

FRIEND OR FOE?

How to tell the difference



Illustration by Susan Trammell, forestryimages.org

Long, extended anal fin

Lower jaw protrudes past the upper jaw

Northern Snakehead
NON-NATIVE SPECIES
← Potential Invasive Species



Illustration by Duane Raver

Black spot at base of tail

Short anal fin

Lower jaw shorter than upper jaw

Bowfin (Choupique)
← **NATIVE SPECIES**

FACTS ABOUT NORTHERN SNAKEHEADS

Snakeheads are native to Asia. Their name comes from the enlarged scales that cover their heads. Snakeheads

are obligate air breathers. Unlike most fish, they must obtain oxygen directly from the air rather than water. They can live up to three days outside of water. They can move short distances on land through a wiggling motion. They are highly predatory, consuming mostly fish, but will also eat other small aquatic animals such as frogs and crawfish. Both male and female snakeheads are very protective of their eggs and fry. They can grow up to 3 feet in length. Four different species of snakeheads are currently found in the United States: bullseye, blotched, giant, and northern. Only the northern snakehead has been found in Louisiana. Northern snakeheads have been reported in the following states: Mississippi, Arkansas, California, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, North Carolina, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Louisiana. They were released into the wild through fish markets and the aquarium trade.

If you think you caught a SNAKEHEAD

DO NOT put the fish
back into the water.

Take a side view photo
of the fish (if possible).

Kill it, freeze it (double bag)
and contact your local LDWF office
or call the ANS Hotline.

Make sure to note the exact location
of the catch. This is helpful to
determine species distribution and
control/management strategies.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

Louisiana's climate is similar to their native
habitat, meaning snakeheads can easily
flourish in our waterways.

Northern snakeheads are a highly
predatory species that can out compete and
prey on our native species.

Northern snakeheads could impact Louisiana's
recreational and commercial fisheries.



**For more information
or to report a possible
snakehead, contact:**

**Louisiana Department of
Wildlife & Fisheries
Office of Fisheries**

Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator

P.O. Box 98000

Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000

225-765-3977

www.wlf.la.gov

**To report any
Aquatic Invasive Species
24-hours a day:**

ANS Hotline: 225-765-3977

ANS Email: AquaticInvasives@wlf.la.gov

Bowfin illustration by Duane Raver

Snakehead illustration by Susan Trammell, forestryimages.org

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BE ON THE LOOKOUT



NORTHERN SNAKEHEAD

Potential Invasive Species