

APPLETON
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Sturgeon season will proceed on schedule

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OSHKOSH - The 1998 Lake Winnebago sturgeon spearing season will open Feb. 14, good ice or bad, a state fisheries official said Wednesday.

"No, we are not going to cancel the season," said fisheries biologist Ron Bruch of the state Department of Natural Resources, speaking at a public meeting on a new, statewide sturgeon management plan.

"We can't guarantee that people will have the common sense to know when to go out on the lake, but the season will go on."

Reports from DNR pilots who flew over the lake Tuesday are that ice now covers the lake, but it looks weak in most areas. The lake is treacherous because snow hides dangerous spots and is



BRUCH

day had set up two tip-ups and was about to set up a third when he stepped through the ice. "He got his butt off of there," Bruch said.

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weighting down the thin ice, causing water to seep up through cracks. The water causes already weak ice to deteriorate.

One fisherman who walked out off the east shore Tuesday had set up two tip-ups and was about to set up a third when he stepped through the ice. "He got his butt off of there," Bruch said.

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collapse. Restoration of remnant populations in areas where sturgeon once flourished. Expanded public involvement in the sturgeon management program.

Spears at the meeting said they would pull their shacks out on ski-like runners and park them on 4 inches of ice if they had to this season. Others said a warm spell would melt the snow, followed by a cold snap, would fix the ice problem. Bruch said reports from the east shore are that the water is so clear the lake bottom can be seen in 13 feet of water. Clear water is a boon for spears.

"That might be some incentive for people to do some foolish things," Bruch said, "to get out where they really shouldn't be."