



Invasive Carp Regional Coordinating Committee *Principles of Coordination* March 2025

*Note: In this document “invasive carp” refers to four species: Silver Carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*), Bighead Carp (*H. nobilis*), Grass Carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*), and Black Carp (*Mylopharyngodon piceus*).*

PURPOSE OF THE ICRCC: The Invasive Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (ICRCC) is convened by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for the purpose of assisting ICRCC members in implementing their authorities to reduce and/or eliminate the threats posed by invasive carp to the Great Lakes.

ICRCC MEMBERSHIP: Agencies eligible for membership in the ICRCC will: (1) have legal authority or mandate to coordinate and/or implement measures to prevent, control, monitor or assess movement of invasive carp in connection with the Great Lakes and associated water bodies; and (2) must be a federal, state, provincial, local, or federally-recognized tribal governmental agency or organization of tribal governmental agencies. A complete list of member agencies is provided in Attachment 1.

AUTHORITIES: To achieve its purpose, the ICRCC relies on the coordination of activities conducted under the existing authorities of its member agencies. Nothing in this document shall be interpreted to alter existing agency missions or authorities.

ACTIVITIES OF THE ICRCC: The central activity of the ICRCC is the annual development and publication of an Invasive Carp Action Plan (Action Plan) that summarizes planned activities of ICRCC member agencies that address the threats posed by invasive carp to the Great Lakes. The development of the Action Plan helps the ICRCC accomplish its purpose through information sharing, planning and budgeting discussions, and coordination of future implementation activities. Action Plan development is initiated in early fall of each year, which coincides with the end of the field season and the beginning of the U.S. federal fiscal year. This allows agencies to consider the most recent field data and projected available funding levels into the development of the Action Plan. The Action Plan is typically released in the first quarter of the calendar year or when relevant annual Congressional budgetary actions have been completed.

The majority of activities conducted by the ICRCC under the Action Plan are geographically focused to mitigate the most significant threats of invasive carp introduction and/or spread. In addition, technology development, communication, and support for ICRCC coordination and operations are also included in the Action Plan. A brief summary of the main activities follows:

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Blocking invasive carp movement through the Illinois Waterway (IWW), with a focus on efforts conducted by the State of Illinois and its partners to reduce overall populations within the Illinois River and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its partners' efforts to maintain the Electric Dispersal Barrier System and implement the Brandon Road Interbasin Project.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) identified the IWW as the highest risk potential pathway for invasive carp introduction. The IWW includes the Illinois River and the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS). The Action Plan identifies the Monitoring and Response Work Group (MRWG) as the principal body that supports the extensive coordination needed for work in the IWW. The MRWG is co-chaired by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (ILDNR) and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC).

The USACE's Electric Dispersal Barrier System (EDBS) in Romeoville, Illinois uses several electrical fields to prevent the upstream migration of invasive carp through the IWW to the Great Lakes. The MRWG co-chairs are regularly updated on operation and status of the EDBS. The MRWG supports USACE's operations of the EDBS by conducting regularly-scheduled monitoring for invasive carp in the IWW. In the event of disruptions to the EDBS, the MRWG co-chairs are consulted on the need for any additional monitoring and/or control activities.

The USACE's Brandon Road Interbasin Project at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam near Joliet, Illinois, being in partnership with the State of Illinois and the State of Michigan is using layered technologies to prevent upstream movement of invasive carp and other aquatic nuisance species from the IWW into the Great Lakes. The USACE and its partners coordinate regularly in the design and construction of the project. As implementation proceeds, the ICRCC's annual Action Plan will be informed by the observed effects of this project.

The MRWG implements coordinated invasive carp monitoring, response, control, and management efforts in the IWW and CAWS. Significant removal efforts downstream of the EDBS suppress the number of invasive carp potentially swimming upstream towards the barrier system. The MRWG performs Seasonal Intensive Monitoring upstream of the EDBS during the spring and fall to detect and remove any invasive carp in the Upper IWW. The MRWG also ensures preparedness to implement effective contingency actions through its Contingency Response Plan for the Upper IWW.

Should there be any detections of invasive carp in nearshore waters or open waters of Lake Michigan, the ICRCC relies on the GLFC and its Lake Michigan Committee members to coordinate actions and strategies to address fisheries management and invasive carp in Lake Michigan.

Installing hydrologic barriers to prevent invasive carp movement through intermittent waterways to the Great Lakes

GLMRIS also identified three medium risk locations where flood conditions can temporarily create direct hydraulic connections between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River watershed, thereby providing a potential pathway for invasive carp introduction. Previous state-led work has reduced the pathway risk at two of these locations: Eagle Marsh (Fort Wayne, Indiana) and Ohio & Erie Canal (Akron, Ohio). Work is ongoing at the remaining site at Little Killbuck Creek (near Wooster, Ohio).

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Preventing the establishment of Grass Carp in the Great Lakes, with a focus on efforts conducted by the State of Ohio and the State of Michigan and their partners within the western basin of Lake Erie and its tributaries, and supplemented by early detection surveillance in the Great Lakes

The Action Plan notes that Grass Carp have been captured in low numbers in all of the Great Lakes except Lake Superior; however, Grass Carp in the Western Basin of Lake Erie show periodic evidence of spawning and is the population of Grass Carp posing the greatest threat to the Great Lakes. The Action Plan identifies the GLFC Lake Erie Committee (LEC) as the principal body that supports the coordination to prevent the establishment of Grass Carp in Lake Erie. The LEC is comprised of jurisdictional agency fishery managers from Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and Ontario, and supported by Canadian and U.S. federal agencies. Their work is guided by the *Lake Erie Grass Carp Adaptive Response Strategy 2024- 2028*. The Adaptive Response Strategy was developed to reduce the threat of Grass Carp to Lake Erie through common and coordinated efforts.

The Action Plan is also informed by the GLFC's Grass Carp Advisory Committee (GCAC) and its Task Groups that "undertake and coordinate special focused activities needed to achieve GCAC and individual Lake Committees' objectives." These activities include collecting information from commercial fishers and additional reconnaissance monitoring outside of Lake Erie by State agencies and their federal partners to better understand the distribution of Grass Carp.

Should there be any significant range expansion of Grass Carp within the Great Lakes, the ICRCC relies on the GLFC, its individual Lake Committees, and the GCAC to coordinate actions and strategies to address any such expansion.

Better understanding Black Carp populations to inform management strategies, with a focus on better understanding the population within the lower Illinois River.

Activities of the ICRCC are focused on evaluating and tracking the status of populations of Black Carp in the Illinois River, including its confluence with the Mississippi River. The lower Illinois River represents the current location of the Black Carp population closest to the Great Lakes. In recognition of the need to develop and share monitoring and management techniques for this species, the Action Plan identifies the Black Carp Working Group as a primary interagency body to help inform and coordinate future activities.

Development of Control Management Technologies

The Action Plan includes projects which relate to the development, refinement, and evaluation of new technologies for invasive carp prevention and control. The goal is to test and identify proven technologies that could further enhance the effectiveness of Great lakes protection strategies.

Multi-Agency Communications

The ICRCC's Communications Work Group (CWG) facilitates communications on key issues among ICRCC members and to stakeholders. The CWG is chaired by the USFWS and co-chaired by ILDNR. The CWG also facilitates the development and dissemination of communication materials to external audiences, including the media. The CWG provides oversight and maintenance of the U.S. website, <https://icrcc.fws.gov> and coordination with the Canadian website – www.asiancarp.ca.

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Ongoing ICRCC Coordination

In addition to the coordination work that occurs as part of developing the annual Action Plan, the ICRCC promotes ongoing coordination of member agency activities through monthly calls and occasional in-person meetings.

FUNDING: ICRCC member agencies are funded through their respective agency budgeting processes, subject to any legislative direction provided as part of appropriations. Enhanced funding of Action Plan activities through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) is coordinated by USEPA and USFWS, subject to any Congressional direction provided as part of appropriations. Nothing in this document shall be interpreted to alter existing agency or GLRI budgeting processes, nor alter legislative/Congressional direction. The mention of activities in this document should not be interpreted to be a commitment to future funding nor any specific funding level. Discussions of the ICRCC will help inform, but will not direct, agency decisions on how they allocate their respective funding or resources.

WORKING METHOD: To accomplish its Purpose, the ICRCC member agencies will coordinate and work collaboratively. Consistent with their authorities, policies, and available resources, member agencies will:

- Work to develop the annual Action Plan.
- Participate in virtual meetings of the full ICRCC membership to provide for an exchange of relevant information between all member agencies, review progress, and develop recommendations for future ICRCC efforts.
- Attend ICRCC meetings and workgroup meetings, as appropriate. It is acknowledged that member agency participation may be limited due to travel budgets and/or workload.
- Share data and information (including planning documents, monitoring results, response actions, control activities and research) within the course of relevant discussions, consistent with applicable laws and regulations. Members will respect that some information or data may be provisional and should be used only to help inform agency activities.
- Strive to provide other ICRCC member agencies at least 10 business days to review and comment on documents/deliverables of ICRCC-wide relevance prior to publication/release.

ROLES OF THE ICRCC CO-CHAIRS: The ICRCC is co-chaired by a representative of the USFWS and the USEPA.

The roles of the ICRCC Co-chairs include:

- Facilitate, in collaboration with member agencies, the development of the annual Action Plan.
- Convene regular virtual meetings of the ICRCC to support Action Plan development and implementation and to provide an opportunity for agencies to share other relevant information.
- Coordinate and lead face-to-face ICRCC partnership meetings, as needed.
- Provide *ad hoc* coordination and communication on invasive carp-related issues, as requested and appropriate, to assist ICRCC member agencies' efforts.
- Coordinate and lead Congressional briefings on the Action Plan, as requested.
- Seek opportunities to leverage invasive carp efforts and to share lessons learned with other jurisdictions working on invasive carp, including initiatives under the national *Management and Control Plan for Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carps in the United States*.

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Attachment 1 – Invasive Carp Regional Coordinating Committee Member Agencies

- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Michigan Department of Environmental, Great Lakes and Energy
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- New York Department of Environmental Conservation
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
- Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians
- Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry
- Quebec Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Geological Survey
- National Park Service
- Fisheries and Oceans – Canada
- Great Lakes Fishery Commission
- Great Lakes Commission
- Metropolitan Water and Reclamation District of Greater Chicago