



# Making Waves



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## The Asian Carp Chronicle - Windy City Update

By Trevor Cypher



Can bighead or silver carp be found upstream of electrical fish barriers in the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS)?

Fortunately, sampling efforts here and at other sites upstream of the electrical barriers yielded no silver or bighead carp. This matches all the previous results of surveillance activities here with one notable exception: a single bighead carp was captured at Lake Calumet in 2010 (see inset photo below).

other interesting captures, including a grass carp that was sacrificed for age estimation and genetic testing (*i.e.*, ploidy determination; see related article on Page 2).

That's exactly what our three member La Crosse FWCO crew recently helped to determine. We were one of many crews working throughout the CAWS June 17-19 to intensively sample randomly selected sites for several species of invasive Asian carps. This effort was organized by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and included staff from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Illinois Natural History Survey, several other Service offices, and commercial fishermen.

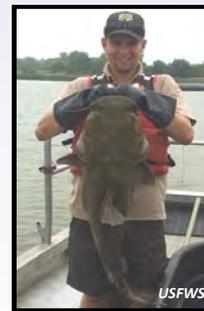
Crews were pre-assigned to use either passive (gill nets) or active (electrofishing) sampling gears to catch Asian carps. Our crew ran one of the electrofishing boats and focused most of its effort in Lake Calumet and the Calumet River. The capture of a silver or bighead carp here would be a serious concern, indicating that such a fish had free access to nearby Lake Michigan.



Water flows unobstructed from Lake Michigan into the Calumet River (red border) and Lake Calumet (yellow border) in South Chicago. Since 2010, two Asian carps have been taken from these inland waters near Lake Michigan.



A 69-pound fertile (diploid) female grass carp caught in the Calumet River



Another notable fish captured in Lake Calumet was a large flathead catfish that was caught several times during the week by other crews working here

Although no silver or bighead carp were caught, we made some

The lack of bighead and silver carp found during this intensive sampling event (and others like it in recent years) suggests that the electrical fish barrier may be performing effectively.

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# Ploidy Analysis of Midwest Grass Carp

By Nick Bloomfield



Grass carp are one of the four species of Asian carps (bighead, black, grass, and silver) that have been invading Midwestern waters for several decades. Their storyline follows much the same script as their "cousin", the European carp.

Grass carp were originally brought to the United States in the 1960's to control aquatic vegetation. Soon after, federal, state, and local managers were stocking grass carp as a biological control to treat the growth of excessive aquatic vegetation around the country. Many fish escaped their impoundments and breeding populations were documented in the Mississippi River basin by the 1970's. To date, grass carp have been documented in 45 of the contiguous United States.



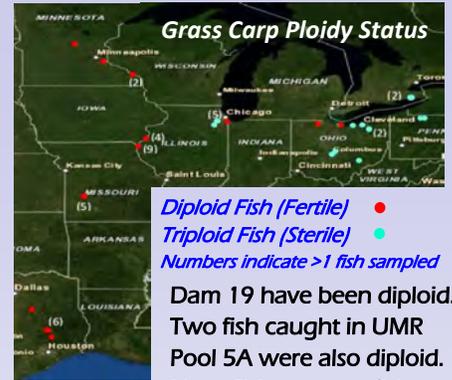
Upper Des Plaines River triploid (sterile) grass carp

While useful as a biological tool, grass carp can cause a number of problems in an ecosystem once established. While excessive vegetation can be problematic, so can a lack of vegetation. Native fish use vegetation for spawning substrate and refuge. Vegetation also acts as a substrate and food source for many different types of invertebrates, which in turn are an important food source for native fish. Grass carp can also cause algal blooms from enriching the water with partially digested plant material.

Fish farmers and hatcheries can treat embryonic grass carp to alter the genetic composition of these fish and give them an extra (i.e. a third or triploid) set of chromosomes in the nucleus of each cell, making the fish functionally sterile as adults. This condition is induced by exposing the fertilized eggs of normal (i.e. genetically diploid) grass carp to rapid changes in water temperature and pressure. Most states now require any grass carp that are stocked to be triploid.

Since 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Whitney Genetics Laboratory (WGL) in Onalaska (WI) has been testing the vitreous (eye) fluid of wild-caught grass carp from around the country since to determine their ploidy status (i.e., chromosome number). Knowing where individuals may successfully reproduce can help target grass carp control/management actions where they are most needed.

To date, the ploidy status of fifty grass carp with accurate capture location data has been determined at the WGL: 32 diploid and 18 triploid. The La Crosse FWCO has collected 22 of these. Of local interest, all 13 fish collected near Upper Mississippi River (UMR) Lock and



Dam 19 have been diploid. Two fish caught in UMR Pool 5A were also diploid. Near Chicago, one fish from the Illinois River (Dresden Island Pool) and five from the upper Des Plaines River were triploid. Meanwhile, the lone fish tested from the Calumet River was diploid (see photo on Page 1).

## Help Wanted: Citizen Scientists

By Mark Steingraeber



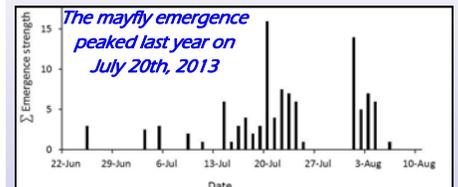
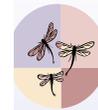
Have you ever wanted to take part in a science investigation?

Medical specialists often seek members of the public to voluntarily participate in trials to determine the effectiveness of new treatments to document health outcomes.

The La Crosse FWCO and several of its partners are likewise seeking help from those who work, commute, reside, or recreate along the Upper Mississippi River to voluntarily participate in efforts to monitor the seasonal pulse of *Old Man River* by observing and reporting mayfly emergence events that occur here throughout the summer.



These observations form the core a citizen-scientist reporting network to document the annual geographic range and relative abundance of burrowing mayflies, sentinels of the river's environmental health.



Join the fun & record these events in 2014!

To learn more about becoming a citizen-scientist mayfly emergence observer, visit: [www.fws.gov/midwest/lacrossefisheries/mayfly.html](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/lacrossefisheries/mayfly.html)

## Welcome Aboard!



Katie Lieder joined the La Crosse FWCO staff in May as a contracted biological science technician. She is from nearby Winona, Minnesota, where she earned her bachelor's degree in Environmental Biology from Saint Mary's University.



Katie Lieder joins the La Crosse FWCO

photos for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. She completed her senior thesis in May, which was based on data collected by the MPCA and assessed the fish diversity in small, drought-affected agricultural streams in the Watonwan River watershed.

While in school, Katie spent a summer as a student worker for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) in St. Paul where she participated in stream surveys of fish populations. More recently, she was employed at GeoSpatial Services in Winona as a Geographic Information System technician, geo-referencing aerial

Katie looks forward to assisting the FWCO staff with a variety of projects, including the Asian carp monitoring program. She hopes to spend her free time this summer enjoying the great outdoors with friends and family. WELCOME ABOARD!





# UMRCC Lauds Career of Achievement In Natural Resource Management

*By Scott Yess*



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources staff, led by Ron Benjamin, went out of their way to make sure the 70th Annual Meeting of the Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee (UMRCC) in La Crosse was a huge success. All aspects of the meeting were carefully planned and well thought out. During the general session, a host of invited speakers gave presentations focused on the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Master Plan. Meanwhile, the highlight of the annual banquet dinner was the presentation of the Conservation Award to Gary Swenson from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE). This is the highest honor the UMRCC presents to individuals that have excelled in their efforts to make the Upper Mississippi River a special resource.



Gary's professional career on the Mississippi River began in 1989 as a forester in the Natural Resources Management Section of the Corps' Mississippi River Project in Pleasant Valley, Iowa. Although Corps involvement in timber management on Mississippi River floodplains of that region had been on-going since the mid-1940s, Gary stepped into a relatively new forestry program with a new set of goals that placed primary emphasis on sustaining forested habitat for wildlife rather than producing forest products.

Gary provided forestry input to the Environmental Management Program (EMP) over the years, particularly Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Projects (HREPs) including those like Odessa, Huron Island, Gardner Division, and many more. Over the years, HREPs along the Upper Mississippi River and at other sites around the Midwest have seen an increased emphasis on forest resources that is likely due, in part, to Gary's passion for and leadership in comprehensive woodland management.



*Conservation Award recipient Gary Swenson received well deserved recognition during the UMRCC 2014 Annual Meeting*

Gary's active participation in UMRCC activities was likewise confirmed with his receipt of a 25-Year River Rat Award at this year's annual meeting. He has organized and hosted forestry field tours as part of Wildlife Technical Section meetings, provided forestry presentations at annual meetings, provided staff planning and field support for Vegetation Ad Hoc Committee pool vegetation surveys, allowed staff to serve as Vegetation Ad Hoc Committee chairs, and co-authored the 2002 UMRCC report entitled "Upper Mississippi and Illinois River Floodplain Forests: Desired Future and Recommended Actions".

The recent USACOE Navigation and Environmental Sustainability Program offered Gary yet another opportunity to emphasize floodplain forest management needs along the Upper Mississippi River. And again, Gary was in the forefront when the interagency Forestry Product Delivery Team was formed and embarked on a multi-year effort to produce the Upper Mississippi River Systemic Forest Stewardship Plan.

Starting in 2007, the scope of Gary's Mississippi River influence expanded beyond forests and other environmental stewardship to include management of Corps-operated and out granted recreation facilities from Pool 11 to Pool 22. As Chief of the Mississippi River Project Natural Resource Section, Gary was responsible for staffing and management at 26 recreation areas that included 6 class A campgrounds, nearly 600 campsites, many day-use areas, and boat ramps. Of no surprise in this role, Gary has also supported staff participation in the UMRCC Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Interpretation Technical (OREIT) Section.

Gary's service in the USACOE as the Mississippi Valley Division Environmental Stewardship Business Line Manager, as well as a member of the national level Stewardship Advisory Team, have also benefitted natural resource management at regional and national scales. Congratulations Gary!

This year we also want to extend our thanks to the out-going UMRCC Chair Kevin Irons and Technical Chairs Megan Moore (Wildlife), Travis Moore (Fish), Louise Hotka (Water Quality), Cindy Samples (OREIT), and Tyler Stelow (Law Enforcement). Each of these individuals worked extremely hard to make a difference on the river and added these duties to their already full workload.

The UMRCC Annual Meeting is held each year in March. The location rotates amongst the five member states – Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Missouri. Each state puts its best foot forward when hosting the annual meeting and there are always outstanding presentations. In addition to the general session, each Technical Section (Fish, Wildlife, Water Quality, Law Enforcement, OREIT, and Mussels) holds a meeting. Issues pertaining to these sections are reported on and action items are developed.

**Did you know ...**  
**waters managed by the USACOE**  
**provide 33% of all freshwater**  
**fishing in the U.S.?**




US Army Corps of Engineers®

# Youth Outdoor

July 12, 2014 **Fest** 10am – 2pm

**NEW LOCATION • Veteran's Freedom Park  
on Clinton Street in  
North La Crosse**

**Free Entry**

**Free Hotdog**

**Hands-on  
Activities**

**Raffle  
Prizes**

**Activities for 2014:**

- Archery
- BB Gun Shooting
- Boat Driving
- Camping
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Casting Game
- Dog Demos
- Electrofishing
- Fish Dissection
- Fish Printing
- Fur Identification
- Geocaching
- Hatchet Throwing
- Hiking
- Identification of Fish
- Invertebrate Investigations
- Live Fish Pond
- Mountain Biking
- Mississippi River Pontoon
- Scavenger Hunt
- Scoop on Soil
- Storytelling
- Trapping
- Turtles

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*Toni Paisley Photography*



City of La Crosse  
**Parks, Recreation, & Forestry**

# Medication Drop Off



**Saturday,  
August 16, 2014  
9:00AM—12:00PM**

**Accepting ALL Medications  
Including Controlled Substances**

## **La Crosse County HHM**

6500 State Road 16, La Crosse

**ONE SITE ONLY**

### **YOU CAN BRING:**

- Prescription Medications
- Over-the-Counter Medications
- Tablets and Capsules
- Liquids
- Creams
- Ointments
- Inhalers, Patches
- Needles/Sharps

**Businesses Call 785-9999 for  
details regarding disposal of  
business wastes.**

## **Also Accepting Household Hazardous Waste**

- Mercury Thermometers
- Fluorescent Lamps and Electronics
- Paint, Solvents, etc.
- Oil, Antifreeze, Oil Filters
- Aerosols
- Pesticides and Yard Chemicals
- Cleaners and Pool Chemicals

**Next Drop Off Days  
One more Drop Off Day will be  
scheduled in 2014.**

**Watch for Times and  
Locations.**

**Visit [www.lacrossecounty.org/HHM](http://www.lacrossecounty.org/HHM) or call 785-9999  
for more information and for future drop off dates.**

