

2012

ILLINOIS COMMERCIAL FISHING INFORMATION

This information is taken from the Fish and Aquatic Life Code and Administrative Rules. It does not supersede or modify the Fish and Aquatic Life Code or Administrative Rules and is presented only as a guide, which is subject to change. *A complete listing of the Fish and Aquatic Life Code and Administrative Rules can be found at www.dnr.state.il.us.*

DEFINITIONS

Resident Commercial Fishermen: An individual who has actually resided in Illinois for one year immediately preceding his application for a Commercial Fishing License and who does not claim residency for a commercial fishing license in another state or country.

Dressed: Means having the head of aquatic life removed.

Bar Measure: Distance from the outside of one knot to the inside of the adjoining knot on the same thread or strand.

WATERS OPEN TO COMMERCIAL FISHING (open year round except as noted)

1. Lake Michigan (limited entry). For further information on Lake Michigan, contact the Division of Fisheries, Lake Michigan Program, 9511 Harrison Street, Des Plaines, IL 60016.
2. Mississippi River and connected public backwaters (wholly accessible by boat), except Quincy Bay, including Quincy Bay Waterfowl Management Area (**open under special permit**), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge waters, but includes that portion of the Kaskaskia River below the navigation lock and dam.
3. Illinois River and connected public backwaters (wholly accessible by boat), from Route 89 highway bridge downstream. except for:
 - a) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge waters;
 - b) Donnelly/DePue Fish and Wildlife Area;
 - c) Rice Lake Complex, including all of Big Lake; and
 - d) Meredosia Lake in Cass and Morgan Counties during duck season.
 - e) **The portion of the Illinois River from the Route 89 highway bridge to Starved Rock Dam will be opened to the commercial removal of Asian carp under a limited number of restricted period contracts.**
4. Wabash River.
5. Little Wabash River.
6. Skillet Fork (Wayne, Hamilton and White Counties).
7. Embarras River, except from Route 130 in Coles County upstream to Route 16 including Lake Charleston.
8. Sangamon River from Belt Route 48 southwest of Decatur downstream to its mouth in Cass County.
9. Kaskaskia River south of Route U.S. 50 bridge to mouth in Randolph County.
10. Big Muddy River south of State Route 14 Highway bridge in Franklin County to mouth in Jackson County.
11. 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.
12. Saline River in Gallatin and Saline Counties.
13. Ohio River

Commercial fishing will not be permitted in any stream, ditch or tributary connected to the backwaters of the aforementioned waters. Other waters (lakes and streams) may be open to commercial fishing by special season or contract with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

SIZE LIMITS ON FISH THAT MAY BE TAKEN COMMERCIALY

No channel, flathead, blue, and white catfishes under 15 inches in length undressed, or under 12 inches dressed, or under 10.7 inches dressed with the first vertebrae (T bone) removed may be taken (except in the Ohio River where there is no minimum size). There is no size limit on carp, buffalo, drum, bullhead, sucker, gar (except that alligator gar may not be taken), bowfin, eel, mooneye, goldeye, carpsuckers, white amur (grass carp), gizzard shad, redhorses, bighead and silver carp, goldfish and minnows. Any person operating commercial fishing devices shall have no other species of Aquatic Life in his possession.

No shovelnose sturgeon less than 25 inches in length (measured from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail) may be harvested from the Wabash River. No shovelnose sturgeon less than 24 inches in length (measured from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail) or greater than 32 inches in length (measured from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail) may be harvested from the Mississippi or Ohio Rivers.

No paddlefish less than 32 inches in length (measured from the front of the eye to the fork of the tail) may be harvested from the Ohio River. No paddlefish less than 28 inches in length (measured from the front of the eye to the fork of the tail) may be harvested from the Illinois or Mississippi Rivers.

NEWLY ADOPTED REGULATIONS FOR THE COMMERCIAL HARVEST OF ROE BEARING FISHES

Effective October 1, 2007 **any commercial fishermen who harvests paddlefish, shovelnose sturgeon or bowfin is required to first obtain a commercial roe harvest permit (whether or not they sell or barter the roe from these fishes)**. All commercial fishermen engaged in harvesting roe bearing species must leave the roe of harvested shovelnose sturgeon and bowfin whole, intact and inside the body cavity of the fish while on the water. The ovaries of paddlefish may be removed while on the water with the carcasses of the fish the ovaries are harvested from being retained for identification purposes. Many additional regulations have been implemented to more effectively manage a sustainable fishery for caviar bearing species. Information regarding these changes can be obtained by contacting the commercial fisheries biologist, Rob Maher at One Confluence Way, East Alton, IL 62024, (618) 468-2852.

PADDLEFISH may not be commercially harvested except in the Ohio River, the Illinois River below Route 89, and the Mississippi River below Lock and Dam 19. Paddlefish may only be harvested from October 1 – May 31 inclusive from the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. Paddlefish may only be commercially harvested from November 1 through April 30 from the Ohio River **A commercial roe harvest permit is required to harvest paddlefish from any body of water.**

SHOVELNOSE STURGEON May not be commercially harvested except in the Mississippi River **upstream of the Mel Price Lock and Dam in Alton, IL** (excluding the area from lock and dam 19 to the State Highway 9 bridge in Niota), the Ohio River and the Wabash River. Shovelnose sturgeon may only be commercially harvested from October 1 through May 31 from the Mississippi and Wabash River and from October 15 through May 15 from the Ohio River. A commercial roe harvest permit is required to harvest shovelnose sturgeon from any body of water.

BOWFIN May be harvested year round from any water that is legally open to commercial fishing. However, a commercial roe harvest permit is required to harvest bowfin from October 1 – May 31 inclusive.

GEAR AND USE LIMITATIONS

Hoop nets, basket traps, trot lines and dip nets may be used in all of the aforementioned waters.

Basket Traps: Must be constructed of wood or plastic slats and must have an unobstructed opening or openings in the rear of not less than 1-1/2 inches square. Wire traps are illegal.

Trot lines: Must have hooks spread at intervals of not less than 24 inches. Trot, set, or throw lines may not be drawn through the water to snare or snag fish.

Hoop Nets: Must have a mesh not less than one inch bar measurement and attached wings and leads must not be smaller than number 9 twine.

Dip Nets: Must have a mesh size not less than 1-1/2 inches bar measurement and must not be more than 15 feet square or in diameter.

Trammel and Gill Nets: Trammel nets must have mesh of not less than 2 inches bar measurement (except in the Ohio River where trammel nets must have a mesh of not less than 4 inches bar measurement), gill nets not less than 4 inches. Neither shall be less than 100 feet in length. It is unlawful to use trammel or gill nets except in the Ohio River, Mississippi River and the Illinois River from its mouth up to Illinois highway Route 89, including adjacent backwaters, but not above the mouth of any stream, ditch, or tributary connected to such backwaters. All trammel and gill nets set shall be under immediate supervision of the operator or his employee except from May 1 to September 30, or except when nets are set under ice, or from sunset to sunrise.

Trammel nets and gill nets may be used in additional waters where authorized by contract from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Seines may be used only in the Ohio River, Illinois River, Mississippi River (except seining will not be permitted in Boston Bay and its connected backwaters above the mouth of Boston Bay in Mercer County) and Wabash River, except where authorized by contract from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Except for seines, no other devices may be pulled, dragged, hauled or drawn to or near shore or to or against any backstop.

Seines: Seines up to 100 yards in length may have a minimum mesh size of 1-1/2 inches bar measurement; in seines over 100 yards in length, the mesh size shall not be less than 2 inches bar measurement, except that all seines over 100 yards in length may have a section not exceeding 300 feet of 1-1/2 inch bar measurement. No seine shall be more than 1500 yards long. If seines are more than 200 yards long, they must be operated with a backstop of vertical slats not less than 1-1/4 inches apart or with 3 inch bar measurement netting or of chicken wire or metallic cloths with mesh of not less than 1-1/2 inches square and shall be operated in not less than two feet of water.

Commercial devices may not be used within 300 yards above or below any spillway, fishway, lock or dam, or in such a manner as to block more than one-half of the width of any stream or watercourse.

Live boxes and nets: Must be plainly labeled with the owner's name and address.

OPERATION AND DISTURBANCE OF GEAR

It is illegal to loan licenses for operation of commercial fishing gear. One may not disturb the licensed equipment of another person without that person's consent.

DISPLAY OF TAGS: All gear must be tagged with a current year's Gear Tag and the owner's name and address as follows:

Seines: Tag or tags shall be attached to the brail or to the leader line adjoining the brail on either end of the seine.

All nets: Tag shall be attached to the rear hoop, tail line or on the tail pole.

Other devices: Tag shall be in such a position as to be exposed to public view.

CHECKING GEAR

Commercial fishing devices must be checked and emptied of catch at the following time intervals:

1. Hoop nets and basket traps must be attended at least once every **72** hours during open water conditions. During ice cover conditions, hoop nets and traps must be attended at least once every 20 days.
2. Trammel and gill nets must be attended constantly from October 1 to April 30 during open water conditions and daylight hours and at least every 24 hours during May 1 to September 30. Under ice they must be attended at least every 96 hours.
3. Trotlines and other hook and line devices must be checked at least every 24 hours.
4. Seines and trammel or gill nets fished by driving or drifting must be constantly attended.
5. Commercial gear containing dead or moribund fish as a result of failure to check gear and empty catch shall be considered an illegal device.

NETTING UNDER THE ICE

Holes shall be marked so as to be clearly visible. Trammel nets shall be set not less than 100 yards from any natural opening in the ice.

IMPORTED FISH

Fishes imported into Illinois must be in containers labeled as to the state and county of origin and must bear the name and address of the transporter.

RECORDS MAINTAINED BY COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN

Commercial Fisherman shall keep an accurate record throughout the year of their catch and commercial fishing activities showing the species and number of pounds taken, type of gear used and location taken. This information shall be open for inspection by the Department of Natural Resources at all times and shall be submitted to DNR on official forms as requested by the Department. Failure to submit such required reports is a violation of Illinois Law and shall be grounds for the Department to refuse to issue a license for the following year.

SUSPENSIONS

Effective July 1, 2007 Illinois entered the Interstate violators compact. This means that if your commercial fishing privileges are suspended in Illinois, they may also be suspended by other compact member states. Pursuant to 515 ILCS 5/20-105(e), which was adopted in August of 1999, if your commercial fishing privileges are suspended by any other state, federal agency or province of Canada they are also suspended in Illinois. For more information on suspensions, visit: www.idnr.state.il.us/law3/ or call the Office of Law Enforcement at 217/782-6431.

PROTECTED SPECIES

All aquatic life on the State and Federal Endangered and Threatened Species List cannot be taken or in possession. The list is available from the Division of Natural Heritage, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702. The State endangered river otter is occasionally taken in nets of commercial fishermen. Reporting of accidental captures should be made to the Department of Natural Resources County Conservation Police Officer or Endangered Species Program Manager (217/785-8290).

CONSENT OF LANDOWNERS

Commercial fishermen are responsible for obtaining permission to fish from the landowner(s) of the aforementioned waters.

SALE OF AQUATIC LIFE

Licensed commercial fishermen may sell commercial species of fish legally taken by themselves in commercial fishing devices to a resident licensed wholesale aquatic life dealer without additional licenses.

Resident Retail Aquatic Life Dealer’s License

Illinois resident commercial fishermen operating a retail fish market in Illinois or offering for retail sale their commercial catch, must also possess a Resident Retail Aquatic Life Dealers License. A separate license is required for each location and for each vehicle from which aquatic life is sold.

Resident Wholesale Aquatic Life Dealer’s License

Illinois resident commercial fishermen who operate a wholesale fish market in Illinois or who sell or ship aquatic life to any other wholesaler, retailer, or commercial institution (other than a licensed resident wholesale fish dealer) must possess a Resident Wholesale Aquatic Life Dealer’s License. A separate license is required for each location and for each vehicle from which aquatic life is sold.

Non-resident Aquatic Life Dealer’s License

Any non-resident commercial fisherman who sells or ships aquatic life to other wholesalers, retailers, or consumers must possess a non-resident aquatic life dealer’s license. A separate license is required for each location and for each vehicle from which aquatic life is sold.

REQUIRED RECORDS FOR AQUATIC LIFE DEALERS

Resident and Non-resident Aquatic Life Dealers shall maintain records of all aquatic life bought, sold, and shipped. The records shall include the name of the seller, the species, and the poundage. The records shall be made immediately available to authorized employees of the Department of Natural Resources upon request.

REQUIRED RECEIPTS FOR AQUATIC LIFE DEALERS

Aquatic Life Dealers shall issue a numbered receipt to the person the aquatic life is purchased or received from listing the number of pounds and kinds of aquatic life, the date of purchase, the price paid per pound for each species, the name and address of the person the aquatic life was received from, the appropriate license number of the seller, and the origin of the aquatic life.

A duplicate copy of the receipt shall be given to the person the aquatic life was received from. The original copy of the receipt shall be maintained by the aquatic life dealer for a minimum of two years from the date of the transaction. All receipts, reports, and records shall be open for inspection by any law enforcement officer upon request.

SHIPMENT OF AQUATIC LIFE: LABELS AND TAGS

Any person shipping or transporting aquatic life shall attach to every container a tag showing the different varieties of aquatic life contained within, the pounds of each variety, the name and place of business of the consignor and of the consignee, and the number and type of license.

CURRENT LICENSE FEES

All commercial fishermen shall have a Commercial Fishing License. Persons assisting a commercial fisherman must also have a commercial fishing license unless those persons are under direct supervision of and aboard the same water craft as the licensed commercial fisherman.

Initial commercial licenses and device tags are available from:

**Commercial Permits
PO Box 19458
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62794 Phone 217-785-3423**

Device tags only are available from local license vendors.

All commercial fishing licenses expire on March 31st of each year; all resident and non-resident fish dealer and minnow dealer licenses expire on January 31st of each year. There is a \$.50 issuing fee per license sold by a vendor. The prices listed below include the \$.50 licensing fee.

<u>Type</u>	<u>Resident</u>	<u>Non-Resident</u>
Commercial Fishing License	\$35.00	\$150.00
Commercial Roe Harvester	\$250.00	\$3,500.00
Commercial Roe Buyer	\$500.00	\$1,500.00
Commercial Fishing Type A Device Tag: hoop net, basket trap, trot line(100 hooks), dip net	\$3.50	\$6.50
Commercial Fishing Type B Device Tag: Each 100 yards or fraction thereof, for seine, minnow seine*, trammel net, or gill net	\$18.50	\$36.50*
Resident Wholesale Aquatic Life Dealer License	\$50.00	
Non-resident Aquatic Life Dealer License		\$100.00
Resident Retail Aquatic Life Dealer License	\$10.00	
Wholesale Minnow Dealer (intra-state)	\$25.00	Resident Only
Retail Minnow Dealer (intra-state)	\$5.00	Resident Only
Minnow Dealer (inter-state)	\$500.00	Resident Only

*minnow seines are resident only devices

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources receives Federal financial assistance and therefore must comply with federal anti-discrimination laws. In compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act, the Illinois Constitution, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the U.S. Constitution, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age or disability. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, please contact the Equal Opportunity Officer, Department of Natural Resources, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702, (217) 782-7616, or the Office of Human Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240. Department of Natural Resources information is available to the hearing impaired by calling DNR's Telecommunications Device for the Deaf: (217) 782-9175. The Ameritech Relay Number is (800) 526-0844. Printed by authority of the State of Illinois

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