

Asian Carp In Great Lakes

Everyone who lives near the Great Lakes or uses them as their water source is well aware of the fish species of Asian Carp slowly coming into Lake Michigan and possibly the rest of the Great Lakes. Asian Carp place of origin is Southeast Asia but they were introduced to America to help clean up the water ecosystem. Just like many species that are introduced to new environments to help control another environmental issue, problems occurred and Asian Carp found their way into the Mississippi. This was probably the worst possible situation for Asian Carp considering the Mississippi is the main waterway from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes, and once they find their way into the Great Lakes any farther there is almost no chance of being able to control them.

Many people are confused as to why another new species of fish would hurt the Great Lakes water ecosystem. The Asian Carp are a large fish that are feared to ruin the native fish population by many ways. One way they can hurt the Great Lakes native fish is by taking their source of food, since they are a large fish they can easily overpower other fish in the area and take their source of food. This would force the smaller native fish to move to an unfamiliar place and try to survive there. There have already been studies done by scientists showing that fish and other aquatic animals that stay in the area have become smaller than before. The reason they are smaller is because they are less able to get to their food resources than they have in the past.¹ Another reason Asian Carp are detrimental to the Great Lakes is because now they are considered to be a fish that can lower the quality of the water and this can hurt the smaller native fish that are sensitive to the water if it is not clean enough. This could do one of two things, one is force the species to move to a new area or even worse, completely kill the existing species there. This is not the first time there has been a species that has broken the course that the environmentalist planned to control a different species.

The area that is most affected by this issue is the southwest part of the state not too far away from Kalamazoo. So far the population of Asian Carp has not gotten into the Great Lakes but it is still a major threat. There have been many plans and millions of dollars spent on how to keep the destructive fish out of the largest freshwater source in America and there is some evidence to say they plans may have failed. As of November there has been evidence found of DNA of a possible Asian Carp near Madison Wisconsin, though it is not clear as if it is from a living or dead fish. One thing that is for sure is that this is the second sample of DNA that has been found of an invasive species of Carp in the Great Lakes.² The situation has seemed to die down in the past couple years to the public's knowledge but it is still a very concerning issue. They are still very present in the Mississippi River near all of the states just south of Michigan bordering the Mississippi river and all of the tributaries that are around it.

Invasive species have continued to be a problem in many environments and especially in Michigan. It seems that many times when humans try to balance the environment it becomes a situation that will turn into another problem. The introduced species will soon become over populated then another species is brought in to control that species and it begins as a vicious cycle. I think that introduced have to be monitored much more and very limited. The issue of Asian Carp is just one issue of many but I believe it is a serious issue that has to be taken with serious caution.

¹ Asian Carp Invasion Part 1, Mark Stevenson, YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yS7zkTnQVaM>, 2006

² John Flesher, *Asian Carp DNA Found in Lake Michigan As Experts Warn Threat to Ecosystem*, Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/11/06/asian-carp-dna-_n_4221978.html, 5 Nov. 2013.