

# Carp in the News



common carp  
(Duane Raver, FWS)

## Fish Flop

The first annual Big River Carp Connoisseur Challenge garnered exactly no entries, but, undaunted, *Big River Magazine* plans to launch the second annual Challenge in March.

The contest challenges restaurants near the river to offer the tastiest carp dish.

"Asian carp are more abundant than last year. Consumers have less money to spend in restaurants. Restaurants are serving more local, naturally grown foods. Local commercial fishermen are selling carp cheap," noted Reggie McLeod, *Big River* editor/publisher. "All of the forces are aligning to create a new interest in carp dishes in the Upper Midwest."

## Volts, Poison, Locks

**Chicago** — Seven miles of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal were closed in early December while 2,200 gallons of the pesticide rotenone were dumped into it, killing all the fish in the canal. This extreme measure was taken after the DNA of invasive Asian carp were found in the Cal-Sag Channel, a channel that splits off the C.S.&S. Canal below Chicago and leads to Lake Michigan. The channel is on the lake side of the new \$9 million electric fish barrier built to repel them by sending electric pulses through the water.

Several species of Asian carp have already infested the Mississippi River watershed. The C.S.&S. Canal was built to send Chicago's sewage down the Illinois River to the Mississippi and to allow shipping between the Mississippi and the Great Lakes. The electric barrier is intended to separate the Mississippi watershed from the Great Lakes watershed. Asian carp pose an enormous threat to the Great Lakes and its many ecosystems, as

well as all the rivers that flow into the lakes. It is widely thought that if the carp make it to the lake, they will out-complete native and sports fish, causing billions of dollars of damage to Great Lakes recreation and commercial fishing industries.

The purpose of the poisoning was to keep carp at bay while the elec-

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tric fence was shut down for routine maintenance. After the three-day, \$3 million poisoning, only one Asian carp was found. Some people claimed that poisoned Asian carp sank, undetected, to the canal bottom.

"Why do the innocent American fish have to suffer because of these evil Asian fish?" asked a blogger after Chicago's WGN ran the story on December 3.

Environmental groups and agencies that have long criticized the electric barrier are expected to push for closing the locks on the ship canal. Michigan's governor, Jennifer Granholm, has asked the state's attorney general to petition the U.S. Supreme Court to force the Army Corps of Engineers to close the locks. Meanwhile, shipping companies, which move oil, coal, cement and other goods through the canal, are grumbling about the maintenance shutdown.

The canal, which was built in

1900, is the only direct link between the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes. Zebra mussels and many other alien species have invaded the Mississippi from the Great Lakes by traveling through the canal. Before that, Chicago's sewage was dumped into Lake Michigan, where the city gets its water.

## Carp Repellent

"Stink bait" is an age-old favorite of carp and catfish anglers, but "stink repellent" is something new.

A U.S. Geological Survey researcher, Robin Calfee, has discovered that invasive carp may be so put off by certain scents that they move away, school closely together and become immobile. The schooling adults emit chemicals that attract young carp.

These attractions and repulsions might one day be put to use in protecting native habitats and native fish-breeding areas from invasive carp.

## Western Carp Surplus

The state of Utah is looking for ways to dispose of 10 to 20 tons of dead carp every day. Seventy-five percent of the common carp are being removed from Utah Lake, near Provo to restore its ecological balance and help a native fish, the June sucker, recover. None of the proposals for carp disposal are feasible on such a large scale. Mink farms would love a cheap source of fish, but not that much fish. Fish fertilizer plants could use the fish, but no one has stepped forward yet with the capital to build one nearby.

The harvest began in September. Commercial fishermen are being paid about 20 cents a pound to net the carp. The state hopes to recoup its costs by selling the fish. 