

Black carp

(*Mylopharyngodon piceus*)

High priority AIS not yet present in
Lower Wisconsin River basin as of January, 2012

What is it?

The black carp is one of four Asian carp that pose a threat to the Lower Wisconsin River basin. It closely resembles the grass carp. The two species are similar in overall body shape, size and placement of fins, and both have very large scales. In contrast to grass carp, the black carp is slightly darker in coloration (not black). Black carp also have a somewhat pointed snout.

Where is it?

The black carp is native to China, parts of far eastern Russia, and possibly northern Vietnam. The typical habitat includes large rivers, channels of lowland rivers, and associated floodplain lakes and backwaters. The species also occurs in artificial habitats, and some populations survive in lakes and reservoirs, although they require flowing water to reproduce. They have been found as far up the Mississippi River as Clarksville, Missouri.

How does it spread?

Black carp were first brought into the United States in the early 1970s as a “contaminant” in grass carp stocks imported to Arkansas. The first known record of an introduction of black carp into open waters occurred in Missouri in 1994, when thirty or more black carp along with several-thousand bighead carp reportedly escaped into the Osage River, Missouri River, and Mississippi River drainages.



Eastern U.S. distribution of black carp.
Red=established, yellow=specimen(s) collected,
green=population unknown (USGS, 2011)

Why do we care?

Black carp can grow as long as five feet and weigh up to 150 pounds. They eat mussels and snails. The Mississippi River and the Lower Wisconsin River are home to many endangered mussel populations that would be threatened if the black carp became established.

What can we do?

Preventing black carp from becoming established is the key to protecting the Lower Wisconsin River and its unique mussel populations. At this time there is no feasible means of controlling Asian carp if they were to become established in the Lower Wisconsin River. It is important that we continue to monitor the region for all four species of Asian carp to make certain that there is not a breeding population. Angler outreach should occur to ensure that they are not harvesting bait, which is currently prohibited on the Lower Wisconsin River and the Mississippi River (as a measure to ensure that young Asian carp are not being transported to other waterbodies).

STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

Wisconsin law requires you to:

- **Inspect** boats, trailers, and equipment.
- **Remove** all attached aquatic plants and animals.
- **Drain** all water from boats, vehicles and equipment.
- **Never move** plants or live fish away from a waterbody.

If you suspect that you have found an invasive species call 1-888-WDNR-INFO (1-888-936-7463) to report it.



Black carp (Leo Nico)