

Lake Sturgeon Harvest Results in Fines and 15-year Fishing Ban

NEWS

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A Blind River area man received a total of \$500 in fines and a 15-year ban on harvesting Lake Sturgeon for illegally taking the species.

Kevin Poulton, a resident of Mississauga First Nation, pleaded guilty and was fined \$250 for illegally taking Lake Sturgeon and \$250 for making a false statement to a conservation officer. In addition, Poulton is prohibited from possessing or fishing for Lake Sturgeon in Ontario for the next 15 years.

Court heard that on September 22, 2013, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry conservation officers from Blind River stopped three Toronto anglers in Espanola who were in illegal possession of 12.2 kg of sturgeon eggs and 1.8 kg of sturgeon meat. In April 2014, two of those individuals were fined a total of more than \$20,000 for their involvement.

After a lengthy investigation, the officers determined that these men met Poulton in Blind River where they asked him to catch Lake Sturgeon for them. On September 16, 2013, Poulton caught two Lake Sturgeon then met the men again, when he gave them the sturgeon eggs and meat.

Justice of the Peace Phil Stanghetta heard the case in the Ontario Court of Justice, Blind River, on August 27, 2014.

Lake Sturgeon is the largest freshwater fish in Canada, and was listed in 2009 as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. In some parts of the world, sturgeon populations have been decimated due to overharvesting and the illegal commercialization of their eggs, which are made into caviar. Lake Sturgeon fishing has been closed in Ontario since 2008 due to concerns with overharvesting and the sustainability of sturgeon populations.

To report a natural resource violation, call the MNR TIPS line at 1-877-847-7667 toll-free any time or contact your ministry office during regular business hours. You can also call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).