

Black Carp

Mylopharyngodon piceus

Iowa Aquatic Invasive Species Fact Sheet

Description: The black carp is very similar to the grass carp in appearance. In contrast the black carp is much darker in appearance than the grass carp. Also the pharyngeal teeth are large and similar to human molars, an adaptation for crushing the shells of mollusks.



Distribution: Black carp were first brought into the US in the early 1970's as a "contaminant" in imported grass carp stocks delivered to a fish farm in Arkansas. A second importation occurred in the early 1980's for use as a food fish and as a biological control agent for a trematode parasite in cultured catfish. The first record of escape or release into the wild occurred in 1994 into the Osage River in Missouri when high water flooded holding ponds at a private aquaculture facility near Lake of the Ozarks. Currently black carp are being used by fish farmers for control of snails, the intermediate host of a trematode parasite in catfish. Black carp are native to most Pacific drainages of eastern Asia. They have been found in several locations along the Mississippi River south of Iowa.

Threats: Most states feel that black carp pose a serious threat to native mollusk and snail species, many of which are federally listed as threatened or endangered.

Control: To help control the spread and introduction of Black carp, become more informed about the spread of non-native species nationwide. Consult your local, state, and federal conservation authorities as to the threat of non-native species in your area, and to the laws and regulations governing the importation, culture, maintenance, and stocking of non-native species. Utilize care in the purchase and use of baitfish in lakes and streams. Ask your bait dealers where their baitfish originates, and never release any unused baitfish into the water; always destroy them or return them to your bait dealer. Support your local, state and federal natural resources agencies in all of their efforts to stop the spread of non-native species of any kind.

Law: Iowa law makes it illegal to 1) possess, introduce, purchase, sell, propagate, or transport aquatic invasive species in Iowa, 2) place a trailer or launch a watercraft with aquatic invasive species attached in public waters, and 3) operate a watercraft in a marked aquatic invasive species infestation. The scheduled fine is \$500 for violating any of the above regulations. The law also requires the DNR to identify waterbodies infested with aquatic invasive species and post signs alerting boaters. The DNR may restrict boating, fishing, swimming, and trapping in infested waters.

