

News Release

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Bighead Carp Added to Federal List of Injurious Wildlife

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will publish a final rule in the Federal Register on March 22, officially adding the bighead carp to the federal injurious wildlife list. The final rule codifies the *Asian Carp Prevention and Control Act* (S. 1421), signed into law by President Obama on December 14, 2010. The injurious wildlife listing means that under the Lacey Act it is illegal to import or to transport live bighead carp, including viable eggs or hybrids of the species, across state lines, except by permit for zoological, education, medical, or scientific purposes.

Under the Lacey Act, an injurious wildlife listing means the species has been demonstrated to be harmful to either the health and welfare of humans, interests of forestry, agriculture, or horticulture, or the welfare and survival of wildlife or the resources that wildlife depend upon. The penalty for violating the Lacey Act is up to six months in prison and a \$5,000 fine for an individual or a \$10,000 fine for an organization.

Curbing interstate transport of live bighead carp promotes the federal government's goal of preventing the carp's spread into new lakes and rivers in the United States, where it can have devastating effects on native species. The Service listed other Asian carps (the black carp, silver carp, and largescale silver carp) as injurious wildlife in 2007.

Bighead carp were imported from eastern China to Arkansas in the 1970s to improve water quality in aquaculture ponds and sewage treatment lagoons. The fish, which can grow to 60 or more pounds, have since spread through the Mississippi River basin and have been collected as far north as Lake Pepin in Minnesota. Because of their large size and abundance, bighead carp routinely out-compete native fish for food. If bighead carp enter the Great Lakes and become established, they potentially threaten the 1.5 million jobs and \$62 billion in wages connected to the Great Lakes.

The bighead carp injurious wildlife listing is just one of many steps the federal government is taking to protect the country's aquatic ecosystems from Asian carp. On December 16, 2010, the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (ACRCC) released an updated version of the Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework. The ACRCC represents a state and federal partnership dedicated to stopping the spread of all types of injurious Asian carp, including bighead, into the Great Lakes.

For more information on how the Service is working with partners to control Asian carp, please visit <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Fisheries/asian-carp.html>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

