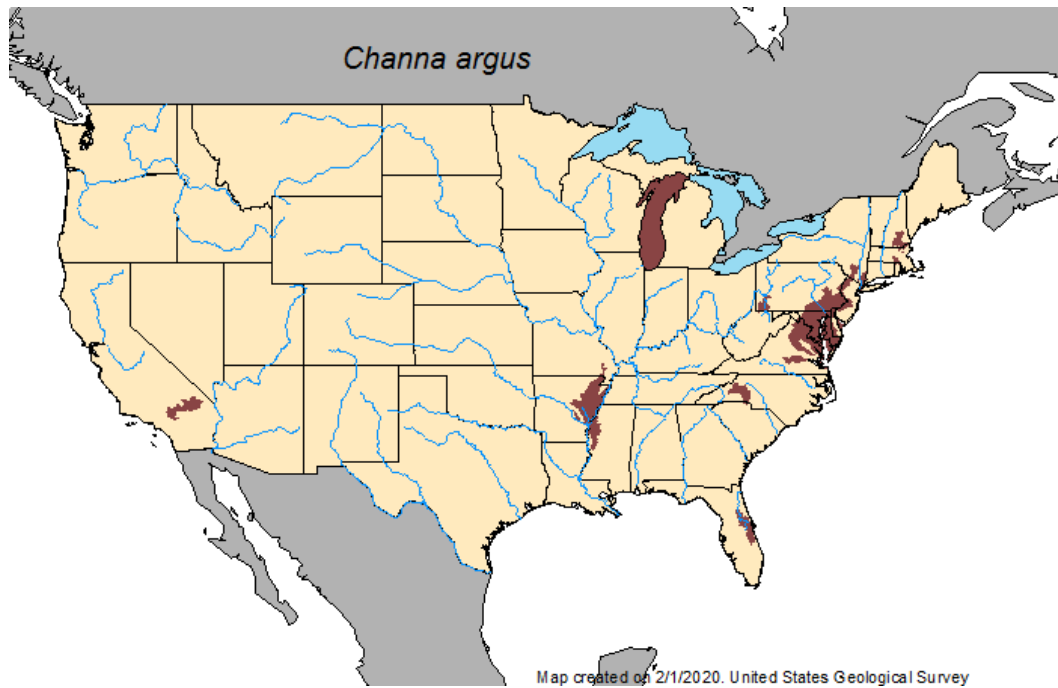


Northern Snakehead



There are multiple species of snakeheads that have been introduced into the U.S., including the Northern snakehead in Georgia. A desired food source in their native range, the species can grow to 3ft and is sometimes confused with the native bowfin. The potential impacts of the species resulting from its consumption of native fish is not fully known but is concerning to fishery managers.

Discoveries of Northern Snakehead



Northern Snakehead Identification

Though multiple snakehead species have been introduced into the U.S., the Northern snakehead is the only one thus far found in Georgia. Northern snakehead can be confused with some native species, particularly bowfin. The guide below can help further distinguish the species. Should you have questions regarding identification of a fish you have harvested, or if you suspect you have captured a snakehead, **RETAIN**

THE FISH and IMMEDIATELY [contact your regional Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division Fisheries Office.](#)

Snakehead



	Snakehead	Bowfin
Anal Fin	Very long, 18 rays, more than half the length of the dorsal fin	Short, 12 rays, less than half the length of the dorsal fin
Head	Pointed and flattened dorsally	Large and rounded
Jaw	Lower jaw protrudes past upper jaw with pointed teeth	Lower jaw is shorter than upper

Bowfin



Snakehead illustration by Susan Trammel, usgs.gov; Bowfin illustration by Duane Raver

Source: <https://georgiawildlife.com/sites/default/files/wrd/pdf/fact-sheets/Snakehead%20Poster%20One%20Pager%20GA%20100819.pdf>

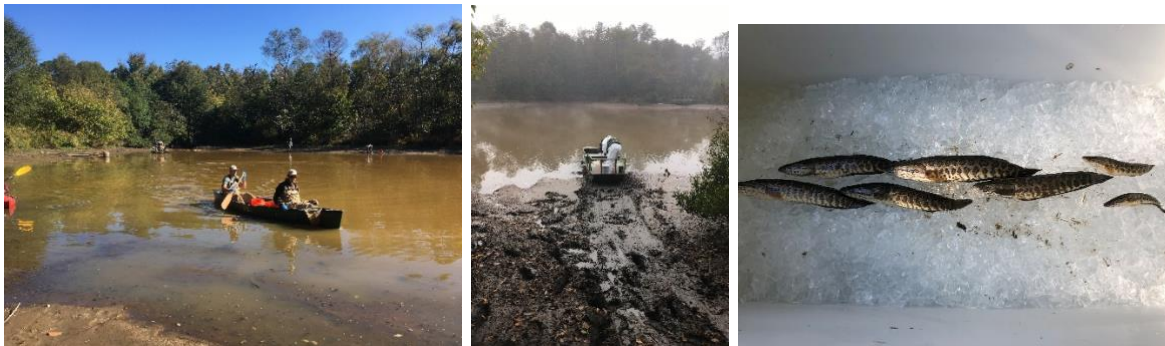
So, What Harm do Northern Snakehead Cause?

A popular food fish in their native range (China, Korea, etc.), snakeheads have been introduced into the U.S. through multiple avenues. Like many other non-native introductions, the positive benefit they may provide as a new fishery or food source is often outweighed by the problems they may create for native species. An apex

predator, the species has the potential to consume large quantities of native fish as it grows to its maximum size approaching 3ft. Their consumption of these resources can deplete those populations and negatively impact fisheries for these native fish.

Current Management for Northern Snakehead

Despite our hope that snakeheads wouldn't find their way into Georgia, the capture of a specimen by an angler in October 2019 in Gwinnett County confirmed that the species was indeed here. In response to this capture, GA DNR staff spent several days assessing the pond and adjacent area where the specimen was captured. Extensive efforts electrofishing the area and applying rotenone to the pond resulted in the removal of 34 specimens of Northern snakehead, comprised of 2 adults and 32 juveniles. GA DNR staff will continue to proactively monitor the affected area and potential downstream sites to assess the potential for additional specimens that may have eluded capture during initial response. Should additional specimens be located, GA DNR staff will respond accordingly and implement proper management strategies.



GA DNR staff will also continue to proactively engage in efforts to educate members of the public about this and other non-native species introductions, particularly in an effort to avoid man-induced introductions. Man-induced introductions can be deliberate (i.e. intentionally moving a fish from one area to another with hopes to establish a population) or by accident (i.e. use of fish as bait, which may escape and become established). In either scenario, understanding the potential impacts of our decisions is key to minimizing such occurrences.