

March 13, 2018



RE: Carp Restrictions in Connecticut

The Bowfishing Association of America was founded in 1990 to serve as a steward of the sport and protect the privileges of bowfishers around the United States. The sport is strong and growing and the BAA has a membership in excess of 5,000 members nationwide. Often the sport is portrayed as barbaric and wasteful by groups that favor practices like catch and release. It's true that bowfishing removes fish from the ecosystem, but the key point is that these species fall into a couple of categories.

**1. Invasive and or harmful species** – These fish have been introduced to native waters and removal of these species contributes to the overall health of the waterbody.

**2. Rough/underutilized species** – native and non-native fishes that are not readily utilized/sought after by rod and reel fishermen. Often these species either have little natural predation and/or compete directly for food sources with more popular game fish species.

Of particular interest to this discussion is the Common Carp. Identified on the [list of 100 of the "worst" invasive species in the Global Invasive Species Database, as of 2014](#). Large specimens have the capacity to spawn 2 million or more eggs per cycle and when they reach sizes larger than 3 pounds (in the first 1-2 years) they have very few natural predators. Their feeding and spawning habits contribute to water turbidity and vegetation destruction, as well as the release of trapped phosphorus leading to algae blooms and affecting more desirable fish species and the growth of aquatic vegetation.

Across the United States carp fishing/bowfishing maintains little to no restriction, as scientific studies and the directives of fish and wildlife agencies place little value on common carp. For example, here is a link to the [Minnesota DNR website](#) and their stance that carp are one of the most damaging aquatic invasive species due to its wide distribution and severe impacts in shallow lakes and wetlands.

The regulations proposed in Connecticut to protect common carp by instituting Trophy Waters and establishing creel limits have the potential to exacerbate a problem that the rest of the country deals with through liberal bowfishing regulations, including no bag limits and no closed seasons for the most part.

We ask that you consider rescinding the recent regulations as there are already ample opportunities for carp to grow large without any unnecessary protections in place. An overabundance of carp will eventually hit the carrying capacities of these water bodies, directly impacting more desirable species and ultimately stunting the growth of carp overall as their food sources are diminished. We hope you understand our position and understand that bowfishers in Connecticut are surprised and disheartened by these regulations that don't seem to be backed up by scientific studies or evidence.

Sincerely,

Peter Gregoire

Secretary, Bowfishing Association of America