

Mike McClelland/Illinois Natural History Survey



Asian carps—fish in the Cyprinid family—have been part of our culture for centuries. We use them as ornamental aquarium fish (goldfish and koi) and food fish, and to help keep aquaculture ponds clean. However, when Asian carps escape into natural waterways, they can cause big problems for human health, the economy, and the environment. Four species of Asian carps have escaped in the United States and are of concern: grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*), silver carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*), bighead carp (*H. nobilis*, previously known as *Aristichthys nobilis*), and black carp (*Mylopharyngodon piceus*).

REPORT THIS SPECIES! **Oregon:** 1-866-INVADER or Oregon InvasivesHotline.org; **Washington:** 1-888-WDFW-AIS; **California:** 1-916-651-8797 or email invasives@dfg.ca.gov; **Other states:** 1-877-STOP-ANS

Species in the news

Asian carps: Friend or Foe to Devils Lake, OR?

Learning extensions

Hazardous Path to the Columbia Gorge

Resources

From Pest to Profit, an NBC video (www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15533981/)

Why you should care

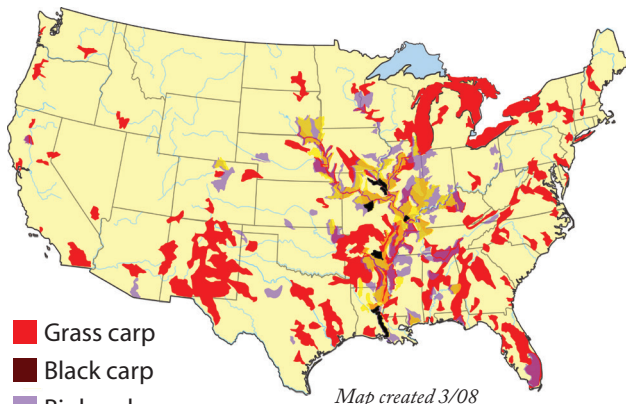
Asian carps can become so abundant that they completely change a river ecosystem, affecting native species and preventing us from enjoying and benefiting from the river. In some areas, Asian carps are so plentiful that fishermen are unable to pull up their nets, due to the weight of the carps. In the Mississippi River and its tributaries, carps can displace native species by crowding out native species and outcompeting native species for food. They are also a human health hazard: silver carp leap from the water when they hear boat motors and can knock a boater unconscious.

How they got here and spread

Asian carps were initially introduced to benefit the aquaculture industry in the Midwest; grass carp were imported to control aquatic vegetation in ponds; silver and bighead carps were introduced to control plankton blooms. Black carp was accidentally introduced as a contaminant in a grass carp shipment, but it was later introduced deliberately to control a parasite-hosting snail.

What you can do

Help prevent the spread of Asian carps by learning to identify them and reporting all sightings. Before transporting your boat between water bodies, empty your bail bucket, live well, and bilge on dry land. Never move or dump live fish from one body of water into another.



- Grass carp
- Black carp
- Bighead carp
- Silver carp

Map created 3/08

Data on map represents established population and species occurrence data

COOL FACTS

When frightened by sounds such as boat motors, silver carp can leap out of the water, reaching heights of 2 to 4 meters.

Plans are in place to use the enormous amount of Asian carps in Midwest rivers as a food source. The St. Louis Zoo is investigating ways to feed this cheap protein to penguins, sea lions, and pelicans.