

INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

ASIAN CARP (Family: Cyprinidae)

REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES
www.reportinvasives.ca

ASIAN CARP FAMILY

Asian carp refers to four species:

- **Bighead carp** (*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*),
- **Silver carp** (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*),
- **Grass carp** (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) and
- **Black carp** (*Mylopharyngodon piceus*).

NATIVE RANGE

Asian carp are native to several drainages in China, Russia, and Northern Vietnam.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Asian carp...

- Can alter food webs, displace native, sport and commercial fish, and degrade habitat
- Have shown to decrease dissolved oxygen levels in waterbodies
- Have the potential to reduce plankton abundance, and therefore could impact populations of native species that feed on plankton (specifically Silver and bighead carp)
- Can impact native mussels and snails which they feed on (specifically black carp)
- Alter plant communities as they heavily feed on aquatic vegetation (specifically grass carp)

BIOLOGY & SPREAD

Asian carp are part of the live food and aquarium trades and therefore susceptible to accidental release in B.C. There is also the concern that Asian carp could be transferred in bait buckets as they resemble minnows or hitch a ride in boat ballast tanks. Once introduced Asian carp can travel and establish quickly throughout a waterbody system.

HABITAT

Asian carp prefer to spawn in areas of consistent water flow to aid in egg development. When not spawning, Asian carp can tolerate a wide range of water quality and current speeds, which could allow them to establish within a variety of B.C. habitats if introduced.

ARE THEY HERE YET?

No. There have been no reports of Asian carp in B.C. There have however been several captures of Asian carp species in the Canadian Great Lakes.



PHOTO: U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, BUGWOOD.ORG
BIGHEAD CARP

PRIMARY IMPACT: Asian carp can compete with native fish and invertebrate species for food and habitat.



SILVER CARP
PHOTO: NATE TESSLER, ENVIROSCIENCE INC.
BUGWOOD.ORG

DID YOU KNOW?

Vibrations from boat propellers can cause silver carp to jump out of the water up to three meters high. This can be extremely hazardous to boaters.

HOW CAN WE STOP THEM?

- Do not possess, breed, ship or release Asian carp in B.C. **It is illegal!**
- Never use live fish as bait
- Do not release aquarium fish into the wild
- Raise awareness to avoid spread into B.C. freshwaters

ASIAN CARP (Family: Cyprinidae)

Features	Bighead Carp	Silver Carp	Grass Carp	Black Carp
Eye Position	Below centre line of body	Below centre line of body	On centre line of body	On centre line of body
Colour	Top- Grey Sides-Grey Underside- Cream	Top-Grey - Black Sides-Olive-Silver Underside-Silver	Top-Dark Grey Sides- White -Yellow Underside-White	Top-Black-brown Sides- Black- brown Underside-White
Markings	Black blotches on back and sides	None	Scales appear Cross-hatched	Scales appear Cross-hatched
Scales	~Not on head ~Curved body scales	~Not on head ~Curved body scales	~None on head ~Body scales are outlined in black	~None on head ~Body scales are outlined in black
Size	Can grow up to 1.5 m long	Can grow up to 1.4 m long	Can grow up to 1.4 m long	Can grow up to 1.8 m long
Teeth	No	No	No	Yes (in throat)

LOOKALIKES



It can be difficult to distinguish Asian carp from **five native sucker species** that belong to the genus *Catostomus* and non-native **common carp** (*Cyprinus carpio*).

Native suckers can be distinguished from Asian carp (specifically bighead carp) by the following characteristics:

- All B.C. suckers have a mouth facing downwards and is slightly overhung by the snout
- Suckers have a cleft between lower lips; with folds or bumps on lips

Common carp can be differentiated from Asian carp (specifically black carp) by the following characteristics:

- Common carp have a long dorsal fin with a serrated leading edge spine
- Common carp have a pair of barbels (fleshy extension) at mouth

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND ONE?

Report Asian carp, or any other invasive species via the **Report Invasives phone app**, or via the **webform** available on the B.C. Inter-Ministry Invasive Species Working Group website:

www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

- Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada- Asian Carp Risk Assessment http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas/Csas/DocREC/2004/RES2004_103_E.pdf
- Washington State Invasive Species Council http://www.invasivespecies.wa.gov/priorities/asian_carp.shtml

