

Invasive Species Alert

BIGHEAD CARP

(HYPOPHTHALMICHTHYS NOBILIS)

PROHIBITED IN MICHIGAN

IDENTIFICATION:

- Up to 5 feet long and weigh up to 90 lbs.
- Large head with a toothless, downturned mouth.
- Eyes sit below the mouth.
- Adults are dark gray with dark blotches.
- Keel between anal and pelvic fins.



HABITAT: Bighead carp are able to establish populations in water bodies with a wide range of temperatures and at relatively low salinity levels. Spawning generally occurs following a flood event in large, turbulent rivers.

DIET: These fish filter feed on a wide spectrum of food. Because bighead carp lack a true stomach, they must feed almost continuously. They can consume 40% of their body weight in food each day.

NATIVE RANGE: Southern and central China.

U.S. DISTRIBUTION: Bighead carp have been recorded in at least 18 states surrounding the Ohio and Mississippi river basins.

POTENTIAL MEANS OF INTRODUCTION: Illinois River or flood connections with Great Lakes waters; bait.

GREAT LAKES CONCERN: Bighead carp feed on plankton, a primary food for many native fish including walleye, yellow perch and lake whitefish. They are voracious eaters, consuming up to 40% of their weight per day. These fast-growing fish can reach up to 90 pounds, and each female can produce up to one million eggs. If they make it to the Great Lakes, bighead carp will populate nearshore areas and large rivers, which could reduce sport and commercial fishing opportunities, threatening the \$7 billion fishing industry.



REPORT THIS SPECIES: Visit MISIN.MSU.edu or download the MISIN smartphone app and report it from your phone, or use the Invasive Carp Reporting Form at www2.dnr.state.mi.us/ors/Home.

Illustration courtesy of Joseph R. Tomelleri. Photo courtesy of Invasive Carp Regional Coordinating Committee.