

Endangered Lake Sturgeon focus of new study

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The money, a portion of \$76,000 in federal funds announced Thursday in Saskatoon, will go to a northern First Nation which will use traditional knowledge to map Lake Sturgeon habitats along the North Saskatchewan River delta.

"We'll be able to assess the threats of the Lake Sturgeon population and make sound recommendations for the recovery of these priceless ancient species," Michael Starr, a representative of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, told CBC News during a ceremony on Thursday.

The Lake Sturgeon is listed by the federal government as an endangered species. Information from the Species at Risk Registry shows that habitat in the Cumberland House area of northern Saskatchewan has been on a steep decline since 1960.

Commercial fishing in the past was the most significant threat to the Lake Sturgeon. It has also lost habitat due to dam construction.

The fish is considered a "living fossil" by scientists since the basic structure of the animal has not changed much in 100 million years. Fossil records of similar fish date back another 100 million years.

The habitat mapping will be done by members of the Cumberland House Cree Nation.

The same pot of money will fund an education program to teach First Nations youth about species at risk.

"It's just extremely important to have that knowledge, for our young people to understand the dangers that may happen to our species within our communities," Starr said.

Source: CBC News