



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 September 1, 1930

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 www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/annual/general/

Legal Equipment

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

What to Catch

Bows are legal for taking non-game fishes such as gar, common carp, and buffalo. A bow may be used to take any species of fish that is:

- NOT listed as a game fish at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/annual/fish/definitions/ and
- NOT listed as an endangered or threatened species at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/species/endang/animals/fish/

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

- For alligator gar, there is a limit of one (1) per day. On portions of Lake Texoma, harvest of alligator gar is **prohibited** during the spawning season in May. For details, see www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/annual/fish/limits_freshwater/exceptions.phtml
- For Lady Bird Lake in downtown Austin, there is a daily limit of one (1) trophy-sized common carp, defined as a carp measuring 33 inches or more. No limits apply to smaller carp.

Where to Fish

Bow fishing is legal 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 a city or a public park)
- Lakes lying totally within the boundaries of a Texas state park, or anywhere on state park property

The Lower Colorado River Authority prohibits bow fishing in Bastrop and Fayette County lakes and enforces special regulations on bow fishing in other Central Texas reservoirs. For details, visit www.lcra.org/community/bowfishing.html.

Other agencies may have regulations about carrying weapons in their lakeside parks. When visiting one of these areas, it's a good idea to check first with the managing agency.