

Asian Carp Found in Chicago Area Waterway System

A 20 lb, 35" Bighead was netted in Lake Calumet, 6 miles from Lake Michigan

One Bighead Asian carp was found on June 23, in Lake Calumet along the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS). This is the first physical specimen that has been found in the waterway system above the Electric Barrier System.

Cooperating Asian Carp Regional Committee agencies (RCC) have announced they 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 DNR. "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/Dam and Lake Michigan. The find was made in the northwest corner of the lake, approximately six miles downstream of Lake Michigan by a commercial fisherman under contract to the I DNR during routine sampling efforts in the area. The fish was measured to be 34.6" long and weighed 19.6 lbs.



Fisheries experts stated it was not known how the Bighead got there. Referencing former finds in the Lincoln Park and McKinley Park Lagoons, both closed systems, biologists plan to take DNA and otolith samples to determine its exact origin; did it get to Lake Calumet on its own or was it dumped there possibly in a cultural release or by more devious means.

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

Intensive sampling operations on the waterway system by the IL DNR and USFWS 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 FWS 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.

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 has no plans to close the locks; they 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.

For more info: www.asiancarp.org

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