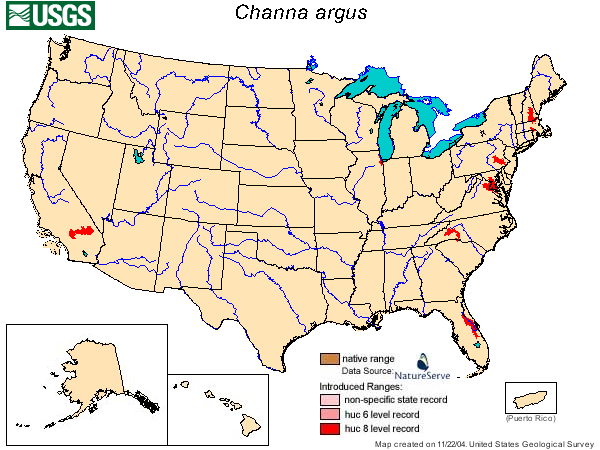
**The Northern Snakehead**

The Channa Argus, or Northern Snakehead, has become invasive species in North America since they were introduced in 2002, with reasons not known. They are top-level predators, meaning they have no natural enemies outside their natural environment, having reported to eat anything- ducks, snakes, rats, lizards, frogs, fish and even other snakeheads, consequently causing major environmental damage to ecosystems.

Able to grow up to 6 ft and 66 lbs and a native temperature of 0°C to 31°C, they can survive on land up to 4 days provided they are wet. Reports state that the Northern Snakehead reaches sexual maturity by age 2 or 3, with each spawning-age female releasing up to 15,000 eggs at once, mating as often as 5 times a year, a single female can release up to 150,000 eggs.



**Summary of Impacts**

* The predatory nature of Northern Snakeheads indicates that their introduction would likely affect other populations of fish, amphibians and invertebrates through direct predation.
* Ecosystem balance could be modified drastically if Northern Snakeheads became established in waters with low diversity of native fish and low abundance or absence of native predatory species.
* They have been identified as being the intermediate host for a parasitic disease that can affect humans, caused by a Helminth parasite, Gnathostoma Spinigerum.
* They can potentially compete with commercially and recreationally important fish species through predation and competition for food.
* Costs associated with control or eradication efforts of the Northern Snakehead are high.
* Eradication of Snakeheads from a small pond in Crofton, Maryland was estimated at USD$110,000.





