

Silver carp

(*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*)

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

What is it?

Silver carp (one of four carp we refer to as “Asian carp” and the notorious flying variety) are fast growing and become very large, weighing up to 60 pounds and measuring up to four feet. They migrate up streams and rivers to breed producing about 265,000-2,000,000 eggs in their lifetime.

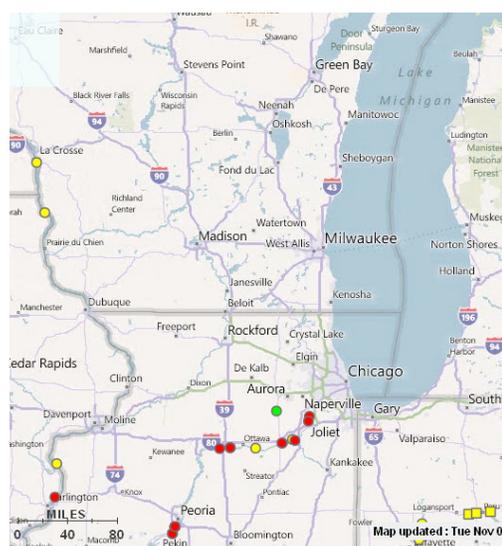
Where is it?

Silver carp were imported into the United States by an Arkansas fish farmer in 1973. They are now present in large numbers in the Mississippi River in Iowa. Only three have been collected in the Upper Mississippi River adjacent to Wisconsin near Ferryville, Crawford County (WI) in 2011 and in the backwaters of the Mississippi River near the city of La Crosse in 2008 and 2009. No silver carp have been found in the Lower Wisconsin River.

How does it spread?

Dispersal of bighead and silver carp appears to be occurring naturally, especially during high-flow events which enable them to swim around barriers in the Mississippi River and Great Lakes region, looking for spawning habitat.

In addition to spread from fish farms, people also spread carp, intentionally and unintentionally, via bait, aquaculture, and sport.



Upper Mississippi River distribution of silver carp. Red=established population, yellow=specimen(s) collected, green=population unknown. (USGS, 2011)

Why do we care?

In numbers, the silver carp has the potential to cause enormous damage to native species because it feeds on plankton required by fish such as gizzard shad and bigmouth buffalo, all larval fish species, and native mussels which are important to the Lower Wisconsin River ecosystem.

Silver carp pose a threat to human safety due to their jumping behavior when startled. These “flying carp” have caused numerous personal injuries to recreational boaters and anglers. In addition to personal injury, silver carp also cause property damage: broken generators, radios and depth finders. When a silver carp lands in a boat, even if it does not break anything of value, it leaves behind unpleasant slime, scales, and feces.

What can we do?

Harvesting bait is currently prohibited on the Lower Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers. It is important that the public is aware of this regulation to prevent the unintentional movement of young silver carp between waterbodies in bait buckets. It is also important that we continue to monitor the Lower Wisconsin River for all species of Asian carp.

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.



Silver carp (Auburn University)