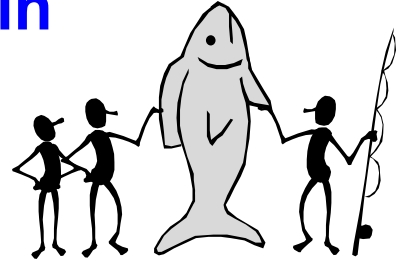


# Fisheries and Aquatics Bulletin

A publication of the U.S. Geological Survey, Fisheries:  
Aquatic and Endangered Resources (FAER) Program

Volume II, Issue 3  
July 2003



## Research Briefs

### Asian Carp Invade the Mississippi Basin

by Marcia K. Nelson

The latest aquatic invaders, and certainly the largest in the great rivers of the United States, Asian carp are becoming all too common. These invasive species, specifically silver and bighead carp, continue to spread widely throughout the Mississippi River basin. USGS researchers at the Columbia Environmental Research Center are in the process of tracking their movements and habitat selection. Evidence indicates that these carp feed even during cold weather, and they have been observed making upstream migrations of many miles. Asian carp are well-adapted to the Nation's large river systems, posing a real problem in terms of competition with and predation on native fishes in our aquatic freshwater systems. One particularly annoying habit is that these carp jump into moving boats, threatening passengers with serious injury as these fish can reach upwards of 50 pounds. A potential control method of these unwanted species is for the USGS to develop a sex pheromone, a chemical substance produced by individuals that serves as a stimulus to other individuals of the same species. It is a ready-made attractant that could be used in a species-specific trapping program. At some point, long-term effects of Asian carp must be evaluated through the develop-



Silver carp. Image: llovshin@acesag.auburn.edu

ment of predictive models, such as those used in ocean fisheries science. They foretell impending variations in populations stemming from fishing pressures that result in aquatic biota fluctuations and changing habits.

Recent news articles can be viewed online, especially the *Columbia Missourian*, "Boatload of Trouble" (main story) for additional information and an action photo of the flying Asian carp <http://www.digmo.com/news/story.php?ID=2393>. A fact sheet on Asian carp produced by scientists at the Columbia Environmental Research Center includes preliminary findings and is available online at [http://www.cerc.usgs.gov/pubs/center/pdfDocs/invasive\\_carp.pdf](http://www.cerc.usgs.gov/pubs/center/pdfDocs/invasive_carp.pdf). Contact: Duane Chapman, Columbia Environmental Research Center.