

This fish has been called ugly and prehistoric. Here's why Texas wants to protect it

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They are probably one of the most unique creatures plying Texas waters.

Some have called them ugly and others have described them as prehistoric.

Now, Texas Parks and Wildlife is proposing changes to protect overfishing of large, mature [alligator](#) gar as well as a nighttime bowfishing ban.

The proposed regulation changes include a 4-foot maximum length for fish on the Trinity River from south of the Interstate 30 bridge in Dallas all the way to the I-10 bridge in Chambers County east of Houston.

To fishing guide Marshall Bryant the rules are unfair. Bryant is originally from Aledo and takes customers all over Texas in the pursuit of alligator gar.

"They make no sense," Bryant said. "We do have a sustainable alligator gar population and a sustainable amount of trophy alligator gar to harvest."

Bryant has started a petition drive that he says has more than 6,000 signatures to oppose the rule changes.

In a [press release](#), Craig Bonds, TPWD Inland Fisheries Director, said that the parks and wildlife commission "has communicated to us that

they would rather, out of an abundance of caution, act proactively to further limit harvest of older, mature alligator gar while populations are in relatively good shape."

The rule changes will be considered at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission's March 20 meeting.

Texas Parks and Wildlife would also include a drawing, similar to one in Arkansas, for the chance to harvest one alligator gar over 48 inches in length per year from the Trinity River.

In a letter to the Fort Worth Star-Telegram in June, Fort Worth attorney Ralph Duggins, chairman of the parks and [wildlife](#) commission, said alligator gar are worth protecting.

"Alligator gar have been in American river systems for millennia, and we are proud that the largest, and oldest, of these fish exist in river systems of Texas, like the Trinity," Duggins said. "Over 10 years ago, the Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission implemented rule changes to try to reduce the harvest of these large fish, and we will continue to study whether or not additional restrictions are appropriate to protect those fish."

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