

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Steny Hoyer released the following statement today after meeting with representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and other agencies, to discuss the northern snakeheads recently caught in the Potomac River.

"I appreciate the opportunity to meet with both federal and state experts to discuss the snakehead and other invasive threats to our state's habitat. This fish poses a real risk to the region's ecosystem. The snakehead is a very fierce predator and feeds on almost anything. They can survive on land for long periods of time and have been known to migrate on land from one body of water to another.

"If snakeheads become established, this behavior could drastically modify our native species, disrupting the ecological balance and damaging our local economy by displacing native fish such as the large mouth bass.

"I stand ready to support the efforts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to provide them with the resources and authority they may need to prevent this fish from damaging our environment or harming our economy.

"It is important that state and local jurisdictions continue to educate anglers and the public about the dangers of the northern snakehead fish, and the need to alert the proper authorities if you come across one."

The northern snakehead can be up to 40 inches long and up to 15 pounds, has a long dorsal fin and a small head with a large mouth and big teeth. This fish is not native to Maryland waters. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has requested that anglers kill this fish and report all catches to the DNR - 1-877-620-8DNR. Three northern snakehead fish have been found in the Potomac River over the past nine days.

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