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Asian Carp—History and Solutions

Asian Carp arrived in the United States in 1963 to reduce nuisance vegetation in fish farms without the use of poisons. Floods accidentally flushed the carp into waterways where they flourished. The carp were found in the Mississippi by 1980. The Mississippi is a giant freshwater highway that gives invasive carp access to the Illinois, Ohio, and Missouri systems. After decades, Asian carp now range from Louisiana to the Dakotas. Grass carp have been found in low numbers in all the Great Lakes. Silver and Bighead carps have overwhelmed the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. Once established, Asian carp starve out native species for food. They now make up

95% of the biomass in some Illinois sections.

Asian carp are extraordinary fish. They consume 40 percent of their body weight a day. They grow rapidly and can weigh 30 pounds in a few years. Fully grown they can be four feet long and weigh 100 lbs. Females can produce a million eggs at a time, and spawn multiple times during each season.

They are spectacular leapers: certain sounds cause them to hurl themselves 10 feet out of the water. Where Asian carp rule, boaters are forced to dodge huge fish as they motor their favorite waterway. Lastly when they flop on a boat, they instantly bleed, quickly covering the gelcoat with blood.

Invasive carp are well-suited to the Great Lakes climate which is similar to their native range in Asia. Once in the lake, it would be difficult to control them. They would have plenty of food along

the shoreline, bays and inland rivers. Without predators, they could quickly become the dominant species damaging the spawning ground for walleye, yellow perch, lake whitefish, Chinook & coho salmon, steelhead, brown and brook trout.

The Great Lakes fisheries are collectively valued at more than \$7 billion annually and support more than 75,000 jobs. Every state bordering Lake Michigan has recognized the unstoppable crisis if Asian carp establish themselves. Some have placed barriers to the invasion. A barrier was constructed in Indiana in 2016 near Fort Wayne. Asian carp have been found in Minnesota but dams at Prairie du Sac and St. Croix Falls should prevent further inroads.

The Illinois river connects to Lake Michigan by the CSSC canal. This is the only Illinois

path for the fish to reach the lake. A simple solution would be to block the river from the lake, but this canal is important. It takes water away from the lake to keep metro sewage from draining into the lake. During torrential rains the canal channels flood water away from Chicago instead of into the lake.

There is significant industrial traffic which depends on barges coming up from the South. Closing the canal could potentially poison the lake and bankrupt canal adjacent industries.

Since 2002 the Corps of Engineers has installed three CSSC underwater electric barriers near Romeoville, IL. Stray electrical currents in the water irritate the fish and turn them away.

Until a more permanent solution is implemented, the Illinois DNR has encouraged carp overfishing to reduce invasive populations. Fishermen can earn 10 cents for every pound of Asian carp they catch

Special points of interest:

- [Asian Carp History](#)
- [Memorium—Jim Rothschild](#)
- [Jumping Carp—where they learned to Jump](#)

and there's a bounty of \$100 per fish on black carp, which are the most difficult to catch. Farther south, commercial fishers on the Illinois river regularly catch up to 25,000 pounds of big-head and silver carp per day. All this is putting a dent in the migration. Sampling in some areas shows an estimated population drop of almost 68%. But it would only take a few carp honey-mooners to breach Lake Michigan.

The leading edge of Asian carp migration is ten miles downriver of

Brandon Road Lock in Joliet, Illinois. Brandon Road is a natural choke of the Des Plaines River. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposes new barriers and deterrents at Brandon Road. Congress has approved \$225 million in seed money to start what could be an \$800 million dollar project.

Brandon Road lock is unique because the downstream bottom is stone. The plan is to dynamite an engineered cross channel between the walls below the lock and install a fish-deterrent gauntlet. First will be a sound barrier

tuned to the frequency carp hate. This may turn most of them away. Second, there will be an electric barrier that will stun hard core fish nosing along the bottom. Third, a bubble curtain will remove small and stunned fish back downstream. And finally, as upbound boats are motoring into the lock, a gentle current through the lock will flush fish eggs or larvae floating in the water downstream.

The Asian Carp experiment was a response

to Rachel Carson's Silent Spring. Using chemicals to keep down plant growth in fish farm tanks kept the weeds down but made the fish toxic. At the time, it seemed like a good idea. But now 60 years later, we have a river disaster that could turn into an international disaster if they escape into the great lakes. We all have a stake in making sure the lakes are protected before it is too late.

Submitted by: James Hubbell, Illinois Region Board Member

In Memorium, LMYA Board Member Jim Rothschadl

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Jim Rothschadl, a member of the LMYA Board from South Milwaukee Yacht Club. Jim and Linda Daly, his wife, have been the treasurers of the Wisconsin region of LMYA for many

years. Jim was a lifelong boater. He was a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary for 40 years and Linda was also a member for 30 years. They were very active in many Auxiliary functions. Jim was also a board

member of the Mitchell Gallery of Flight for nearly 30 years. Its' mission is to preserve aviation history in Wisconsin and sharing it with the public through displays and seminars at Mitchell Field. Jim was also a member of

the South Milwaukee Historical Society and the Robert Burns Club of Milwaukee. A memorial celebration will be held for him at South Milwaukee Yacht Club on January 15th.

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LMYA Officers Elected for 2023

Commodore: Thomas Dogan
Vice Commodore: Matthew Dogan
Secretary: Jim Mergener
Treasurer: Sally Mergener
Judge Advocate: Thomas Dogan



How the Asian Carp Learned to Jump Around

Several of our Illinois members have been caught in the terrifying experience of have Asian Carp jumping around and into their boats as the waters seem to explode with huge jumping fish on every side. The fish can cause injury to passengers and sometimes significant damage to the boats. We just discovered that the way these fish learned to jump came from one of them who happened to be present at a Univ of Wisconsin football game in the 4th quarter.



Jump Around has been a tradition for 25 years at UW Madison's Camp Randall. Between the third and Fourth quarters, the anthem recorded by the House of Pain has been adopted by the student population and is becoming one of the greatest traditions in all college football. The whole stadium is engulfed in jumping frenzy as the song continues for two minutes. Perhaps this is where the Carp got their training.



Jim Mergener, LMYA sect & UW season ticket holder