

## Record of a White Sturgeon, *Acipenser transmontanus* from Bahía De Todos Santos, Baja California, Mexico, Found at the Ensenada Sea Food Market

J. A. Rosales-Casián and R. Ruz-Cruz

*Centro de Investigación Científica y de Educación Superior de Ensenada, B.C.  
División de Oceanología, Departamento de Ecología  
Grupo e Ecología Pesquera  
Km 107 carretera Tijuana-Ensenada, Ensenada, B.C., México*

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The white sturgeon, *Acipenser transmontanus* (Richardson 1836), is an anadromous fish that lives primarily in freshwater or estuaries, and infrequently meanders in the ocean. Most of fish are found in river systems, with the Sacramento-San Joaquin River system (California) and Columbia River system (Oregon/Washington) containing the largest populations (Love 1996). In summer, they migrate into shallow warm waters of rivers or toward the shores for breeding purposes. They are benthic and long-lived fish species that inhabit the shallow sand and mud bottoms (Love 1996). The distribution of *Acipenser transmontanus* range from Northern Baja California (Love 1996), or from Ensenada, Baja California (México) to Gulf of Alaska (Miller and Lea 1972).

Bahía de Todos Santos is located at Ensenada, Baja California, México, (31°40'–31°56'N, 116°36'–116°50'W), and fish studies at the bay began in the early 1980's with a variety of gear types including spear guns at kelp beds (Díaz-Díaz 1983; Díaz-Díaz and Hammann 1987), trawl tows on sandy bottoms Hammann and Rosales-Casián (1990), and creel surveys (Rodríguez-Medrano 1993). In addition, research on the fish community of Todos Santos bay and also in Bahía and Costa de San Quintín was conducted between 1992 and 1995 using five different gears: beam-trawl, otter-trawl, beach-seine, gillnet, and hook-and-line (Rosales-Casián 1997a, 2004). Recently, a study of the artisanal fishery from eight fishing camps along northwestern coast of Baja California was also completed (Rosales-Casián and Gonzalez 2003). All those studies failed to collect any specimens of white sturgeon.

The Seafood Market of Ensenada Port has been surveyed monthly since September 2000 (Hernandez-Hernandez 2002). During this monitoring program on March 15, 2003, we observed a white sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*), which was captured on same day with a bottom trap close to the Isla de Todos Santos located in Bahía de Todos Santos. The specimen was fresh and complete but eviscerated, and the testes were still in the body. This male was in stage III: maturation (Nikolsky 1963; Cailliet *et al* 1986). The white sturgeon was 1,228-mm total length (TL) and a somatic weight of 6,366 g. In California waters, the males mature at TL 1,097–1,828 mm (Love 1996).

The white sturgeon was identified by the combination of the following characteristics: body coloration was grayish-white with five rows of bony plates (scutes) on its body. The head was short and robust with the four long barbells (5cm) located in the front and closer to the snout tip than to the mouth. The

mouth was underneath the head, and the number of the midlateral bony plates was 40.

Another white sturgeon, *Acipenser transmontanus*, was collected at Flat Rock, Rancho Palos Verdes in Los Angeles County on April 24, 2003. SL 1,220, TL 1,940, and 20.5 kilos. It was caught in an overnight gill net set as part of a white seabass monitoring project (Pondella and Allen 2000). Latitude 33°47'54''N, Longitude 118°24'73''W, depth 6.3 meters (Daniel Pondella, personal communication, Vantuna Research Group, Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA).

The record of this specimen is important because it reconfirms the southern range of white sturgeon, increases the list of fish species that have been collected or registered at Bahía de Todos Santos, Baja California, México, and re-establishes a well-documented reference.

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