



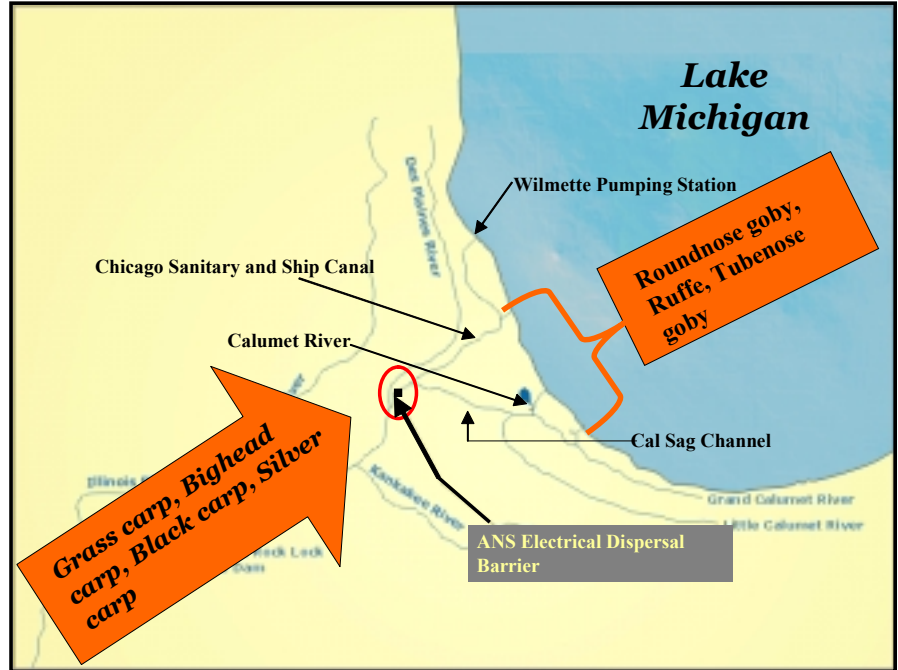
Aquatic Invasive Species

Interbasin Exchange

Issue

More than 160 aquatic nuisance species (ANS) became established in the Great Lakes Basin during the last century. These invasive species are carried to the United States through ballast water, aquaculture, recreational activities and water diversion. Once released into American waters, these species often thrive as there may be no predators in their new location to control their populations. Once established, these invasive species can begin to compete against native species and may eventually have serious negative impacts.

As a result of the clean-up of the Calumet River and Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, both native and invasive fish species can now move freely between the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes Basins. This could have a devastating effect on the en-



ANS exchange site between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River Basin.

vironment, as well as the \$4.5 billion annual Great Lakes sport and commercial fishery. Likewise, ANS in these basins threaten industrial and recreational economies throughout over 40 percent of the nation.

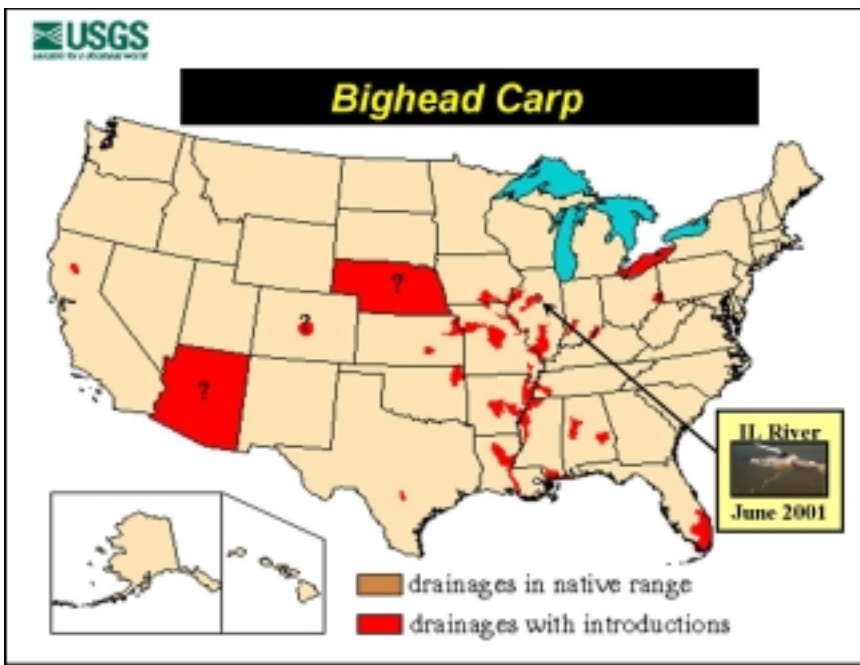


Big competition for native fish.

Asian carp are the latest threat facing the Mississippi River and Great Lakes. Four species of Asian carp are ranging north from the Mississippi River toward the Great Lakes via the Illinois River and Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Alarmingly, several Asian carp have already been captured in Lake Erie. These invasive fish directly compete with native fish for food and habitat.

The Honorable Richard Daley, mayor of Chicago, has committed to lead an effort to combat the inter-basin passage of aquatic invasive species while promoting recreational and commercial navigation. The mayor has informed the Great Lakes governors and mayors, state representatives on the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA) and numerous Great Lakes and Mississippi River Congressional delegates of his desire to address this issue directly.

The mayor has requested support to craft strong provisions in the National Invasive Species Act of 1996 reauthorization (NISA) for further development and operation of an electric demonstration barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, including \$200,000 for operations and maintenance in Fiscal Year 2003. The electric barrier is an "interim" measure which is expected to help slow the movement of species between the basins. Slowing the movement of the species will give resource managers more time to develop permanent solutions to this potentially catastrophic problem.



Bighead carp (a species of Asian carp) are approaching the Great Lakes Basin.

Background

Invasive species are a rapidly expanding global problem causing detrimental economic and ecological impacts. Many of these species pose significant threats to over 42 percent of the species currently listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Controlling the exchange of species between the two basins can only be accomplished through open communication, innovative control methods and strong partnerships among federal, state, tribal and private entities. Our first line of defense is prevention. Prevention has failed in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. Now we must respond to the situation through early detection, rapid response to new invasions and by cooperatively developing solutions to this problem.

The development and operation of an electrical barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal is considered an interim measure. The barrier will not stop all fish species from moving freely between the basins and will not stop unwanted non-fish invaders. However, it will slow species movement and allow more time to develop permanent solutions.

Mayor Daley is committed to gain the financial, scientific and political support needed to address this issue by assigning resources and gaining the partnerships needed to solve the problem.

Currently, language is being drafted for inclusion in the NISA of 1996 reauthorization to control the exchange of aquatic nuisance species between the two basins; the Midwest Natural Resources Group and several state natural resource agency leaders are ready to participate in an aggressive effort to protect the fisheries, economics, and recreational opportunities of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins.

Our window of opportunity to work cooperatively and stop the continued passage of Asian carp, ruffe, goby and other aquatic nuisance species is now. If we do not act now, our opportunity to protect these basins may be lost forever.



In 12 years zebra mussels spread to half of the nation.