

Northern Snakehead Frequently Asked Questions Addressing the Problem



What is being done? The Department of Natural Resources has several ongoing studies to assess the impact of northern snakehead (*Channa argus*). In some instances, we also assist with research performed by other organizations like the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Geological Survey, and others.

What can I do to help? Share our videos and fact sheets with friends and family. Notify the department of any sightings in new areas. Target and harvest the fish and encourage others to do the same. Never sell or transport live northern snakehead.

Other invasive species like flathead and blue catfish have a large negative impact as well, why aren't they being scrutinized to the same degree as snakehead? They are. The department and its partners are also working to address the problems of invasive catfish.

Do northern snakehead pose a risk to largemouth bass populations? Potentially. Anytime another top predator is introduced to an ecosystem, there is the potential for conflict. Snakeheads tend to grow much larger and they eat the same food as largemouth bass. There's some evidence of predation on largemouth bass, but it's not common. Research has shown that in some conditions, snakeheads could become highly abundant and limit the number of largemouth bass in the area.

Are largemouth bass more abundant than snakehead? Unknown. Absolute abundance is rarely determined for many populations and instead, electrofishing surveys are performed to measure the relative abundance of bass and snakehead. Each species reacts differently to electrofishing and snakeheads are not as easily captured as bass, making side by side comparisons nearly impossible.

