

SUGGESTED PROTOCOL FOR SAMPLING WHITE STURGEON MORTALITIES

1. Examine carcass for any external abnormalities. Take photos of whole carcass and any abnormalities noted. Examine gills and try to assess time since death.
2. Measure total and fork lengths, as well as girth, snout and head lengths.
3. Remove pectoral fin rays, or just first ray of each pectoral. Freeze.
4. Attempt to remove otoliths. Dry and store in a scale envelop.
5. Cut open abdominal cavity. Take care not to pierce any organs (e.g. full ovaries). Take photo of entire viscera.
6. If possible weigh ovary (not a high priority)
7. Cut open stomach and examine contents. Preserve if not easily identified.
8. Note condition of organs, and take specific photos of ovary and liver.
9. Unless the fish is very fresh and the gills are still red (not pink), the blood is still red and thick (not pinkish and watery), and there is absolutely no decomposition odor (still smells like a live fish) then do not bother to collect tissues samples for analyses. If the fish is fresh, then:
 - a) Take swab samples form liver and kidney. Clean area on organ and a scalpel (knife) with alcohol. Make an incision into the organ and take swab sample from freshly exposed tissue. Reinsert swab fully into holder and ensure sample is saturated with medium. These samples should be sent to Sherry Guest (250-751-3121) ASAP for analysis (WLAP Fish Health Unit, 2080 Labieux Rd., Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6E9). Please phone them to let them know samples are being sent.
 - b) Using a sharp scalpel remove sections of the liver, kidney and ovary and preserve in 10% formalin (other similar preservative). Preservative volume should be about 10 times tissue volume. Tissue size should not require formalin to pass through more than 1 cm of tissue for fixation. Contact Robyn Roome or Julia Beatty (WLAP, Environmental Protection, Nelson, 250-354-6333) for containers and follow up instructions.
10. Take any further samples that may be required.
11. Prepare memo describing where and when fish was recovered, approximate time of death, any obvious signs of damage or trauma, life history data collected, a list of

tissue samples collected (if any) and when samples were sent for analysis, and who conducted the examination.