alive, but it has to be on the bottom. There at least three prime feeding times for sturgeon, sunset, moon rise and sunrise. Brett plans to be anchored up and bait out well before each of these times. In his years spent on the river, he has noticed that when sturgeon are feeding other fish are also active. If his bait is being stolen by catfish or small stripers, or if he hears fish splashing on the surface, all of these indicate a good chance for a sturgeon bite. Conversely, if the water shows no indicators of activity he seldom gets a sturgeon to react. It is his experience that the entire river community turns on and off in unison and he can't predict when that will be. He just knows that there is some sort of rhythm to nature and he can sense it as it changes.

The allure of sturgeon is the long hard fight from a large fish. The rules allow only fish between 40 and 60 inches to be kept. Fish that are 5 feet and longer must be released. Sturgeon are slow growing creatures that do not reproduce until aged 5 to 10 years. A 6-foot-long fish will be about 25 years old. They can live to over 100 years. A 6-foot fish is considered a large one in the Sacramento River but on occasion larger ones are caught. Twenty years ago, an eight footer was caught in the Russian River.

Brett does not expect his clients to stay awake with him all night long. He sets up cots in the boat for his anglers to sleep during the quiet times. Once the bait is out and the rods set, the conversations go long into the night. Anglers get drowsy and nod off. The alarm bell is the sound of line being pulled off the reel as a fish has taken the bait and heads off dThe Union Newspaper, Nevada County, CA

own the river. That's when the fun begins. The trips last through the sunrise bite which can be the best of them all. Brett will get you back to the launch by about 9 a.m., a 14-to-16-hour fishing trip. If you are looking for a winter fishing adventure, and you are not averse to spending a night on the river, sturgeon fishing might be for you.

Sturgeon fishing tips

- If you want to fish sturgeon on your own and don't have a boat, there are a number of riverside beaches that have deep holes within casting distance. A couple of the more popular are Sandy Beaches #1 and #2, about a half mile up river from Knights Landing on the west side of the Sacramento River.
- Sturgeon fishing has a number of special regulations to protect the fish from over-harvest, be sure to pick-up a Department of Fish & Wildlife regulations book free at a Rooster Tails Fishing Club's third Friday breakfast meeting.
- Be sure to use a single barbless hook, know how you measure the 40-to-60-inch length slot limit for a keeper, and the difference between white sturgeon (keeper) and green sturgeon (protected).

Going to a local bait shop to get information for directions to Sacramento River launch ramps and beaches.

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Brett's clients landing a 75" Surgeon on the Sacramento River [youtube.com/watch?v=gUY7xclmv2I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUY7xclmv2I) .

You can find out more about **Bare Bones Fishing Guide Service** by visiting www.fishbarebones.com. You can also reach Brett 'Bones' Brady directly at 530-263-4451 to find out why his motto is **"It's All About Fishing!"**



Sacramento Sturgeon Aquaculture

Sacramento has grown to become the Caviar Capital of America, supplying some 80 percent of the nation's supply from a handful of local farms. The 30 year, pioneering effort to develop sturgeon farming had its global beginning at UC Davis, with the help of a research team built around Russian defector, Dr. Sergei Doroshov, known locally as the grandfather of sturgeon farming. The success has been a collaborative effort built on advances in academic research, combined with a flexible and supportive regulatory environment, and the innovations and patience of private industry investment. For instance, the acquisition of brood-stock from the wild to begin the process was initially an illegal prospect until rules could be established to lawfully make such collections. Ownership of the offspring spawned by farmers was another legality needing regulatory clarification. Many such challenges face aquaculture, which has been developing rapidly in many countries of the world,



California and the US behind, despite the many innovations first developed here. The indoor facility in Elverta recirculates its water repeatedly before discharging a portion to neighboring wetland habitat provided specifically for endangered species, then continuing on to further irrigate neighboring farm crops and recharge groundwater supplies. Tanks ranging in size from

five- to 100 feet in diameter accommodate sturgeon through their entire life cycle and are supported by automated filtration, feeding, oxygenation, and process monitoring systems. Production manager Bobby Renschler, explained that raising sturgeon takes an attentive staff of farm technicians who fully understand the stakes of maintaining the good health and nutrition of such a long-lived animal. There is no margin for error with a 10 year crop, making their backup systems and constant diligence vitally important.

The Long View of Sturgeon Farming

- Commercial farming of sturgeon began soon after, starting with a handful of farms in northern California in the early 1980's before spreading worldwide. Sterling Caviar represents the consolidation of multiple area facilities, including Stolt Seafarm at Wilton (started in 1983), Sierra Aquafarms at Elverta, which was a pioneer in water recirculating technology and started in 1985, and the Buena Vista cold-water facility near Lone CA.



- Sterling produces nearly 12 tons of caviar and approximately 180 tons of sturgeon meat annually. Global supplies from farms have stepped up to replace wild harvests from the Caspian Sea, where a moratorium is in place to protect and allow recovery of wild sturgeon populations. Chinese caviar production is ramping up steeply, aiming to quadruple supply in the next decade.
- Caviar prices and preferences vary depending on color, texture, and flavor.

The first farm-raised caviar in the world came from Sacramento in 1993. Culinary acceptance has gradually grown to dominate the market, with chefs preferring the environmental sustainability and consistent quality of farm-grown product.

- While it takes an estimated 20+ years for a female white sturgeon to mature in the wild, it takes about half that time on Sacramento area farms where their water remains warm year-round. Still, a crop that takes 8-10 years before harvest represents a substantial investment in capital and risk, unmatched in conventional agriculture.
- Initial brood-stock originated from the Sacramento River and San Francisco Bay; requiring changes in Fish & Game Code, both to make the collection of breeders legal, and to clarify ownership of the progeny resulting from such captive spawns.

Click here to see how sturgeon are raised for caviar:

<http://www.sterlingcaviar.com/about-sterling/sterling-caviar-raising-perfection>

Attention Members:

Be prepared to carpool with fellow RTs and guests to caravan to the International Sportsman's Expo (ISE show) to save on parking fees. We will leave immediately after our Jan. 20th breakfast meeting!!!

How to Cook a Dinosaur



Looking like an aquatic dinosaur, the sturgeon may be one of the strangest looking fish swimming. But the lean, firm meat has a delicious flavor. It can be grilled, sautéed, baked, barbecued, poached or fried. It stands up to the boldest of preparations and is almost impossible to over-cook. Those who love swordfish but are concerned about its status as a nearly endangered species will enjoy the mild taste of sturgeon and find it an excellent alternative. Handled properly, sturgeon makes a superior meal — Handled poorly, it can taste fishy and take on an old-tire texture. The survivors of a variety of fish 120 million years old, white sturgeon are bony-plated, which requires unusual dressing techniques. Most experts recommend that any sturgeon you keep be bled immediately by cutting one or more of its gills. Dressing a sturgeon is similar to filleting most white-meat fish, except that first the bony plates, or scutes, along its back and sides should be removed, along with the fins. This requires a very sharp knife to simply slice off the scutes. The head is then removed and the filets sliced out. Then it is advisable to remove all of the reddish fat that lines the center of the filet. This eliminates a fishy flavor that some palettes find objectionable. Thus prepared, sturgeon meat has a mild flavor.

The important thing about proper sturgeon preparation is that after you have cleaned or filleted the fish, the fillets must age

for 48 hours in the refrigerator to achieve the proper texture and taste before cooking. After a sturgeon dies, the fibers in muscle or meat of the fish, goes into riggers and tightens up and it takes 48 hours for the fibers to relax and become soft. This aging period make all the difference in the world in the flavor and texture of the fish. Some say that soaking the fillets in milk during this 48-hour aging period will make the flavor even more mild and delicious. If cooked too soon, you will probably be disappointed. If aged properly, you will be able to toss a fillet on to the barbecue and flip it with a spatula and delicately cut it with a fork. The texture will be similar to a good piece of properly cooked Swordfish. Sturgeon smokes very well, being a slightly oily fish. It is also excellent thinly sliced, lightly breaded and deep-fried quickly — its dense meat tends not to flake apart like that of other fish. It often is thinly sliced or scalloped before sautéing so that it can be cooked quickly. Sturgeon can be baked or barbecued, but it can get chewy if it is extremely overcooked or if it is cooked prior to the 48-hour aging period. Some people take advantage of the texture by simply boiling sturgeon plain in saltwater and a little sugar for “poor man’s lobster.”

For more information on cleaning your sturgeon, click here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDg-YpG_aQQ

2016 Rooster Tails Jackpot Contest Winners



Left to Right—Mel Ewing, Jackpot Contest Chairman, Art Stonebraker, Tom Hyde, Chuck Mierkey, Eric Liske, Shawn Conlan, Peter Zittere, Ivan Ichters, Jerry Lampkin