



News Release

For Immediate Release

Government of Canada releases socio-economic study on the risk of Grass Carp to the Great Lakes

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Burlington, Ontario

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of protecting the biodiversity and quality of Canada's waters, including the Great Lakes. We are preserving and protecting the Great Lakes and their considerable social, economic and spiritual benefits from the harmful impacts of invasive species.

Grass carp, one of four species of Asian carp, has the potential to disrupt the Great Lakes ecosystem and economy unless their spread is stopped, according to a report released today by Fisheries and Oceans Canada with support from the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. The socio-economic study concludes that, in addition to the significant ecological threat that is posed by the presence of grass carp in the Great Lakes, there would also be economic, social and cultural ripple effects.

The report – *Socio-Economic Risk Assessment Of The Presence Of Grass Carp In The Great Lakes Basin* – found the total economic value of activities in or around the Great Lakes is estimated to generate \$13 billion annually. This includes commercial and recreational fishing, hunting, recreational boating, beaches and wildlife viewing. The economic values for these sectors could be at risk if grass carp become established in the Great Lakes basin.

The management of aquatic invasive species is a shared responsibility of federal, provincial and territorial governments. To protect our ecosystems and prevent economic loss, the Government of Canada, through Budget 2017, allocated \$43.8 million over five years to help prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species, respond rapidly to the detection of new species, and manage the spread of already established aquatic invasive species. Of this, we invested up to \$20 million over five years in the Asian Carp Program to ensure Canada's Great Lakes are well-protected from harmful impacts of Asian carps, we also made this an ongoing program. The Canadian Asian Carp Program is actively, and successfully, preventing the spread of grass carp into the Canadian waters of the Great Lakes. Since 2012, the Asian Carp program, and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, has caught 28 grass carp in the Great Lakes. Of those 28 fish, the majority were triploid – meaning, they had been sterilized through genetic modification.

While the finding of grass carp in Canadian waters is cause for concern, there is no evidence that they have reproduced in Canadian waters or of an established population. Fisheries and Oceans Canada continues to work with domestic and US partners to prevent the migration of Asian carps from southern waters.

Researchers are hopeful both studies will provide decision-makers with information for future options to stop the spread of grass carp into the Great Lakes. The Government of Canada has invested heavily in research to find innovative and effective ways to address the current situation and we continue to use existing and emerging science to inform policy decisions. The report released today will be invaluable to inform our future protection and management measures. Through active collaboration with the different levels of government, conservation groups and international partners, we continue to work together to protect our waterways.

Quotes

“We know that preventing the spread of Grass Carp in the Great Lakes basin is vitally important. The Great Lakes is home to diverse species and also an important corridor for economic activity – helping to move \$19.8 billion worth of goods each year, supports 237,868 jobs and \$45.4 billion in economic activity. This invasive species poses a significant risk to both the local economy and environment. Our government is committed to working with our provincial colleagues, environmental groups and international partners to guard against this threat”.

Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard, the Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson

Quick Facts

- Grass carp pose an extreme ecological risk to most areas of the basin due to their capability to destroy aquatic habitats on which other fishes and animals rely.
- Budget 2017 allocated \$43.8 million over five years, starting in 2017–18, to help prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species, respond rapidly to the detection of new species, and manage the spread of already established aquatic invasive species.
- Of that amount, up to \$20 million over five years, and ongoing, was earmarked for DFO’s Asian Carp Program to ensure Canada’s Great Lakes are well protected from the establishment and potential significant impacts of Asian carps.
- The Asian Carp Program conducts early detection surveillance at over 40 locations in the Canadian waters of the Great Lakes, responds to sightings of Asian carps, assists our Great Lakes basin partners, and conducts outreach activities.

Associated Links

- [Socio-Economic Risk Assessment Of The Presence Of Grass Carp In The Great Lakes Basin](#)
- [Binational Ecological Risk Assessment of Grass Carp for the Great Lakes Basin](#)

- 30 -

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