

New documentary highlights Red River lake sturgeon recovery efforts

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has released a new 30-minute documentary called “Kings in the North: Lake Sturgeon Recovery in the Red River Basin.”

The video tells the story of decades-long efforts by Minnesota DNR fisheries biologists and their partners to restore the lake sturgeon population in the Red River of the North and its tributaries, known as the Red River Basin. The Red River Basin stretches 395 miles along the border between Minnesota and North Dakota. It has a long, rich history and was once a primary trade and commerce route.

“It’s a story about teamwork, innovation and perseverance to restore an iconic Minnesota species,” said Nick Kludt, Minnesota DNR Red River fisheries specialist. “For anglers, conservationists, people interested in clean water or ‘kids at heart’ who think swimming dinosaurs are pretty cool, this conservation story is for all Minnesotans.”

Highlights of the documentary include:

- New and never-before-released footage of reintroduced lake sturgeon naturally spawning in the Red River Basin, showcasing the benefits of river restoration projects.
- An in-depth discussion of the over-exploitation, dam construction, and river fragmentation that contributed to lake sturgeon’s local extinction (also known as extirpation) in the Red River Basin. These barriers prevented lake sturgeon and other species from migrating and accessing critical habitat.
- The efforts to reconnect the Red River Basin using dam removal or modification projects to restore the fractured river system.
- A comprehensive look at Minnesota DNR collaboration with partners to conduct lake sturgeon egg take operations, fry and fingerling rearing, and stocking efforts that have contributed to more than one-half million lake sturgeon fingerlings being stocked in the Red River Basin.
- Discussion of management approaches and goals of the lake sturgeon restoration effort by Minnesota DNR and its partners, along with information about funding resources used.
- Discussion of the first natural spawning event verified in the Red River Basin in over 100 years, and its significance as a milestone toward full restoration.

- The public benefits that lake sturgeon restoration and river connectivity efforts are providing, such as dam safety, restored native fish ranges and increased angling opportunities in the Red River Basin.

Learn more about the lake sturgeon restoration efforts on the [Minnesota DNR website](https://dnr.state.mn.us/fisheries/red-river-sturgeon.html). (dnr.state.mn.us/fisheries/red-river-sturgeon.html)

[Sturgeon Recovery video](#)