

COUNCIL OF GREAT LAKE FISHERY AGENCIES
POSITION STATEMENT

On
Invasive Carps

Four related species of invasive carps, e.g., bighead carp (*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*), silver carp (*H. molitrix*), grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*), and black carp (*Mylopharyngodon piceus*), were introduced from native Asian waters into United States impoundments during the 1960s for biological control of undesired algae, rooted aquatic plants, and parasites, and as a potential source of protein for animals and humans. However, escapement and spread of these carps resulted in population establishment in the Mississippi River drainage, including the Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois rivers, posing serious ecological threats to these aquatic ecosystems. Extensive efforts have been undertaken to prevent further spread of these carps, particularly to the Great Lakes.

In 2013, the Lake Erie Committee (LEC) and the Council of Lake Committees (CLC) issued formal position statements about threats from invasive carps on Great Lakes fisheries. These statements remain relevant perspectives from fisheries managers for coordinated attention to these threats. Herein, the Council of Great Lakes Fishery Agencies (Council) seeks to reinforce LEC and CLC perspectives through consistency in communications involving invasive carps among signatory parties to *A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries* (the Plan).

Use of the term “invasive” carps

Given their geographic origins, these four species of carps were often referred to as “Asian” carps in associated government, media, and public communications, both collectively and singularly. For example, an Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (ACRCC) and U.S. point person (“Asian Carp Czar”) were established in 2010 to oversee efforts to manage the spread of these carps. By 2014, however, Minnesota legislators replaced “Asian” with “invasive” carps in state law, owing to cultural sensitivity associated with the former. Similarly, the ACRCC formally became the “Invasive” Carp Regional Coordinating Committee in 2021, consistent with a new U.S. federal government directive when referring to these four species of carps. Accordingly, the Council recommends use of the term “invasive” by parties of the Plan when collectively referring to these four species of carps, or by their common or scientific names when referencing a species.

Exclusion of common carp as “invasive”

Common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), introduced from native Eurasian waters in the 1800s, are naturalized throughout North America with associated fisheries in various jurisdictions of the Great Lakes. They are not recognized as “invasive” in current fish community objectives of any lake committee. The Council recommends restricting use of “invasive” carps to the four species previously mentioned, until such time that lake committees might otherwise decree.

Restricted use of the term “copi”

In 2022, the state of Illinois approved the use of “copi” in place of “carp” to enhance commercial marketing of bighead and silver carp that are caught from state waters and sold for human consumption. The Council recommends that parties of the Plan restrict any use of “copi” to its stated purpose in Illinois.