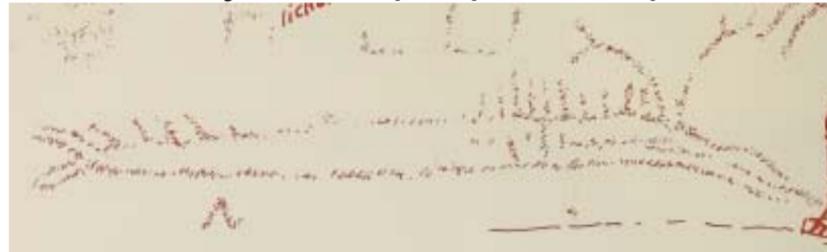


# Ancestors, Archaeology and the Anishinabek: Bridging the Past into the Future Nmé (Sturgeon)

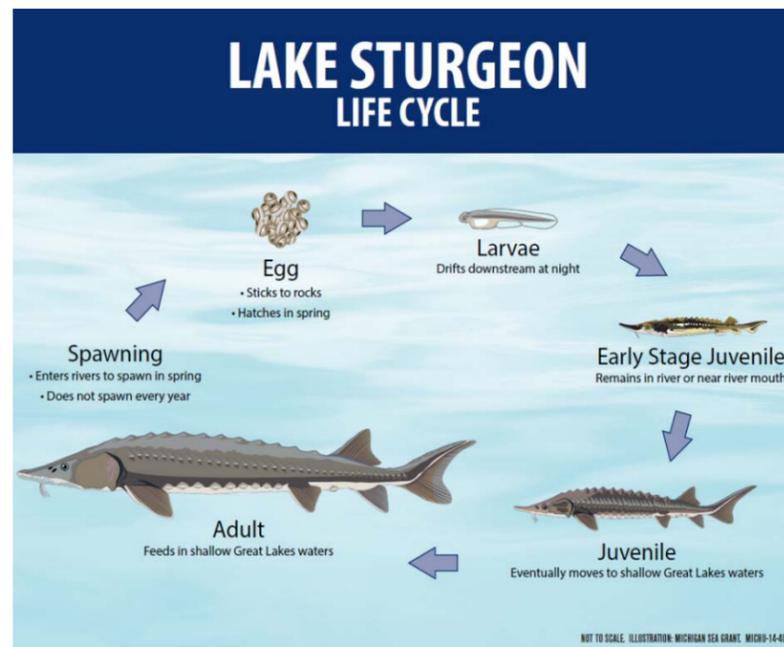
## The Grandfather Fish

Among the Anishinabek, Sturgeon are known as the Grandfather fish. The Anishinabek often catch Sturgeon in the spring when they swim up rivers and streams to lay their eggs. The Anishinabek always thank the sturgeon. The Anishinabek believe that sturgeon are wise and curious just like people. The picture to the right is an ancient painting of a Sturgeon spirit found on Painted Rock Island in Canada, north of Minnesota.



(Image from Indian Rock Paintings of the Great Lakes by S. Dewdney and K.E. Kidd, 1962)

## Sturgeon



(Image from <http://www.miseagrant.umich.edu/explore/native-and-invasive-species/species/fish-species-in-michigan-and-the-great-lakes/lake-sturgeon/>)

## Sturgeon Fishing in the 1850s

The Anishinabek caught Sturgeon with nets and spears. Spearing was often done at night. As shown in the painting to the right, burning torches were fastened to the end of a canoe. The fishermen paddled slowly through the water. The bright light from the torches helped fisherman see the Sturgeon and spear them. One large Sturgeon could feed an entire village of people.



(Paul Kane, Fishing by Torchlight, 1849-1856, oil on canvas, Royal Ontario Museum)

## Sturgeon Today

In 1880, four million pounds of Sturgeon were caught in Lake Michigan. So many Sturgeon were caught over the next 50 years, that they almost disappeared. Today, the Anishinabek raise Sturgeon in fish hatcheries. Each fall, hundreds of young fish about 5 inches long are placed by the Anishinabek into rivers. The Anishinabek want to make sure they can always fish for Sturgeon like their grandparents and ancestors did.



Fall 2013 Fish Release, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians (Image from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srPZ\\_r2tuCc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srPZ_r2tuCc), Manistee News Advocate)