



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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Statewide Cookout Adds Carp to Menus

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) today, together with Midwest Fish Co-op and Sorce Freshwater Company, introduced Illinoisans to a locally-sourced, plentiful and healthful seafood option with a statewide Asian carp cookout.

Held at nine locations across the state, the cookouts offered Illinoisans free Asian carp tacos, sliders, hush puppies and more to showcase the versatility and health benefits of Asian carp.

“An invasive species, Asian carp are abundant in Illinois and, while we’ve long worked with commercial fishermen and other partners to remove these fish from our waterways, we know more can and must be done,” said Colleen Callahan, director, IDNR. “To that end we thought, ‘Why not acknowledge them as a protein source add them to menus across the state?’ They’re an extremely healthy and mild-flavored fish which can be locally sourced. It’s a win-win for everyone.”

Event locations included restaurants, parks, community event spaces and university dining locations in Chicago, Quincy, Peoria, East Peoria, Springfield, Urbana, Carbondale and Carterville. The meals, prepared and served by chefs across the state, were given to residents free of charge with help from Midwest Fish Co-op and Sorce Freshwater Company, which provided the fish for all locations.

“Asian carp isn’t only a delicious and healthy protein option, it’s also an excellent option for restaurants as it’s easy to prepare and sourcing it is very economical,” said Roy Sorce, president, Sorce Freshwater Company. “As a distributor, we see the benefits not only for restauranteurs and hungry and discerning patrons, but also for our waterways. The more carp we remove, the better our native fish and ecological systems will fare.”

Additional help in organizing and providing event locations came from local partners including regional planning commissions, universities, food distribution companies and restaurants.

For Illinoisans who missed today’s event, additional opportunities to try Asian carp meals are available at the below locations:

- **Evanston:** Sunday, Oct. 18 Denegos will be serving Asian carp burgers at the Temperance Beer Co. parking lot, 2000 Dempster St.
- **Ashburn:** Saturday, Oct. 24, the Black Fire Brigade will prepare and serve Asian carp burgers at Black Fire Bridge, 8404 S Kedzie Ave., Chicago.
- **Peoria:** Kelleher's Restaurant, 619 SW Water St., will be serving Asian carp items on their menu during the coming weeks.
- **Springfield:** Beginning Oct. 21, customers can enjoy a fish taco special at The Barn located at 1501 Wabash Ave.
- **Quincy:** Red Light Bar & Grill, 428 Maine St. Red Light Bar & Grill will prepare and serve Asian carp sliders as a daily special for the week following the Asian carp cookout.
- **Carbondale:** Chefs from Cristaudo's Café, Bakery and Catering will prepare and serve a Jamaican Escovitch fish taco filling at upcoming Southern Illinois Collaborative Kitchen events in the coming weeks.

“For us, these events really are the best of all worlds,” Callahan said. “They’re introducing Illinoisans to a new fish with dishes they already love, present new possibilities for restaurant owners in local communities and are helping enhance work already underway to protect Illinois waterways.”

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