



# Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee

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## Bighead Asian Carp Found in Chicago Area Waterway System

The Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (RCC) announced today that one Bighead Asian carp has been found in Lake Calumet along the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS). This is the first physical specimen that has been found in the CAWS above the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Electric Barrier System.

RCC agencies will enact immediate measures to remove any additional Asian carp found during sampling efforts, including but not limited to electrofishing and netting.

"We set out on a fact finding mission and we have found what we were looking for," said John Rogner, Assistant Director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). "This is important evidence and the more information we have about where Asian carp are, the better chance we have of keeping them out of the Great Lakes."

The Bighead carp was found in Lake Calumet which sits between T. J. O'Brien Lock and Dam and Lake Michigan. The find was made in the northwest corner of the lake near Harborside Golf Course, approximately six miles downstream of Lake Michigan by a commercial fisherman contracted by the Illinois DNR during routine sampling efforts in the area. The fish was measured to be 34.6 inches long and weighed 19.6 pounds.

This capture represents the first Asian carp discovered above the electric barrier system and just the second in the Chicago Area Waterway System.

The first Asian carp was found on December 3 in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (CSSC) below the

electric barrier system and just above the Lockport Lock and Dam.

Intensive sampling operations on the CAWS by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service first began on February 17 in an attempt to locate either Silver or Bighead Asian carp above the Electric Fish Barrier System.

Previous sampling actions throughout the last four months above the barrier did not produce any Silver or Bighead carp.

Additional sampling actions on Lake Calumet above T.J O'Brien Lock and Dam will include IDNR and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fishery biologists supported by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and commercial fishermen. Commercial fishing nets and electrofishing gear will continue to be used in Lake Calumet and additional resources will be deployed to begin sampling up the Calumet River leading to Lake Michigan. Electrofishing and sampling efforts in Lake Calumet and the Calumet River will continue throughout the next several weeks.

During these activities every effort will be made to minimize the impact to waterway users and provide as much advanced notice of any possible waterway restrictions.

"This issue is an extremely high priority for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and we will continue to work directly with our partners and stakeholders to implement the Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework using all available tools and techniques," said Mike Weimer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Assistant Regional Director of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Program. "We remain firmly committed to achieving our collective goal of preventing Asian carp from becoming established in Great Lakes waters."

The sampling effort is an important and continued effort in the Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework, which includes both short and long term actions to stop the migration of Asian carp into the Great Lakes.

Sampling and monitoring will also continue at five fixed sampling stations throughout the Chicago Area Waterway System as detailed in the RCC's Sampling and Monitoring plan to search for Asian carp. Commercial fishing operations will also continue to remove Silver or Bighead carp in downstate waters where the fish are known to be present.

"The Army Corps of Engineers will continue to operate the locks and dams in the Chicago Area Waterway System for Congressionally authorized purposes of navigation, water diversion, and flood control. We will continue to support fish suppression activities by modifying existing structures such as locks as requested by other agencies to support this common goal," said Colonel Vincent Quarles, Command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District. "At this time there is no intention to close the locks."

Short and long term control efforts as part of the Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework include:

- Operations to reduce propagule pressure on barriers
- Increased fish collection effort and population suppression
- Evaluation of modified and structures operations in support of fish suppression activities
- Emergency measures to prevent bypass of fish between (1) Des Plaines River and CSSC and (2) I&M Canal and CSSC during flood events
- Increased biological control efforts
- Barrier operations

To view the entire control framework and to receive the latest updates on sampling efforts in the CAWS, log on to [www.asiancarp.org](http://www.asiancarp.org).