

# Have you seen an invasive carp?

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is on the lookout for invasive carp. Imported from China in the 1970s to control plankton, algae and snails in southern fish farms, these four carp species escaped into the Mississippi River and have been working their way upstream ever since. Some of these invasive carp grow as large as 100 pounds and they can cause serious problems for native fish and healthy waters. While some native fish jump out of the water, silver carp are known for causing hazards for boaters because they jump as high as 10 feet.

If you see an invasive carp, please contact the DNR. But first, take a few minutes to learn how to distinguish invasive carp from common carp and native species found in Minnesota waters.

## If you see one of these invasive carp, contact the DNR



### Silver carp

Eyes set below downward slanting mouth, no teeth, long keel from throat to tail, small scales, narrow dorsal fin, no barbels by mouth, silver in color, average size 33 inches. Known for jumping high out of the water.



### Bighead carp

Eyes set below mouth, no teeth, large head, short keel between pelvic fins, protruding lower jaw, small scales, no barbels by mouth, solid grey body with dark blotches, average size 40 inches.



### Grass carp

Eyes set even with mouth, no teeth, large scales with prominent dark edges, no keel, no barbels by mouth, silver to olive in color, average size 33 inches.



### Black carp

Eyes set even with mouth, teeth like human molars, large scales with prominent dark edges, no keel, no barbels by mouth, dark in color, average size in other states 36 inches.

Silver, bighead and grass carp photos: MN DNR  
Black carp photo: U.S. Geological Survey, Columbia Environmental Research Center

If you see or catch an invasive carp, please take pictures and note the location, then email or call the Minnesota DNR's invasive carp coordinator at:

**[Invasive.carp@state.mn.us](mailto:Invasive.carp@state.mn.us); 651-587-2781**

# Have you seen an invasive carp?

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is on the lookout for invasive carp. If you see one, the DNR wants to know about it. But first, take a few minutes to make sure it's not just a common carp or some native species found in Minnesota waters. And remember, while silver carp can jump as high as 10 feet out of the water, some native fish jump too.

## Common species that might be confused with invasive carp



### **Common carp**

Eyes set above mouth, large dorsal fin, downturned mouth, large scales, barbels present by mouth, gold to olive color, average size 24 inches.



### **Bigmouth buffalo**

Eyes set above mouth, large dorsal fin, forward facing mouth, large scales, no barbels, silver to gold color, average size 24 inches.



### **Smallmouth buffalo**

Eyes set above mouth, large dorsal fin, downward facing mouth, no barbels, large scales, silver color, average size 24 inches.



### **Gizzard shad**

Eyes set above mouth, no teeth, mid-set dorsal fin, forward facing mouth, small scales, silver color, dark spot behind gills, average size 8-12 inches.



### **Mooneye/Goldeye**

Eyes set above mouth, back set dorsal fin, teeth on both jaws, upturned mouth, small scales, keel from anal to pelvic fin, silver color, no spot, average size up to 15 inches.



### **Shiner species**

Eyes set above mouth, transparent dorsal fin, no teeth, often silver color, very small in size (less than 6 inches).

Fish illustrations: ©C. Iverson, MN DNR  
Gizzard shad photo: Adobe Stock

For more information on Minnesota fish and fishing, visit [www.mndnr.gov](http://www.mndnr.gov).