

# Atlantic Sturgeon



photos-Art Michaels



*Juvenile Atlantic sturgeon*

## **Atlantic Sturgeon**

**Family: Sturgeon (Acipenseridae).**

**Anadromous.**

**Status: Endangered.**

**PA Watershed Range: Delaware.**



When you look for record-breaking fish in Pennsylvania, check out the Atlantic sturgeon. As Pennsylvania's largest fish, it may reach 14 feet in length. Atlantic sturgeon are also likely the longest-lived fish in Pennsylvania: They have been known to be more than 50 years old. Sturgeon relatives date back more than 350 million years! Atlantic sturgeon don't look quite like other fish. Instead of having scales, Atlantic sturgeon are covered with rows of bony plates, called "scutes." The snout has four whiskerlike sensory barbels near the mouth. The top tail lobe is longer

than the bottom lobe, and it looks like a shark's tail.

Adult sturgeon live on the bottom of the ocean and use their snout to root along the bottom for small clams, crabs and other invertebrates. These anadromous fish are found from Quebec to Florida. They swim through the Chesapeake and Delaware bays in spring on their way into large rivers, which they use as spawning grounds and nurseries. Young Atlantic sturgeon may spend up to five years in nursery waters. Atlantic sturgeon are endangered in Pennsylvania.