

I am opposed to any exemptions or changes to the recently adopted CT regulations for Trophy Carp Waters and Creel Limits

As a catch & release angler who supports and endorses the Connecticut Trophy Carp Water and Creel Limit regulations for common carp I am extremely concerned to hear that there are changes or amendments being sought without an opportunity for discussion among ALL interested parties.

It is my understanding that the changes would give an exemption to bow fishing on the CT River below Middletown, the Quinnipiac river and below the Derby dam on the Housatonic River. These are without doubt the areas bow fishers most wish to target as it gives them the easiest access to kill Trophy sized carp, especially when spawning in shallow coves and marsh areas.

Bow fishers focus on killing big fish. This is perhaps the greatest area of contention for regular rod & line anglers. A single bow fishing boat can boast of killing 20-30 trophy sized carp in a single night. Carp are long lived and a specimen carp weighing over twenty pounds may be 10-12 years in age and a 30 considerably older. Killing these valuable trophy fish not only destroys the sporting opportunities for the growing numbers of catch & release anglers but can also have significant impacts on the natural environment and balance of fish populations, including native species.

While common carp are sometimes considered 'invasive' they are not to be confused with Asian carp species. In many waters such as those in New England they have become naturalized and rarely if ever pose the water quality issues or over population that some claim. Where you find trophy sized carp you will invariably find trophy sized bass, pike, walleye and other species.

Catch & Release Trophy carp fishing has seen a significant growth in recent years here in North America and especially Connecticut. It is already valued at over US \$ 7 billion in Europe. CT has seen significant revenue growth for local businesses who sell carp angling bait and tackle and many others who benefit from the influx of visiting anglers. The new carp regulations (without exemptions) would certainly support further growth.

The new CT fishery regulations provided ample opportunity for discussion over the past year.

I would respectfully request that the regulations remain unchanged without any amendment for such exemptions until ALL interested parties have had an opportunity to be engaged in further discussion. These fish have been in the United States since the late 1800's and haven't destroyed or compromised any of the other trophy fish programs. Letting people slay these beautiful giant fish for fun or fertilizer is just not right. Carp fishing is growing so quickly in the United States and we'd like to keep it going for the kids and families who all have a blast fishing for these creatures. This is a large stepping stone.

Sincerely,

Matthew Kelly

