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Region 10: the Pacific Northwest

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Asian Carp Species

Carp are large members of the minnow family. The group known as Asian carp, originally from Eastern Russia and China, includes the bighead carp (*Aristhythys nobilis*), silver carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*), black carp (*Mylopharyngodon piceus*), and grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*). The common carp is a Eurasian relative. Bighead can weigh up to 80 pounds and reach 4.5 feet in length; silver, black, and grass carp are slightly smaller.

In 1963, the state of Arkansas imported grass carp for aquaculture and research, and in 1972, Arkansas aquaculture introduced bighead and silver carp for aquatic vegetation control in fish ponds. Black carp arrived in the early 1970s as a "hitchhiker" in grass carp shipments. Later it was also purposefully introduced to control snails in catfish ponds. Farmers in a variety of states intentionally stocked these species as well, and grass carp now occur in at least 46 states. Accidental releases of bighead and silver carp occasionally occurred, and flooding of the Mississippi River in the 1990s further facilitated the escape of bighead, silver and black carp into the wild. These species are now spreading rapidly throughout the Mississippi River basin. In the Pacific Northwest, the Asian community also imports live bighead and silver carp for consumption.

The large size, voracious appetite, and high reproductive capacity make carp formidable threats to freshwater ecosystems. Bighead and silver carp are filter feeders, and they compete directly with other fish and mussels feeding at the base of the food web. Black carp prey upon local snail and mussel populations. Grass carp modify aquatic habitats by eating and uprooting vegetation, and they cause increased turbidity and other water quality problems. Both bigheads and silvers impact recreation as well; they are very excitable, and disturbance such as boat motor noise can cause them to jump as high as 10 feet out of the water. They have been known to injure boaters and waterskiers, and even knock people off of their boats, causing some officials to consider them a public safety hazard.

Status in the Pacific Northwest: Common carp are spread widely throughout the Pacific Northwest, and are potentially found in nearly any shallow freshwater stream or lake. But the only Asian carp known to be in the Northwest at this time is the grass carp; if a permit is obtained, a sterile variety can be purposefully introduced for localized weed control. The black, bighead and silver carp have not yet been observed in the Pacific Northwest.

What can you do? Do not release ANY unwanted fish (carp or otherwise) into the environment. Do not stock or move fish from one pond, lake or stream to another without first checking with the state fish and game department. If you believe you have caught a bighead, silver or black carp, save the fish, take a photo if possible, and contact the appropriate state:

In Washington: 1-360-902-2700 (ANS Coordinator)

In Oregon: 1-866 INVADER (hotline)

In Idaho: 1-208-332-8686 (ANS Coordinator)

In Alaska: 1-877-INVASIVE (hotline)

Species of Concern in the Pacific Northwest

Invasive Species in the Pacific Northwest

Marine Algae

- Caulerpa
- Spartina Species

Marine Animals

- Non-native Crab Species
- Solitary/Colonial Tunicates

Freshwater Plants

- Mat Forming Macrophytes

Freshwater Animals

- Asian Carp Species
- Zebra/Quagga Mussels
- Crayfish Species
- Nutria
- New Zealand Mudsnail
- Bullfrogs

Riparian Plants

- Knotweeds

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[Asian Carp - General Fact Sheet](#)

[Asian Carp Management](#)

[National Management Plan : Bighead, Grass and Silver Carp](#)

Bighead Carp (*Aristythes (Hypthalmictys) nobilis*) Fact sheets

<http://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/FactSheet.asp?speciesID=551>

http://www.cerc.usgs.gov/pubs/center/pdfDocs/Asian_carp-2-2004.pdf

Silver Carp (*Hypthalmicthys molitrix*) Fact sheets

<http://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/FactSheet.asp?speciesID=549>

Black Carp (*Mylopharyngodon piceus*) Fact sheets

<http://www.fws.gov/blackcarp-b.pdf>

<http://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/FactSheet.asp?speciesID=573>

http://el.erdc.usace.army.mil/ansrp/mylopharyngodon_piceus.pdf