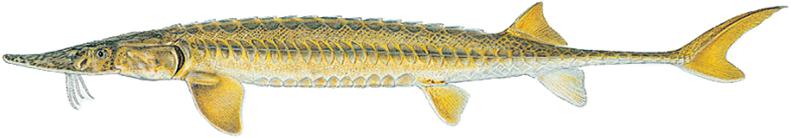


Shovelnose sturgeon

Scaphirhynchus platorynchus



Similar Species: Pallid sturgeon

Identification: Bases of barbels **straight across**, all four are about the same length, bony plates **present** on belly.

The shovelnose is the most abundant sturgeon in the Mississippi and Missouri rivers and larger tributaries. It prefers the fast currents of large rivers with sand or gravel bottoms but can live in muddy rivers. The shovelnose, like other sturgeons, feeds entirely from the bottom on larvae of aquatic insects, the bulk of its diet. It may occasionally eat small fish. Spawning, which can begin at 5 to 7 years of age, occurs over sand and gravel in large channels with fast current. Shovelnose sturgeon are smaller than pallid sturgeon; the average size of adults is about 20 inches and 1 1/2 pounds; a large specimen is about 5 pounds.

