Bighead and Silver Carp

Bighead (Hypophthalmichthys nobilis) and silver carp (H. molitrix) are invasive fish spreading to lakes, rivers and streams in several areas of North America, particularly the Mississippi River and Great Lakes regions. Because they feed on plankton, these fish compete for food directly with native organisms including mussels, all larval fishes and some adult fishes. This competition could reduce numbers of native species, which would ultimately affect the entire food web.

These Asian carp were brought to North America in the early 1970s to remove algae from aquaculture ponds. By the early 1980s, both species had escaped to open waters of the Mississippi River Basin. Use of juveniles as bait and release of adults into new habitats contribute to their spread. Early detection of isolated populations may help slow or restrict the spread of these Asian carp. Your help in reporting new sightings and preventing the spread of these and other non-native aquatic species is vital for protecting our waters.

What you can do

- **Learn** to identify bighead and silver carp (see back cover).
- **Disperse** of unwanted live bait in the trash.
- **Never release** live fish from one body of water into another.
- **Drain** lake or river water from boviwell and bilge before leaving area.
- **Inspect and remove** aquatic plants and animals from boat, motor and trailer.
- **Report** new sightings—not exact location; freeze specimen in a sealed plastic bag; call the Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant Program in Zionsville, IN (317-872-6877), the Illinois DNR in Topeka, IL (309-968-7531), or the Indiana DNR, Div. of Fish and Wildlife in Indianapolis, IN (317-232-4093).

**REMINDER:** Keep the rules!

Specimens are needed to confirm sightings, but some jurisdictions prohibit possession of Asian carp and other invasive aquatic animals and plants. Others may restrict possession for specific uses only. Contact your local natural resource management agency for instructions. Unauthorized introduction of fish, crayfish or plants into the wild is illegal. Protect your property and our waters.

**Produced by Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the Great Lakes Sea Grant Network. 2003. 039 03-07**