

Prehistoric Paddlefish Makes Return to Texas Lake



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The slimy long-nosed paddlefish is making a return to a Texas lake where the dinosaur-era species used to swim before it was nearly wiped out years ago.

Rick Lowerre, president of the Caddo Lake Institute, a private nonprofit dedicated to preservation, said 47 fish equipped with trackers were released into Caddo Lake this week.

The fish will be tracked by scientists at state and federal agencies who hope to see whether changing the water releases from a nearby dam will help restore the area ecosystem, which has suffered in recent years, Lowerre said.

“If all 47 stay in the system for the next six months or a year, that’s a success. We’ll know they’re willing to try the system out,” he said. “If it didn’t work, we’ll know we have to change things.”

The fish, which is prized for its caviar, can live as long as 30 years and grow as long as 7-feet.

Local school children have also adopted the fish and will be tracking their routes from their classrooms. Lowerre said one has already been given the obvious nickname of Pinocchio.

“They’re a great way to get kids excited about natural science and learning about how river systems should work,” he said.



(Image Credit: Sue Ogrocki/AP Photo)