



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

June 29th and 30th, 2023

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Environmental Activists Host A “Last Baby Shower” for the Delaware River Atlantic Sturgeon

*An Action that Amplifies The Need For Immediate Government Action to
Prevent Extinction of the Delaware River Genetically Unique Population of Atlantic Sturgeon*

Philadelphia, PA: Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Waterspirit, and Saddler’s Woods Conservation Association, joined by volunteers from around the region, hosted the “Last Baby Shower for the Delaware River Atlantic Sturgeon”. Over the course of the two day event, activists and volunteers are canvassing the lawns of Independence Hall and the streets of Philadelphia to alert the public to the plight of the genetically unique population of Atlantic Sturgeon of the Delaware River, while at the same time gathering signatures for a message directed at the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), and Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) urging immediate and specific protective action for the nearly extinct population.

On the lawns of Independence Hall, Mama Atlantic Sturgeon and her Babies are seen running around alerting the public to ‘their’ dire fate. The activists, dressed up as sturgeon, are holding bloody ship propellers, lifting up informational signs, and handing out cards explaining the plight of the Atlantic Sturgeon of the Delaware River.

The goal of the event, according to organizers, is to educate the public and gather signatures urging meaningful government action. Members of the public are being invited to sign “Thank You” cards outlining the “deadly gifts of extinction” the targeted agencies have been providing the Atlantic Sturgeon of the Delaware River. According to, and as described by, the event’s informational materials, the Delaware River Basin Commission, US Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Marine Fisheries Service have provided ‘gifts’ of ship strikes, habitat destruction, pollution, and failure to ensure dissolved oxygen levels sufficient for the sturgeon to propagate and thrive.

Says **Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, a lead organizer of the event**, “Time is running out for the Atlantic Sturgeon of the Delaware River. If our government agencies do not step up and put in place critical protections, while at the same time saying ‘no’ to fossil fuel, dredging and port projects that will inflict devastating harm, then the Delaware River’s Atlantic Sturgeon population could be lost from this earth in our lifetime. Once they are lost we can never get them back. That will be a tragedy and responsibility inflicted because of the conscious choice of the Delaware River Basin Commission, National Marine Fisheries Service and USEPA who had a chance to save the sturgeon but chose not to. And that is unacceptable.”

The Delaware River population of Atlantic Sturgeon has been identified by scientific study as genetically unique. As a result of government failures to ensure protective pollution standards and to reject damaging projects, 99.5% of the original population of Delaware River Atlantic Sturgeon have been decimated; with only 250 spawning adults left to carry the species forward.

Specifically, the event organizers have been urging the targeted government agencies to pass pollution standards that will support needed oxygen levels in the Delaware River, to recognize the Delaware River Atlantic Sturgeon as a distinct population segment in need of higher protective care under the Endangered Species Act, and to reject proposed fossil fuel, LNG, port and dredging projects that have decimated critical habitat and water quality essential for sturgeon propagation and survival.

“This event’s focus is squarely on the opportunity for governmental action that benefits water, the source and sustainer of *all* life. Understanding the root of environmental degradation that leads to a species extinction, urgent prevention is critical. Journalists and press should be overwhelmingly covering young people desperately yearning for people in power, such as the DRBC, US EPA and NMFS, to prioritize clean air, clean water and a livable future. Extinction of the Delaware Atlantic sturgeon is a key indicator the time for government action is overdue. With our young people and young sturgeons crying out for a future in which they can breathe, it is imperative that real action is taken to reverse the fate of the Delaware Atlantic sturgeon and its related ecosystem” offers **Rachel Dawn Davis, Public Policy & Justice Organizer, Waterspirit**.

“As an organization dedicated to habitat preservation in the Delaware watershed, we are proud to add our voice in the call to protect the endangered Atlantic Sturgeon. We can no longer kick the problem of extinction downstream for the next generation. If we are to save the Delaware’s genetically unique sturgeon, regulatory agencies must act now to elevate their protections so that sturgeon may continue to spawn and thrive in the Delaware as they have done for eons before us” said **Janet Goehner-Jacobs, Executive Director of Saddler’s Woods Conservation Association**.

In addition to collecting signatures on the streets of Philadelphia, the effort is also calling on the general public to sign the virtual “Thank You” cards for “gifts of extinction” at www.dinointhedelaware.org/sign-the-postcard/ .

The signatures and cards will be delivered to the targeted regulatory agencies in the coming weeks as part of additional petitions and calls for government action.

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