

## Sea lions eat endangered river sturgeon

*by UPI*

PORTLAND, Ore. - The survival of sturgeon in the Columbia River Gorge along the Washington-Oregon state line is threatened by feasting Steller sea lions. Fish and wildlife officials in the two Pacific Northwest states reportedly have tried to frighten away the almost extinct Steller sea lions, which weigh as much 2,400 pounds, with rubber bullets and underwater noise bombs, The News Tribune in Tacoma, Wash., reported Wednesday. The gorge is 40 miles east of Portland, Ore. Officials said one of the main facets of the problem is that the sea lions have targeted egg-bearing sturgeon. "These fish are essentially the anchor for the entire species on the West Coast of North America," sturgeon biologist Blaine Parker said. Wildlife experts say stronger measures need to be taken against the sea lions for the sturgeon to survive. "I'm not going to dispute the fact that Stellers need protection, also," Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association Executive Director Liz Hamilton said. The predatory Steller sea lions are protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act.

Â© 2008 United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

*Sea lions eat endangered river sturgeon by UPI*