



## Stopping the Spread of Asian Carp: An Action Agenda for Congress

### Priorities for Stopping Asian Carp

The Great Lakes Commission calls on Congress and the Administration to sustain critical actions needed to keep Asian carp from invading the Great Lakes. While the regional response has been strong, additional resources and authorizations are needed to enable federal agencies to move aggressively to halt the spread of the carp. It is not too late to prevent this ecological and economic catastrophe!

**Request:** Support the following actions to provide immediate and long-term solutions to Asian carp.

- Maintain funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and base agency programs to ensure **full implementation of the Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework** and other prevention and control measures.
- Provide resources and direct the Army Corps of Engineers to **expedite the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study** of options for separating the Great Lakes and Mississippi River watersheds as a permanent solution to prevent the transfer of aquatic invasive species.

### Status of Asian Carp Migration

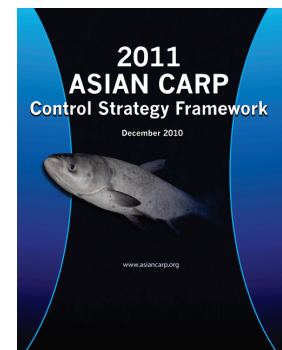
Asian carp are established in the Mississippi and Illinois rivers and are migrating toward Lake Michigan. Monitoring has confirmed their presence in the upper Illinois River 60 miles from the lake. In 2009 a carp was found in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (CSSC) below the electric barrier in the Lockport Pool. In January 2010 carp DNA was found in Lake Michigan in Calumet Harbor and in the North Shore Channel near the Wilmette pumping station. A live Asian carp was caught in Lake Calumet, north of the electric barrier and just six miles from Lake Michigan in June 2010.

**See reverse for a map of Chicago area waterways and locations where Asian carp DNA has been detected, along with additional information on efforts to keep carp out of the Great Lakes.**

### The Response: Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework

In February 2010 the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (ACRCC) established the *Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework* to integrate contributions from federal and state agencies and other partners. The framework is intended to provide a comprehensive approach that builds on past research, monitoring and control efforts. The Framework was updated for FY 2011 and outlines a series of actions to combat the spread of Asian carp, with a projected cost of \$47 million. The strategy proposes that \$26 million be allocated from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and \$14 million from base agency budgets in FY 2011, with an additional \$7 million provided from FY 2010 GLRI funds.

The *Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework* focuses on keeping Asian carp from establishing populations in the Great Lakes. It will support enhanced monitoring and harvesting of fish; evaluation and validation of eDNA monitoring techniques; construction of barriers to prevent fish passage during floods; and completion and testing of the electric dispersal barrier system on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. In addition, the strategy calls for new research on tools for controlling Asian carp; educational and enforcement efforts to prevent live carp from being sold or transferred; assessing the possibility of transfer of carp in ballast and bilge water; expanding the market for Asian carp; and a study of options to permanently prevent the interbasin transfer of aquatic invasive species.



### Asian Carp and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

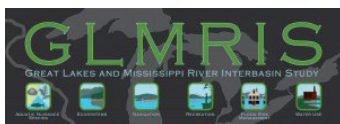
Stopping the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species is one of the GLRI's key focus areas. The Initiative will provide more than half of the cost of the control strategy in FY 2011. However, ongoing control efforts for Asian carp must not derail the broader effort to restore the Great Lakes. The GLRI is off to a strong start. For FY 2010, Great Lakes states and other entities submitted nearly 1,300 restoration projects seeking more than \$1 billion. A permanent solution to prevent the transfer of aquatic invasive species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi watersheds is complex and will take years to implement. **In the meantime, it is vital to maintain funding for the GLRI and sustain momentum in restoring the Great Lakes.**

## The Dispersal Barrier System

Since 2002 the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has operated a dispersal barrier system on the CSSC, a man-made part of the Illinois River system that links the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. In 2007 the Corps was authorized to upgrade the original demonstration barrier (Barrier I), build a second barrier (Barrier II) and operate the system at full federal cost. Barrier II consists of two electrical arrays and control houses, known as Barriers IIA and IIB. They can be operated independently, but the ultimate goal is to operate both at the same time. Barrier IIA was completed in 2006 and is now in continuous operation. Barrier IIB is expected to be completed in early 2011.

## Army Corps of Engineers Studies

The Corps is conducting two studies authorized in 2007. The **Dispersal Barrier Efficacy Study** is investigating hazards that might reduce the effectiveness of the electric dispersal barrier system. A series of interim reports were released in 2010 and led to the construction of 13 miles of concrete barriers and mesh fencing along the Des Plaines River and the Illinois & Michigan Canal to prevent Asian carp from bypassing the barrier system during flood events. The final efficacy report addressing pathways not covered in the interim reports will be available later this year.



The **Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS)** is investigating the feasibility of options

and technologies to prevent the transfer of aquatic invasive species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River watersheds via the CSSC and other aquatic pathways, including separating the two watersheds. The study began in 2009 and a project management plan was released in 2010. The Corps recently completed a series of public scoping meetings inviting input on the study. **Congress should direct the Corps to expedite this study and provide funding for this complex challenge.**

## Lock Closure and the Federal Courts

Led by Michigan, five Great Lakes state Attorneys General have filed suit in federal court seeking immediate, temporary closure of the O'Brien Lock in the Calumet-Sag Channel and the Chicago Controlling Works in the Illinois River until a permanent solution can be found to prevent Asian carp from getting into Lake Michigan. The lawsuit also seeks to re-establish the natural separation between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River basin that was eliminated with construction of the Chicago canal system. To date, the courts have denied the request to close the Chicago locks. Ultimately, a sustainable solution is needed that permanently prevents the passage of aquatic invasive species between the basins.



## Ecological Separation

Separating the Great Lakes from the Mississippi River is the preferred permanent solution to prevent Asian carp and other aquatic invasive species from moving between the two watersheds. In the early 1900s a complex system of rivers and canals was built in the Chicago area to divert wastewater from Lake Michigan to the Illinois River. The waterways are also used for commercial and recreational boating, flood control and emergency response. Ecological separation will likely entail using barriers to prevent the movement of aquatic organisms—at all life stages—via canals and waterways between the watersheds. How to achieve this goal, however, is still unclear and difficult to visualize. Through GLMRIS, the Corps will consider a range of options and technologies to accomplish ecological separation at multiple connections between the basins.

The Great Lakes Commission and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative are leading an initiative to develop and evaluate options to achieve separation, with a focus on the Chicago area. With support from a team of consultants, the project will provide a detailed evaluation of several potential options for separation, including their costs, benefits and impacts. Final outcomes from this initiative will be available in January 2012.

## More Information

Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee: <http://asiancarp.org>

Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework: <http://www.asiancarp.org/Documents/FrameworkDec15-2010.pdf>

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Chicago District, Aquatic Nuisance Species Portal: <http://www.lrc.usace.army.mil/AsianCarp>

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study: <http://glmr.is.anl.gov>

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative: <http://greatlakesrestoration.us>

Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species: <http://glc.org/ans/panel>