

Allowed harvest and use of bait on Mississippi River and tributaries

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Due to VHS precautionary rulings, it is now **illegal** for anglers to trap legal bait species (minnows, willow cats, etc.) from the Mississippi River or tributaries. The ruling is applicable even if anglers trap, use, and dispose of baits before leaving the river system. However and to the contrary of minimizing opportunity to spread VHS, it is legal to bring minnows to the river, (if purchased from certified bait dealers) and then retain and take them to other water bodies later!

The harvest and use of bait from/on VHS suspect waters will not increase the likelihood of spreading VHS provided anglers dispose of such bait before leaving those waters. Opportunity of spread can be further diminished if bait equipment is disinfected following use in/on VHS suspected waters. According to the *WDNR disinfection protocol*, boats, trailers, live wells, minnow buckets, dip nets, traps, and other equipment; can be disinfected for VHS with common bleach at a concentration of one tablespoon per one gallon of water. However, the protocol **does not** require the general public to disinfect angler equipment after leaving VHS suspect waters. This standard begs the question, "Why are current rules regarding the harvest and use of bait on the Mississippi River excessively stringent?"

Do you support the allowed harvest and use of legal bait species from/on the Mississippi River or its tributaries up to first barrier, for personal angling use only, provided such bait is not transported away from the river or those tributaries?

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