**Section 810.15 Statewide and Site Specific Bowfishing (Archery/Spear Methods) Regulations**

a) Legal Methods of Taking

Aquatic life, as listed by species in subsection (b), may be taken by means of legal bowfishing devices, including a pitchfork, underwater spear gun, bow and arrow or bow and arrow device, spear or gig. A valid sport fishing license is required for taking aquatic life under this Section. Aquatic life taken by these means shall not be sold or bartered. No other aquatic life (e.g., fish, amphibian or reptile species) may be taken in this State by these means.

b) Species

Only fish, amphibian and reptile species listed may be taken by bowfishing and other legal methods and in accordance with length limits and daily harvest limits identified for each. Fish, amphibian and reptile species permitted to be taken by bowfishing and other archery/spear fishing legal methods in Illinois waters include:

1) Order Petromyzontiformes

Family Petromyzontidae (Non-Native Species):

Sea lamprey – Petromyzon marinus (Linnaeus)

2) Order Lepisosteiformes

Family Lepisosteidae (Native Species):

Spotted gar − Lepisosteus oculatus (Winchell)

Longnose gar – Lepisosteus osseus (Linnaeus)

Shortnose gar – Lepisosteus platostomus (Rafinesque)

Alligator Gar – Atractosteus spatula (Lacepede)

3) Order Amiiformes

Family Amiidae (Native Species):

Bowfin – Amia calva (Linnaeus)

4) Order Clupeiformes

Family Clupeidae (Native Species):

Gizzard shad – Dorosoma cepedianum (Lesueur)

5) Order Cypriniformes

Family Cyprinidae (Non-Native Species):

Grass carp − Ctenopharyngodon idella (Valenciennes)

Common carp − Cyprinus carpio (Linnaeus)

Silver carp − Hypophthalmichthys molitrix (Valenciennes)

Bighead carp − Hypophthalmichthys nobilis (Richardson)

Goldfish − Carassius auratus (Linnaeus)

Black carp – Mylopharyngodon piceus (Richardson)

Family Cobitidae (Non-Native Species):

Oriental weatherfish – Misgurnus anguillicaudatus (Cantor)

Family Catostomidae (Native Species):

River carpsucker − Carpiodes carpio (Rafinesque)

Quillback carpsucker − Carpiodes cyprinus (Lesueur)

Highfin carpsucker − Carpiodes velifer (Rafinesque)

White sucker − Catostomus commersoni (Lacepede)

Blue sucker − Cycleptus elongates (Lesueur)

Smallmouth buffalo − Ictiobus bubalus (Rafinesque)

Bigmouth buffalo − Ictiobus cyprinellus (Valenciennes)

Black buffalo − Ictiobus niger (Rafinesque)

Spotted sucker − Minytrema melanops (Rafinesque)

Silver redhorse − Moxostoma anisurum (Rafinesque)

Black redhorse − Moxostoma duquesnei (Lesueur)

Golden redhorse − Moxostoma erythrurum (Rafinesque)

Shorthead redhorse − Moxostoma macrolepidotum (Lesueur)

6) Order Characiformes

Family Serrasalmidae (Non-Native Species):

Pacu – Callisoma spp. (Eigenmann and Kennedy)

7) Order Siluriformes

Family Ictaluridae (Native Species):

Channel catfish – Ictalurus punctatus (Rafinesque)

Blue catfish – Ictalurus furcatus (Lesueur)

Flathead catfish – Pylodictis olivaris (Rafinesque)

Yellow bullhead – Ameiurus natalis (Lesueur)

Brown bullhead – Ameiurus nebulosus (Lesueur)

Black bullhead – Ameiurus melas (Rafinesque)

Family Ictaluridae (Non-Native Species):

White catfish – Ameiurus catus (Linnaeus)

8) Order Perciformes

Family Sciaenidae (Native Species):

Freshwater drum – Aplodinotus grunniens (Rafinesque)

9) Order Cichliformes

Family Cichlidae (Non-Native Species):

Tilapia – Tilapia spp. (Smith)

10) Order Gobiiformes

Family Gobiidae (Non-Native Species):

Round goby – Neogobius malanistomus (Pallas)

11) Order Anabantiformes

Family Channidae (Non-Native Species):

Northern snakehead – Channa argus (Cantor)

12) Order Anura

Family Ranidae (Native Species):

American bullfrog – Lithobates catesbeianus (Shaw)

13) Order Testudines

Family Chelydridae (Native Species):

Common snapping turtle – Chelydra serpentina (Linnaeus)

c) Non-Native Fish Species

No live possession of non-native fish species listed in subsection (b) is permitted, with the exception of common carp and goldfish.

d) Waters Open to Bowfishing and Other Legal Archery and Spearfishing Methods

1) All public site specific waters as noted in Section 810.45.

2) All public rivers and streams noted in 17 Ill. Adm. Code 3704.Appendix A, except as restricted by subsections (d)(2)(A) through (G).

A) Mississippi River connected public (accessible by boat during normal flows or stages) backwaters, including that portion of the Kaskaskia River below the navigation lock and dam, except:

i) Quincy Bay, including Quincy Bay Waterfowl Management Area;

ii) All U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge backwaters.

B) Illinois River and connected public (accessible by boat during normal flows or stages) backwaters from Route 89 highway bridge downstream, except for:

i) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge waters;

ii) Donnelley/DePue State Fish and Wildlife Area;

iii) Rice Lake Complex, including all of Big Lake;

iv) Meredosia Lake in Cass and Morgan Counties during the central zone duck season; and

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

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

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

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

F) Saline River in Gallatin and Saline Counties.

G) Ohio River, except for:

i) Olmstead Locks and Dam downstream to a line perpendicular with the end of the longest lock wall, including the circular cell portion;

ii) Smithland Dam downstream to a line perpendicular to the end of the outer lock wall; and

iii) Within 50 yards of the mouth of any tributary or stream.

3) Additional waters (accessible by boat during normal flows or stages), except as restricted in this subsection.

A) Embarras River, except from Route 130 in Coles County upstream to the dam;

B) Skillet Fork River; and

C) 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.

e) Catfish species (Family Ictaluridae) may be taken by bowfishing methods only in the following waters, except as restricted in this subsection.

1) Mississippi River connected public (accessible by boat during normal flows or stages) backwaters, including that portion of the Kaskaskia River below the navigation lock and dam, except:

A) Quincy Bay, including Quincy Bay Waterfowl Management Area; and

B) All U.S. Fish and Wildlife National Wildlife Refuge backwaters.

2) Illinois River and connected public (accessible by boat during normal flows or stages) backwaters from Route 89 highway bridge downstream, except:

A) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge waters;

B) Donnelley/DePue State Fish and Wildlife Area;

C) Rice Lake Complex, including all of Big Lake;

D) Meredosia Lake in Cass and Morgan Counties during the central zone duck season; and

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

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

4) Kaskaskia River, south of Route U.S. 50 bridge to mouth in Randolph County.

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

6) Saline River in Gallatin and Saline Counties.

7) Ohio River, except:

A) Olmstead Locks and Dam downstream to a line perpendicular with the end of the longest lock wall, including the circular cell portion;

B) Smithland Dam downstream to a line perpendicular to the end of the outer lock wall; and

C) Within 50 yards of the mouth of any tributary or stream.

8) Embarras River, except from Route 130 in Coles County upstream to the dam, and except Charleston Side Channel Lake.

9) Skillet Fork River.

10) 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.

11) Wabash River.

12) Little Wabash River.

13) South Fork of the Sangamon River from State Highway 48 bridge downstream to the Sangamon River in Christian and Sangamon Counties.

f) Bowfishing for common snapping turtles is not permitted in the following Illinois counties: Randolph, Perry, Franklin, Hamilton, White, Gallatin, Saline, Williamson, Jackson, Union, Johnson, Pope, Hardin, Massac, Pulaski and Alexander.

(Source: Amended at 49 Ill. Reg. 436, effective December 30, 2024)