



Bow Fishing in Texas

Hunting and fishing regulations are addressed in the Texas Administrative Code. This page summarizes regulations that apply to bow fishing.

Fishing License

A freshwater, saltwater, or all-water license package is required to bow fish in Texas public waters. No additional stamp or license is required.

You don't need a fishing license if you are:

- Under 17 years of age
- A Texas resident born before January 1, 1931

A hunting license is required to take turtles and frogs. You may elect to purchase a Combination or Super Combo license, which covers both fishing and hunting. For information on license fees and packages, see <http://tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/licenses/>

Legal Equipment

Fish may be taken with longbow, recurved bow, compound bow, or crossbow.

What to Catch

Bows are legal for taking nongame fishes such as gar, buffalo, mullet and sheepshead. A bow may be used to take any species of fish that is:

- NOT listed as a game fish at <http://tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/fishing/general-rules-regulations/definitions>
- NOT listed as an endangered or threatened species at http://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/wildlife_diversity/nongame/listed-species/fish.phtml

No minimum lengths or daily bag limits apply to non-game fishes in fresh water, **except**:

- For alligator gar, there is a statewide limit of one (1) per day, with the following exceptions:
 - On Falcon International Reservoir, the limit is five (5) per day.
 - On portions of Lake Texoma, harvest of alligator gar is **prohibited** during the spawning season in May. Other areas may be temporarily restricted when optimum spawning conditions occur. See <http://tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/fishing/freshwater-fishing/gar-closure>
- For Lady Bird Lake in Austin, there is a daily limit of one (1) trophy-sized common carp measuring 33 inches or more. No limits apply to smaller carp.

Limits exist on some nongame fishes in salt water. See <http://tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/fishing/saltwater-fishing/saltwater-bag-and-length-limits>

Any fish that is edible or can be used for bait (includes all gar species, common carp, and buffalo) may not be released after being taken by bow.

Where to Fish

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department regulations permit bow fishing in Texas coastal waters and in most rivers and large lakes. However, this method is not allowed in:

- Community Fishing Lakes (public impoundments of 75 acres or less, located within city or county parks)
- Lakes lying totally within the boundaries of a Texas state park, or anywhere on state park property

Other government entities may have rules that apply to bow fishing on properties that they own or manage. When fishing within city limits or at any lakeside park, it's a good idea to check first with local authorities.