

*** Permitting bowfishing for catfish - Public Act 99-867, House Bill 5788**

Bowfishing is the practice of taking a fish with a spear or a bow and arrow.

Existing Illinois law limited the kinds of fish that can be taken through bowfishing.

HB 5788 added catfish to the Fish Code list of fish that can be taken with sharp weaponry.

* this one has caused some confusion & questions. Below is the IDNR answers to clear this up:

There have been questions regarding the taking of catfish by archery means. This will begin on April 1, 2017, and only on certain waters, which are listed below. The only harvest limits are those found for those waters in 810.45 of the administrative rules and are listed in the IDNR fishing regulations booklet. Archery fishing for catfish will have no effect on the catfish populations in any of those waters.

The regulation:

Catfish species may only be taken in rivers and connected public (wholly accessible by boat) backwaters as noted in subsection (d)(4) through (15) below.

4) Mississippi River connected public (wholly accessible by boat) backwaters, including that portion of the Kaskaskia River below the navigation lock and dam, except:

A) Quincy Bay, including Quincy Bay Waterfowl Management Area.

B) Spring Lake in the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

C) Mark Twain U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge Waters (except by special permit).

5) Illinois River and connected public (wholly accessible by boat) backwaters from Route 89 highway bridge downstream, except for:

A) U.S. Fish and Wildlife National Refuge Waters.

B) Meredosia Lake in Cass and Morgan Counties during the central zone duck season.

C) Clear Lake in Mason County 7 days prior to and during the central zone duck season.

D) Route 89 highway bridge to Starved Rock Dam for the commercial removal of Asian carp only by a limited number of restricted period contracts.

6) Wabash River.

7) Embarras River, except from Route 130 in Coles County upstream to the Harrison Street Bridge, including Lake Charleston.

8) Sangamon River, downstream of Belt Route 48 southwest of Decatur to mouth in Cass County.

9) Kaskaskia River south of Route U.S. 50 Bridge to mouth in Randolph County.

10) Little Wabash River.

11) Big Muddy River south of State Route 14 highway bridge in Franklin County to mouth in Jackson County.

12) Skillet Fork.

13) Cache River from Route 51 downstream to the Mississippi River via Cache Diversion Channel, but not including that portion of the Cache River between the Cache Diversion Channel Levee and the Ohio River.

14) Saline River in Gallatin and Saline Counties.

15) Ohio River, except for:

A) Lock and Dam 52 downstream to a line perpendicular with the end of the longest lock wall, including the circular cell portion.

B) Lock and Dam 53 downstream to a line perpendicular with the end of the longest lock wall, including the circular cell portion.

C) Smithland Dam downstream to a line perpendicular to the end of the outer lock wall.

D) Within 50 yards of the mouth of any tributary or stream