

Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Asian Carp

What Are They?

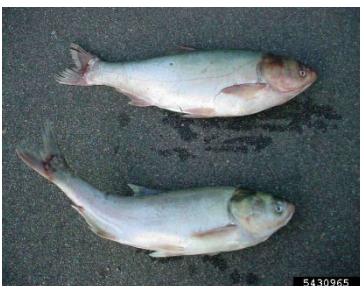


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Grass carp have scales outlined in a dark pigment. Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bugwood.org

Invasive Asian carp (*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis* [bighead carp], *Mylopharyngodon piceus* [black carp], *Ctenopharyngodon idella* [grass carp], *Hypophthalmichthys molitrix* [silver carp],) are members of the minnow family that grow to be very large. These invasive fish, native to Eurasia, are found in both flowing and still water, tolerating a wide range of water quality and weather conditions. These carp tend to eat large amounts of vegetation and plankton, affecting food webs and natural environments.

Are They Here Yet?



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Silver carp. Photo: U.S. Geological Survey, Bugwood.org

No. Bighead and silver carp are established in the Mississippi and Missouri River basins. Common carp are present in Washington but are not invasive.

Why Should I Care?

Carp can out-compete native, sport, and commercial fish; remove native vegetation; decrease dissolved oxygen levels and water clarity; disrupt food webs; and introduce parasites and disease. Certain species (silver carp) are known to jump forcefully out of the water in response to noises or lights, injuring boaters and breaking boat windshields.

A dark green rectangular box containing a magnifying glass icon with a bug inside, the text "Report Sightings", a QR code, and the website "Invasivespecies.wa.gov".

Report Sightings



[Invasivespecies.wa.gov](https://invasivespecies.wa.gov)

What Are Their Characteristics?

- Bighead carp weigh up to 110 pounds and are up to 4-5 feet long. They have a lower jaw that extends past the upper jaw, a large head, a green to olive-colored body with dark blotches, and eyes below the body midline.
- Silver carp are smaller (3 feet long) with lighter coloring. Unlike bighead carp, they normally do not have dark blotches.
- Black carp are black with a white belly, a pointed head, and a more cylindrical body. They can grow more than 6 feet long and can weigh 150 pounds.
- Grass carp are golden brown or silvery. They grow up to 3 feet and 65 pounds. Their scales are outlined by a dark pigment.



Black carp are more narrow and cylindrical. Photo: Rob Cosgriff, Illinois Natural History Survey, Bugwood.org

How Can We Stop Them?

Bighead, black, grass, and silver carp are all classified as Prohibited Aquatic Animal Species by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, meaning they may not be possessed, purchased, sold, propagated, transported, or released into state waters. The importation of black and silver carp are regulated by the federal Lacey Act, under which they are listed as Injurious Wildlife Species.

What Should I Do If I Find One?

Report immediately via the WA Invasives mobile app or reporting web form at <https://invasivespecies.wa.gov/report-a-sighting/>.



Bighead carp have dark blotches on their bodies. Photo: South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks, Bugwood.org