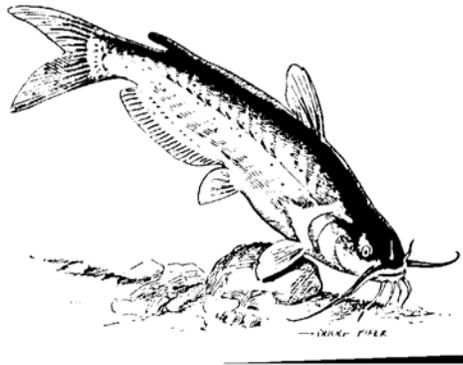


SUMMARY OF REPORTED HARVEST AND LICENSE SALES FOR
INDIANA'S OHIO RIVER COMMERCIAL FISHERIES, 2006

Fish Management Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Reported 2006 Ohio River harvest was 95,771 pounds. Paddlefish was the most abundant fish harvested by weight and comprised approximately 78% of the annual harvest. Flathead catfish comprised the second largest portion of total harvest (9%) followed by blue catfish (6%), buffalo (4%), and channel catfish (3%).
- The number of paddlefish harvested during 2006 was 3,528. Paddlefish egg harvest was 10,420 pounds, a record high. Three shovelnose sturgeon containing one pound of eggs were also reported harvested.
- The 2006 monetary value of the Ohio River commercial fishery was estimated at \$2,515,117. Paddlefish eggs comprised 91% of the fishery's monetary value.

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INTRODUCTION

Persons using nets to catch fish from Indiana's rivers are regulated and licensed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). A November 1985 United States Supreme Court settlement between the states of Indiana and Kentucky granted Indiana control over a portion of the Ohio River. An Indiana law mandates that Indiana's Ohio River regulations be tailored after Kentucky's. Indiana's DFW started selling Ohio River commercial fishing licenses in January 1988 from the Sugar Ridge Fish and Wildlife Area office. Ohio River commercial fishermen were required to report their harvest effective 1/1/99.

Commercial fishing is allowed in the 358-mile segment of the Ohio River which forms the boundary between Indiana and Kentucky (Figure 1). Ohio River fishers may use an unlimited amount of gear. The types of gear which may be used are hoop nets, wing nets, straight lead nets, heart lead nets, gill nets, trammel nets, trotlines, seines, and slat basket traps. The current regulations are contained in Appendix 1. An Ohio River commercial fishing license costs \$125 and includes ten gear tags. Additional blocks of 10 gear tags may be purchased for \$15 per block of ten.

The objective of this report is to identify major patterns in the Ohio River fishery by examining harvest information and license sales data. This report covers the harvest reported for 2006. Earlier reports (Stefanavage 2001, 2007; Stefanavage and Kowalik 2007) summarize the 1999 to 2005 harvest estimates and license sales.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Only eight Ohio River commercial fishing licenses were sold the first year that the new license was available, 1988. In 1989, 118 Ohio River licenses were sold. Sales declined to 63 in 1990 due to the issuance of a fish consumption advisory on Ohio River catfish and carp. License sales have since steadily declined to where they now range from 29 to 42 per year (Table 1). Net tag sales declined from a high of 1,700 in 1989 to a low of 520 in 1999. Annual net tag sales ranged from 590 to 660 from 2000 to 2005. During 2006, 37 licenses and 760 net tags were sold.



Figure 1. River reaches where commercial fishing is legal (indicated by heavy lines).

Ohio River commercial fishers reported a total harvest of 95,771 pounds of fish for 2006 (Appendix 2). This was a significant decline from 2005 when 120,280 pounds were reported harvested (Table 2). The 2006 reported harvest was also lower than that reported for 2000, 2002, 2003, and 2004.

As in previous years, paddlefish was the most abundant fish harvested by weight, comprising 78% of the total. Pounds of paddlefish harvested were at a record high level for 2006. Flathead catfish comprised the second largest portion of the total harvest (9%) followed by blue catfish (6%), buffalo (4%), and channel catfish (3%). Harvest levels of all three catfish species has been quite variable in the eight years that harvest reporting has been required (Figure 2). However, 2006 channel catfish and blue catfish harvest were at record low levels. Flathead catfish harvest was at a record low level in 2005 but rebounded in 2006. Buffalo harvest was also at a record low level during 2006. The reductions in channel catfish, blue catfish, and buffalo harvest during 2006 accounted for the decline in total harvest from 2005 to 2006.

The number of paddlefish reported harvested during 2006 was 3,528, a slight decline from the 3,631 reported for 2005. It was unusual that the poundage of paddlefish flesh harvested increased from 2005 to 2006 while the number of fish harvested decreased. This is due to a number of factors; some fishers obviously did not weigh their fish as they always reported an average weight of 20 pounds per individual paddlefish, some fishers reported pounds of fillets versus total weight, or the actual average weight per paddlefish may have increased significantly from 2005 to 2006.

Paddlefish egg harvest was 10,420 pounds during 2006, a new record high. The previous high was 8,659 pounds for 2002. The weight of paddlefish eggs reported harvested is thought to be much more accurate than the reported weight of the whole fish as the fishers generally report egg harvest to the "0.01" pound.

Shovelnose sturgeon were reported as harvested for the first time from the Ohio River during 2006. The reported harvest was three fish weighing four pounds and containing one pound of eggs.

Retail values used to determine monetary estimates were \$3.00/pound for catfish, \$2.18/pound for other fish, and \$220/pound for paddlefish eggs. The monetary value of the Ohio River commercial fishery was estimated at \$2,515,117 for 2006. Paddlefish eggs comprised 91% of the fishery's economic value.

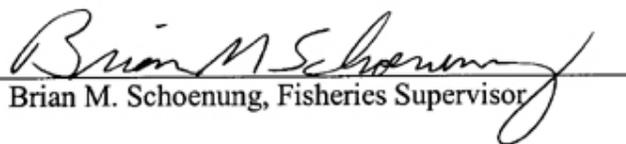
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Submitted by: Thomas C. Stefanavage, Big Rivers Fisheries Biologist
Date: March 27, 2008

Approved by: 
Brian M. Schoenung, Fisheries Supervisor

Date: October 23, 2008

Table 1. Number of Ohio River commercial fishing licenses and net tags sold per year, 1988 to 2006.

Year	Licenses Sold	Net Tags Sold
1988	8	80
1989	118	1,700
1990	63	not available
1991	62	890
1992	66	910
1993	59	830
1994	56	790
1995	47	660
1996	47	660
1997	49	680
1998	46	720
1999	40	520
2000	34	600
2001	42	660
2002	30	590
2003	29	630
2004	32	630
2005	31	620
2006	37	760

Table 2. Reported pounds of fish, number of paddlefish and shovelnose sturgeon, and pounds of paddlefish and shovelnose sturgeon eggs harvested from Indiana's Ohio River commercial fishery, 1999 to 2006.

Year	Flesh Harvest (pounds)						Egg Harvest (pounds)		Number Harvested		
	Channel Catfish	Blue Catfish	Flathead Catfish	Buffalo	Other	Paddlefish	Total	Paddlefish	Shovelnose Sturgeon	Paddlefish	Shovelnose Sturgeon
1999	5,426	6,187	6,407	4,598	389	13,587	36,594	1,225		1,388	
2000	12,992	9,763	11,402	44,729	43	31,280	110,209	6,203		2,439	
2001	7,385	10,834	9,529	31,597	246	26,484	86,075	3,442		2,007	
2002	5,308	7,345	12,553	13,289	106	63,881	102,482	8,659		4,116	
2003	11,996	5,774	16,385	33,781	1,169	47,286	116,391	5,275		2,205	
2004	14,295	7,572	10,385	44,966	1,650	52,471	131,339	4,471		2,481	
2005	3,522	12,561	4,579	31,616	1,652	66,350	120,280	7,553		3,631	
2006	2,506	5,732	8,717	4,120	406	74,290	95,771	10,420	1	3,528	3
Totals	63,430	65,768	79,957	208,696	5,661	375,629		47,248			

Other* - includes common carp, Asian carp, carpsuckers, suckers, drum, and shovelnose sturgeon.

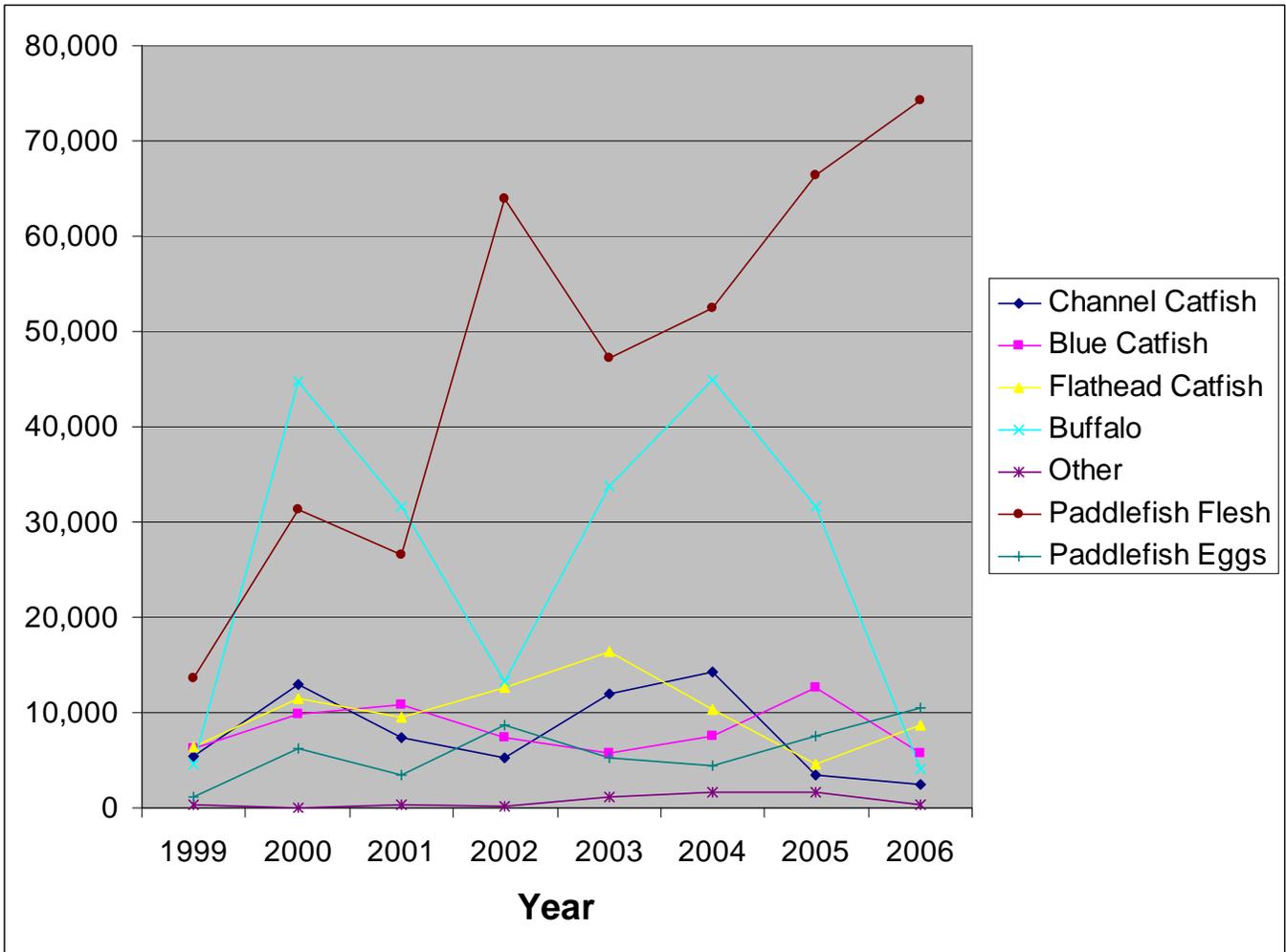


Figure 2. Ohio River commercial fish flesh and egg harvest, 1999 to 2006.

Appendix 1. Ohio River commercial fish regulation (3/27/08).

312 IAC 9-8-6 Commercial fishing on the Ohio River

Authority: IC 14-10-2-4; IC 14-22-2-6; IC 14-22-13

Affected: IC 14-22

Sec. 6. (a) This section applies to commercial fishing on the Ohio River.

(b) No person shall take or sell fish except in accordance with this section and 312 IAC 9-10. A person may take fish with the aid of illumination of:

- (1) a spotlight;
- (2) a searchlight; or
- (3) an artificial light;

where lawfully engaged in commercial fishing.

(c) A license holder under this section may take and sell all species of fish from the Ohio River except the following:

- (1) Largemouth bass.
- (2) Smallmouth bass.
- (3) Spotted bass.
- (4) Rock bass.
- (5) White crappie.
- (6) Black crappie.
- (7) Walleye.
- (8) Sauger.
- (9) Saugeye.
- (10) Striped bass.
- (11) White bass.
- (12) Hybrid striped bass.
- (13) Yellow bass.
- (14) Muskellunge.
- (15) Northern pike.
- (16) Tiger muskellunge.
- (17) Chain pickerel.
- (18) Lake sturgeon.
- (19) Trout.
- (20) Salmon.

(21) Shovelnose sturgeon taken on June 1 through September 30. Shovelnose sturgeon taken from October 1 through May 31 must be at least twenty-five (25) inches in fork length.

(d) A license holder under this section must tag each item of gear so that a conservation officer may determine if the:

- (1) gear is properly licensed; and
- (2) license holder is complying with the law.

(e) No person shall possess a seine, net, or commercial trotline except as authorized for a commercial fishing license for the Ohio River. This subsection does not apply to a manufacturer, retailer, or wholesale dealer who possesses gear exclusively for sale.

(f) Commercial fishing nets authorized under this section cannot be used on a bay or inlet of the Ohio River. A line drawn from point to point of a bay or inlet denotes the limits of the fishing zone. Commercial gear cannot be used within fifty (50) yards of the mouth of a stream. Commercial gear, except slat traps, cannot be used in the following locations:

- (1) John T. Myers Dam downstream to the outer lock wall and the portion of the split channel around the southern part of Wabash Island from the fixed weir dam to the first dike.
- (2) Newburgh Dam downstream to the end of the outer lock wall.
- (3) Cannelton Dam downstream to the end of the outer lock wall.
- (4) McAlpine Dam downstream to the K and I railroad bridge.
- (5) Markland Dam downstream to the end of the outer lock wall.

(g) Each item of fishing gear in use must be tended not less frequently than once every twenty-four (24) hours and all fish taken by the gear removed, except that baited hoop nets or slat traps may be left unattended for not more than seventy-two (72) hours. Each item of gear must be removed from the waters in which the item was fished immediately upon usage.

(h) Gear is authorized only as set forth as follows:

- (1) Lines and mesh must be made of:
 - (A) linen;
 - (B) cotton; or
 - (C) a flexible synthetic fiber.

- (2) The following restrictions apply to a hoop net, wing net, straight lead net, or heart lead net:
 - (A) Each net described in this subdivision must have a minimum bar mesh size of one (1) inch.
 - (B) Hoops may be any size, shape, or material.
 - (C) The maximum length of the lead or wing is sixty (60) feet.
 - (D) One (1) tag must be attached to the front hoop of each net.
 - (3) The following restrictions apply to a gill or trammel net:
 - (A) The minimum bar mesh size is four (4) inches.
 - (B) The nets referenced in this subdivision may be fished weighted or as a flag net.
 - (C) A tag must be attached to the net at intervals not less than one hundred (100) feet apart.
 - (4) The following restrictions apply to a commercial trotline:
 - (A) Each line must have more than fifty (50) hooks placed not closer than eighteen (18) inches apart.
 - (B) One (1) tag must be attached.
 - (C) The trotline must be:
 - (i) not longer than three thousand (3,000) feet, including staging; and
 - (ii) fished separately rather than tied in a continuous line.
 - (5) The following restrictions apply to a seine:
 - (A) A seine must have the following:
 - (i) A minimum bar mesh size of one (1) inch.
 - (ii) Both float and lead lines.
 - (iii) Wood, fiberglass, metal poles, or brails attached to each end.
 - (B) A seine in the water must be attended by persons pulling the seine through the water for the entrapment of fish.
 - (C) A seine must have a tag attached at intervals not less than one hundred (100) feet apart.
 - (6) The following restrictions apply to a slat trap basket:
 - (A) No wire or other mesh may be added to the trap.
 - (B) At least two (2) openings not less than one and one-fourth (1¼) inches wide must be located between the slats. These openings shall not be restricted by cross-bracings shorter than eight (8) inches long.
 - (C) The trap shall be not larger than two (2) feet in diameter or square end measure.
 - (D) A tag must be attached to the open ring or square.
- (i) A license holder must do the following:
- (1) Keep accurate daily catch records on a departmental form of the following:
 - (A) The pounds and species of fish caught by gear type.
 - (B) The number of paddlefish and shovelnose sturgeon caught by gear type.
 - (C) The pounds of paddlefish, shovelnose sturgeon, sucker, and eggs sold.
 - (D) The location fished by pool, river mile, and county.
 - (2) Submit to the department the completed form required under subdivision (1) by the fifteenth day of each month for the preceding month whether the license holder fished or not.
 - (3) Allow on-board and dockside inspection of the gear and catch at any time by the director or the director's representative.

(Natural Resources Commission; 312 IAC 9-8-6; filed May 12, 1997, 10:00 a.m.: 20 IR 2725; filed May 28, 1998, 5:14 p.m.: 21 IR 3727; readopted filed Jul 28, 2003, 12:00 p.m.: 27 IR 286; filed Feb 27, 2007, 2:25 p.m.: 20070328-IR-312060262FRA)

Appendix 2. Reported pounds of fish, number of paddlefish and shovelnose sturgeon, and pounds of paddlefish and shovelnose sturgeon eggs harvested from Indiana's Ohio River commercial fishery, 2006.

REPORTED HARVEST (POUNDS) PER MONTH

Species	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Species Total
Blue Catfish	695	265	190	531	875	1,557	138	819	152		510		5,732
Buffalo	175	190	1,825	1,378	307	225					20		4,120
Carp*		14	112	29	63	20					12	17	267
Channel catfish			575	182	811	438	187	148	165				2,506
Drum				135									135
Flathead catfish			175	32	1,530	5,695	156	351	112	181	170	315	8,717
Other**													0
Paddlefish	6,245	3,220	14,256	29,282	1,857				55	3,250	8,940	7,185	74,290
Shovelnose sturgeon										4			4
Sucker & Redhorse***													0
TOTALS	7,115	3,689	17,133	31,569	5,443	7,935	481	1,318	484	3,435	9,652	7,517	95,771

REPORTED HARVEST (NUMBER) PER MONTH

Species	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Species Total
Paddlefish	334	158	731	1,418	97				3	152	336	299	3,528
Shovelnose sturgeon										3			3

REPORTED HARVEST (POUNDS OF EGGS) PER MONTH

Species	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Species Total
Paddlefish	792	507	2,394	4,520	305				5	250	838	809	10,420
Shovelnose sturgeon										1			1

* - Includes bighead, silver, grass, and common carp.

** - Includes gar, bowfin, and eel.

*** - Includes white, spotted, and all redhorses.