

Sturgeon Care Guide

Copyright © 2010 www.sturgeon-web.co.uk

General

Correct feeding, good water quality and good oxygen levels (minimum 6mg/ltr) are vital for the health and welfare of your sturgeon. Nearly all problems are either food, oxygen or water quality related.

Housing

Sturgeons, including Sterlets, are not small fish, even the smallest species needs a minimum pond size of 4,500 ltr (1,000 gallons). The pond must be filtered and well aerated. Sturgeons should never be kept in aquariums.

The Diamond Sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*) can grow to 1.2 – 1.5m. It can be kept in a pond of 13,500 - 27,000 litres (3,000 - 6,000 gallons) for some time but a pond of 27,000 - 36,500 litres (6,000 - 8,000 gallons) or more is recommended to keep Diamond Sturgeons into maturity.

The Siberian Sturgeon (*Acipenser baerii*) can grow to 1 – 1.5m, although not as stocky as the Diamond Sturgeon. It can be kept in a pond of 13,500 - 27,000 litres (3,000 - 6,000 gallons) for some time but a pond of 27,000 - 36,500 litres (6,000 - 8,000 gallons) or more is recommended to keep Siberian Sturgeons into maturity.

The Starry Sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*) can grow to 1.3 - 1.5m but is more slender than the Diamond and Siberian and slower growing. It will need a pond of at least 11,000 litres (2,500 gallons) when young but 13,500 - 27,000 litres (3,000 - 6,000 gallons) is recommended if you want to keep it into maturity.

The Sterlet (*Acipenser ruthenus*) can grow to 1 – 1.2m and is the slowest growing species available for the pond. It can be kept in a pond of 4,500 - 9,000 ltr (1,000 – 2,000 gallons) for many years but bigger is better and 9,000 - 13,500 litres (2,000 - 3,000 gallons) is recommended if you want to keep the fish into maturity. The Sterlet is not a baby sturgeon, it is a true species.

Diet

Sturgeons do not eat blanket weed or 'clean the bottom of the pond' as some people may tell you. The food must have a high fish meal content. Sturgeon food should have a minimum protein content of 40% and an oil level of 15% or more. The main ingredient should be fishmeal. Avoid foods made from mainly soya and wheat. Recent studies show that a small percentage of the protein can be obtained from soya but the majority of the protein still needs to be from fishmeal. Sturgeons need to be fed all year round, they require between 2 - 3 % of their body weight of food per day in the summer, less in the winter.

Pellet to Sturgeon size

2mm pellet - Sturgeon 10-20cm (4-8in)

3mm pellet - Sturgeon 20-36cm (8-14in)

6mm pellet - Sturgeon 36-61cm (14-24in)

8mm pellet - Sturgeon over 61cm (24in) except *Stellatus* and Sterlets; use 6mm until 76cm (30in)

Health

Sturgeons generally have few problems if their environment and food are right but they can have some parasites. Treat them with salt (pure cooking or dish washer salt, not table salt) in the form of a bath 15gm per litre / 2oz per gallon for a maximum of 15 minutes every other day for 3 or 4 treatments. Note: Sterlets, being a true freshwater fish, may not like salt this strong, and Koi certainly won't.

Warnings

There are many treatments for garden ponds that are deadly to sturgeons. Most are algacides for the control of 'green water' or 'blanket weed', others are for treating parasites. Always check the label or ask the store / manufacturer, if they are unwilling or unable to say then avoid the treatment. Avoid treatments with Copper sulphate / CuSO₄, Formalin / formaldehyde, Potassium permanganate / KMnO₄ or any treatments that state not to be used with Orfe or Rudd as they are more than likely to kill sturgeon.

Small sturgeons can easily become entangled, and suffocate, in blanket weed and plants such as *Elodea crispata*. They cannot 'reverse' out of tight corners so you must make sure there are no areas in the pond where your sturgeon can get stuck.

More information

www.sturgeon-web.co.uk

www.pond-life.me.uk/sturgeon