



Asian Carp Rapid Response Workgroup

U.S. Army Corps of
Engineers

U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Service

U.S. Coast Guard

U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency

Illinois Department of
Natural Resources

Chicago Department of
Environment

Great Lakes Commission

Great Lakes Fishery
Commission

Great Lakes Interagency
Task Force

International Joint
Commission

Metropolitan Water
Reclamation District

Midwest Generation

U.S. Department of
Agriculture – APHIS

Wisconsin Sea Grant

Dear Great Lakes Stakeholder,

In early December, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will perform scheduled maintenance on the electric fish barrier (Barrier IIA) in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (CSSC). The combination of barriers I and IIA are currently the only deterrent preventing Asian Carp from continuing their destructive advance up the waters of the CSSC into Lake Michigan and periodic maintenance is necessary to maintain reliable operations and to avoid a catastrophic failure. The maintenance requires that barrier IIA be turned off, while barrier I will remain active. While effective against larger adult fish, testing has shown the power capabilities of barrier I to be less effective on juveniles, therefore, there is a consensus among state and federal agencies that additional measures must be taken to prevent the passage of fish during this maintenance period.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), in coordination with a multi-agency Asian Carp Rapid Response Workgroup, will use a fish toxicant (rotenone) to eradicate any carp in the canal before the barrier is taken down for maintenance.

Rotenone will also kill other fish in the canal but does not present a risk to people or other wildlife when used properly. While the scheduled maintenance will require the barrier to be shut down for two days, the entire rapid response operation will necessitate the temporary closure of the canal to all commercial and recreational boat traffic for 4 to 5 days. Rotenone quickly dissipates on its own, but to accelerate that process a neutralizing agent will be used following the application. Fish will be removed from the canal and disposed of properly in a landfill. The Workgroup and its partners are committed to working rapidly and responsibly so the canal may be reopened as soon as possible.

Asian carp are an invasive aquatic species that have significantly impacted the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers and are now rapidly moving toward Lake Michigan.

In efforts to keep these destructive fish out of the Great Lakes, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers installed an electric barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal that is intended to stop the fish from reaching Lake Michigan – an event that could create an ecological disaster for the Great Lakes.

If Asian carp become established in the Great Lakes, they could seriously disrupt fish populations in the lakes and their major tributaries and severely damage the Great Lakes sport fishing industry, valued at \$7 billion. In addition, the presence of Asian carp could result in injuries to boaters and other waterway users because of the natural behavior of silver carp to jump from the water when they are disturbed by watercraft.

For a glimpse of the safety and ecological problems these fish pose, watch video taken on the Illinois River by logging on to www.youtube.com/watch?v=yS7zkTnQVaM.

Your cooperation and support is appreciated as we work together to protect the Great Lakes for future generations.

For more information on the rapid response plan or the joint effort to keep these invasive species out of the Great Lakes, please contact Bill Bolen-USEPA Senior Advisor -Great Lakes National Program Office at 312-353-6316 or bolen.bill@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

The Asian Carp Rapid Response Work Group