



## Studying Sturgeon: Idaho Power Scientists Support Iconic Fish

One Idaho Power biologist describes it as “working with dinosaurs.” But preserving the Snake River’s iconic white sturgeon takes modern science and technology.

Idaho Power has a dedicated team who puts that science into action every day as part of the company’s commitment to providing reliable, affordable energy while being responsible stewards of the Snake River.

Idaho Power began its sturgeon conservation program more than 30 years ago. Led by Resource Scientist Leader Ken Lepla, today’s team of biologists research the health and habits of these fish throughout the Snake River.

Sturgeon have prowled the deep since before the era of T-Rex, but they face

modern challenges like warming water, changes in river flows, and dams that restrict access to their spawning areas.

Each spring, Idaho Power’s sturgeon team uses specialized equipment to collect fertilized eggs from the Snake River and bring them to the hatchery. There, the eggs are kept in temperature-controlled spring water until they hatch. Raising sturgeon from eggs collected in the river helps preserve the genetic diversity of the Snake River population, which we hope will help the species persevere into the next millennium.

It will take nearly a year of careful feeding and monitoring by hatchery operators from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game until they are ready to be released.

Recently, Senior Resource Professional Riley Brown stood in the middle of Idaho Power’s Niagara Springs Sturgeon Hatchery south of Wendell as dozens of 18-inch sturgeon swam in a giant round tub.

“These fish will just about double in size by the time they are released into the river in October,” Brown said. Even then, they’ll be small by sturgeon standards. These giants can grow to 10 feet long and weigh more than 300 pounds.

Science Technician Ian Yoder adds that some sturgeon can live to be 100

years old. “Some of the fish we are raising today may outlive all of us.”

Each fish is given a small identification tag, either at the hatchery or the first time it is captured in the wild. When fish are later recaptured, scientists can track their growth, movement, and condition over time.

“Our team at Idaho Power is proud to contribute valuable research that adds to the scientific community’s understanding of these incredible fish,” said Lepla.

To learn more about the work Idaho Power does to care for Snake River fish and other aquatic species, visit [idahopower.com/fish](https://idahopower.com/fish).



Riley Brown handling a roughly year-old sturgeon



Sturgeon eggs with early embryos developing.



Year-old plantings along the Powder River from the Snake River Stewardship Program.

## Native Plants for a Healthier Snake River

Idaho Power crews have been planting native trees and shrubs to increase shade over streams and support healthier riparian areas along streambanks in Idaho and eastern Oregon. This work helps improve habitat areas along key tributaries of the Snake River.

Idaho Power's Snake River Stewardship Program helps meet state water-quality requirements as part of the company's application for a new license to operate its low cost hydropower dams in Hells Canyon.

Over the past several years, Idaho Power tested planting methods on several projects. Now we are applying what we've learned to guide future work as the program expands.

Healthy streamside vegetation helps keep water cooler during hot summer months, which is an important factor for creatures living in the river. Many areas targeted for restoration have little natural vegetation, which means these

planting projects can positively impact the river environment over time.

Crews have already planted thousands of native trees and shrubs using species suited to local conditions. Early projects relied on fencing to protect plants from deer and livestock, with drip irrigation to help establish plants.

As Idaho Power expands these projects, the team will evaluate more efficient approaches. In some areas, smaller fenced zones and individual plant cages may be practical. New, specialized planting techniques will allow crews to install larger trees to reduce the need for irrigation and long-term maintenance.

"Installing and maintaining irrigation drip lines across large areas isn't practical," said Idaho Power Senior Resource Professional Josh Pearson. "We're learning how to scale the program in a way that's both cost-effective and sustainable over time."

## Education and Inspiration Are Part of the Job



A "typical" day at work doesn't exist for Idaho Power biologist Jessi Galloway.

One day, she's on a boat in the Snake River collecting tiny sturgeon eggs. The next day, she's in a Nampa park teaching fourth-graders about how some of those eggs will end up as full-grown sturgeon by the time those kids grow to be adults.

"I love being on the river — that's why I love my job so much," Galloway said. "I also love that my job allows me to do outreach and talk about environmental stewardship and Idaho Power's fisheries programs."

She's one of the many Idaho Power employees who power our communities in ways that go beyond generating and delivering electricity — like encouraging young people to explore careers in science and technology.

"I really love educating youth, inspiring them, and hopefully encouraging someone to go into STEM and pursue their dreams."

Learn more at [idahopower.com/fish](https://idahopower.com/fish).



## From the Electric Kitchen

July 2026  
Dinner

### BBQ Chicken

- 2 fryers — small, whole chickens
- 2 Tbsp fat
- 2 Tbsp brown sugar
- 1 cup ketchup
- 3 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- ½ cup celery, chopped
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 medium onion
- 2 Tbsp vinegar
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 1 cup water
- ½ Tbsp prepared mustard
- 1 tsp pepper

Brown chicken in fat then set aside. Sauté onion and add remaining ingredients, let simmer for at least 30 minutes. Pour over chicken and bake, covered for 2 hours at 325°. Garnish with orange slices.



## Did You Know?

We have five fish hatcheries, including the sturgeon hatchery that opened in 2021 at Niagara Springs, south of Wendell.