

Rare Paddlefish Being Stocked At East Texas Lake

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KARNACK, Texas (CBSDFW/AP) - About 2,000 more paddlefish will be released into an East Texas lake after apparent success with initial restocking of the rare creatures.

State and federal wildlife agencies joined conservation groups for Tuesday's release into Caddo Lake.

In March about 50 paddlefish implanted with radio transmitters were put in Caddo Lake and the Big Cypress Bayou. Officials with the Nature Conservancy say early data indicates those fish are doing remarkably well.

According to Texas Parks and Wildlife, Paddlefish (sometimes called a spoonbill, spoonbill cat, or shovelnose cat) are the oldest surviving animal species in North America. Fossil records indicate that it is older than dinosaurs (300 million years).

The paddlefish experiment is part of a larger five-year project with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to change how water is released from Lake O' the Pines Dam. The releases are meant to mimic the watershed's natural flows, along with flood control.

Historically in Texas, paddlefish lived in the Red River's tributaries, Sulphur River, Big Cypress Bayou, Sabine River, Neches River, Angelina River, Trinity River, and San Jacinto River.

Observers hope that paddlefish, on the Texas list of threatened marine life, will once again flourish.