

Asian Carps



What are they and Why are they a Problem?

Asian Carps include the species Silver Carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*), Bighead Carp (*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*), Grass Carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*), and Black Carp (*Mylopharyngodon piceus*). So far, Grass Carps have invaded the Great Lakes area where they displace native species and outcompete other fish for food. In fact, they eat about 40% of their body weight in vegetation each day, which leaves little for native fish. In addition, they grow very quickly, allowing them to escape the size at which they would be eaten by predatory fish fairly easily. They also reproduce very quickly and can lay more than 1 million eggs in a single spawning event. Silver Carp can be a hazard to fishers and boaters since the vibrations from boat motors cause them to jump out of the water and potentially injure people. Asian Carps in general have not yet been detected in The Land Between, but Grass Carps have been confirmed in surrounding Great Lakes and thus may potentially spread to the region if careful precautions are not taken.

- Note: Common Carp are not considered part of the Asian Carp group but are also introduced from Asia (over 100 years ago) and can wreak havoc on ecosystems. Unlike Asian Carps, the Common Carp has two barbels (whisker-like fleshy pieces) located around its mouth and a long dorsal fin



How Can they be Managed?

- Help prevent the spread of this invasive species to The Land Between by reporting sightings of any invasive species online through [EDDMapS Ontario](#), a web-based mapping system which also has an app, or through the [Invasive Species in Ontario](#) project on [iNaturalist.org](#).
- Inspect your boat, trailer and fishing gear before leaving a fishing spot and before heading to a new fishing spot to remove any mud, plant fragments and animals. Dispose of any plant and animal matter in the garbage. Refer to the [OMNRF's Boater's Action Plan](#) for more information on cleaning your boat and gear.
- Release water from your motor, live well, bilge and transom wells once on land.
- Do not release aquarium or pond contents into water bodies. Oftentimes invasive aquatic animals end up reaching water bodies when people dispose of them in lakes and rivers.



What do they Look Like?

- Bighead Carps usually weigh between 2 - 4 kg, but sometimes can weigh up to 40 kg, have large heads, toothless mouths, are dark grey with mottling, and have eyes that sit below the mouth
- Silver Carps tend to be smaller than Bighead Carps, are silvery in colour with a white belly, and have eyes that sit below the mouth
- Grass Carps (pictured above) have large scales that look crosshatched and eyes that are even with the mouth
- Black Carps look similar to Grass Carps but can weigh up to 36 kg and are usually darker in colour

References

[Great Lakes Nonindigenous Species Information System](#), produced by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Ontario Invading Species Awareness Program](#), developed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH).