



Iona Island Park – Sturgeon in the Tidal Pools - by Terry Slack

Yes my name is Terry Slack, and my family came to fish in the North Arm of the Fraser River in the 1930's. My Uncle and my grandfather came to homestead on a place called Iona Island in the mouth of the North Arm of the Fraser. In 1948 I came from Nottingham England to meet my family and become a fisherman. When I first got here, I was given the job by my grandfather and my uncle to provide the family with Dungeness crab, which was caught right off the sturgeon bank right next to our float houses. One day I was taken out by my uncle and grandfather and shown how to catch Dungeness crab. Our grandfather gave us a sack and a pointed stick so that we could hold the crab down while we picked it up so we didn't get bitten by the pinchers on the crab. It was kind of a new to us, because we came from the middle of England and we hadn't seen the shore at all. Probably visiting once every five years to a seashore in England. But we went out to the tidal pools and then fished and took the instruction from my grandfather and my uncle. Then it was our turn to do it. My sister and myself, to do this thing by catching Dungeness crab by ourselves. We went out one day and it was a very low tide, and we had to walk a very long way out off of the island way out onto the last tidal pools on sturgeon bank. As we were fishing in the pools, we noticed there was a large fish with a dorsal fin sticking out of the water, and it was very scary. We all thought it was a shark. We had seen pictures of sharks before but never of a sturgeon. We dropped all our crab fishing gear and ran home to the float house, which took us about half an hour, running all the way back up the beach. My grandfather said "I better go out with you and look at this great fish in the tidal pool". So we walked back out and he said "yep", and we looked and it was still there. There were two of them now in this tidal pond. He said they were great white sturgeon and they were probably trapped by the tide going out, they could not hurt us and they would not do any harm to us, so continue your fishing and just ignore them. But we were too scared. We thought they were still sharks.