

MONITORING AND RESPONSE WORK GROUP
MONTHLY ACTIVITY UPDATES
AUGUST 2025

MULTIPLE AGENCY MONITORING OF THE ILLINOIS RIVER

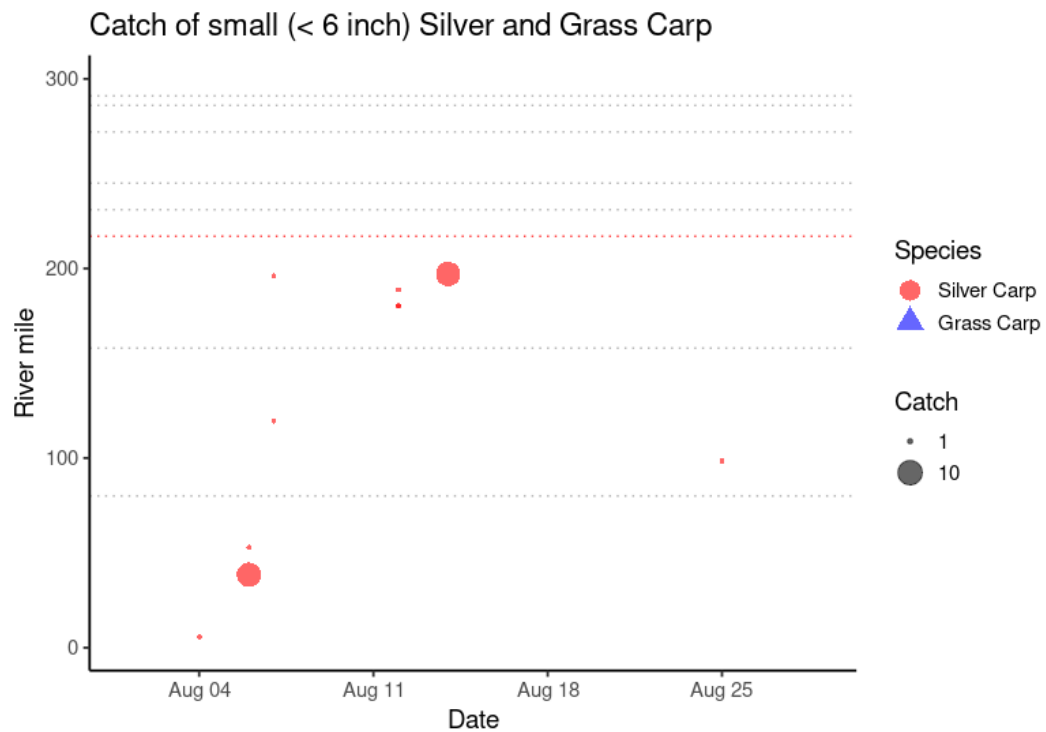
IL DNR, USFWS, INHS

August 2025 Highlights

Small (< 6 inch) carp caught during August

All reported catches are provisional and subject to further QAQC.

	Silver Carp	Grass Carp
Lockport	0	0
Brandon Road	0	0
Dresden Island	0	0
Carp-Likely (DR/KK)	0	0
Kankakee River	0	0
Marseilles	0	0
Fox River	0	0
Starved Rock	0	0
Peoria	14	0
La Grange	2	0
Alton	12	0





Small (< 6 inch) invasive carp capture locations. Silver Carp captures are in red, Grass Carp in blue

Sampling sites completed during August

	E-fish	Fyke net	Hoop net	Mini-fyke net	Trawl	Dozer trawl
Lockport	15	0	0	8	0	15
Brandon Road	12	0	0	8	0	12
Dresden Island	32	5	14	24	0	24
Carp-Likely (DR/KK)	18	0	0	0	0	0
Kankakee River	0	0	0	0	0	5
Marseilles	19	4	14	26	0	30
Fox River	0	0	0	0	0	5
Starved Rock	30	3	13	10	0	30
Peoria	41	6	7	21	0	30
La Grange	36	10	14	22	2	30
Alton	24	0	6	6	0	30

CONTRACTED COMMERCIAL FISHING BELOW THE ELECTRIC DISPERSAL BARRIER

IL DNR

August 2025 Highlights

The agency did not submit a response for the August monthly report.

BARRIER MAINTENANCE AND FISH SUPPRESSION

IL DNR, USACE

August 2025 Highlights

The agencies did not submit a response for the August monthly report.

SUMMARY EVALUATION OF BIO-ACOUSTIC FISH FENCE DETERRENT

USFWS, USGS

Introduction

This project will test the effectiveness of a Bio-Acoustic Fish Fence (BAFF) at deterring Silver Carp and Grass Carp from crossing the BAFF and from crossing through the Barkley Lock on the Cumberland River, KY. This sound, bubble, and light deterrent is designed to have a greater effect on invasive carp than on native species. This deterrent could be part of a multi-deterrent approach to prevent movement through a lock chamber where the lock is the only option for fish to move upstream (e.g., Brandon Road Lock and Dam) or in combination with a yet to be developed deterrent that slows passage through dam gates during open river while the BAFF deters fish from passing via the lock chamber (e.g., Starved Rock Lock and Dam).

August 2025 Highlights

The most recent maintenance was completed in early August 2025. This is an “off year” maintenance trip designed to get divers in the water for a week to manage silt accumulation and repair sound projectors and other BAFF components to the greatest extent practical. This differs from a “full” maintenance trip that occurs every 2 years, during which substantial silt removal occurs, and all sound projection units are removed from the water and fully maintained. As of the end of the maintenance trip, the BAFF was back to full performance for all 60 sound projectors.

We are targeting a final ICRCC/basin-wide presentation on the BAFF for early FY26. Progress is also continuing on multiple manuscripts:

- “Evaluating the effects of a multi-modal deterrent to upstream passage by invasive carp and native species.” To be submitted in September 2025 to Canadian Journal on Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, special collection on “Fish telemetry to address management and conservation”
- Time to Event manuscript and fine-scale behavioral manuscript are both in prep.

INVASIVE CARP ENHANCED CONTRACT FISHING REMOVAL PROGRAM

ILDNR

Introduction

In September 2019, the Enhanced Contract Fishing Program was initiated in the Peoria Pool of the Illinois River. In 2022, the area was expanded to include the LaGrange and Alton pools. The program offers Illinois-licensed commercial fishers \$.10 per pound for invasive carp caught in any of these pools and sold to fish processors or other buyers for at least \$.07 per pound. To date, a total of 69 fishers have entered into contracts to catch invasive carp from these pools, with 36 currently under contract. (The number of contracted fishers dropped from June (50 fishers) due to new contract start in July. Number of contracted fishers expected to increase.) From inception through June 2025, 30,983,376 pounds of invasive carp have been caught among all three pools. Of these total catches, 2.69% are Bighead, 87.58% are Silver, and 9.73% are Grass carp.

August 2025 Highlights

The table below summarizes the total pounds of invasive carp caught through enhanced contract fishing.

YEAR	Total Lbs.**	Bighead	Silver	Grass
2019 *	518,132	24,813	310,297	183,022
2020	2,882,724	176,195	1,980,175	726,355
2021	3,345,973	209,526	2,517,416	619,031
2022	5,249,161	200,396	4,615,097	433,669
2023	8,410,107	95,532	8,024,643	289,932
2024	6,336,449	90,865	5,821,067	424,517
2025 Part Year	-	-	-	-
<i>January</i>	87,108	0	72,025	15,083
<i>February</i>	479,791	0	415,750	64,041
<i>March</i>	657,157	2,228	606,351	48,578
<i>April</i>	684,091	7,809	632,634	43,648
<i>May</i>	864,539	10,480	837,906	16,153
<i>June</i>	387,079	5,608	357,547	23,924
<i>July</i>	432,323	2,130	388,310	41,883
<i>August</i>	592,344	8,561	512,564	71,219
2025 Part Year Subtotal	4,240,832	36,816	3,886,768	337,248
GRAND TOTALS	30,983,376	834,141	27,135,463	3,013,772

* September 2019 program inception.

** No Black carp reported as these are reported through the Black Carp Bounty Program.

INVASIVE CARP CONTRACTED FACILITATION PROGRAM

ILDNR

Introduction

In July 2025, the Contracted Facilitation Program was initiated in the three pools of the Illinois River where the Enhanced Contract Fishing Program currently operates – the Peoria, LaGrange, and Alton pools. The program’s goal is to help reduce the cost of transporting invasive carp caught in the three pools to processing facilities. The program offers Illinois fish processors and other buyers \$0.05 per pound to purchase invasive carp caught in the three pools from commercial fishers. To date, four processors have entered into contracts to buy under the program. A total of 898,040 pounds of invasive carp have been caught among the three pools. Of these total catches, 0.75% are Bighead, 93.85% are Silver, and 5.40% are Grass carp.

July - August 2025 Highlights

The table below summarizes the total pounds of invasive carp caught through Contracted Facilitation Program.

YEAR	Total Lbs.**	Bighead	Silver	Grass
2025 Part Year	-	-	-	-
<i>July *</i>	346,592	0	343,872	2,720
<i>August</i>	551,448	6,760	498,902	45,786
2025 Part Year Subtotal	898,040	6,760	842,774	48,506
GRAND TOTALS	898,040	6,760	842,774	48,506

* July 2025 program inception.

** No Black carp reported as these are reported through the Black Carp Bounty Program.

USFWS ILLINOIS WATERWAY HYDROACOUSTICS

USFWS

Introduction

The purpose of USFWS hydroacoustic monitoring in the upper Illinois Waterway (IWW) is to enhance invasive carp management by reporting spatial and temporal patterns of fish abundance. Hydroacoustic data aids operation, maintenance, and response at the electric dispersal barrier system (EDBS). Density and distribution data enhance targeted harvesting efforts throughout navigational pools. Consistent hydroacoustic data collection allows managers to annually assess the risk of further upstream spread of invasive carp. Hydroacoustic estimates of length and depth of targets, along with corresponding telemetric data, allow managers to make inferences about possible fish species identified as targets. Targets detected across replicate surveys may identify the same target. USFWS hydroacoustic barrier surveys are conducted monthly, and pool scans are conducted annually in the fall. Additional barrier and pool scans can be conducted upon request. Further details regarding the methods of data collection and use of hydroacoustic data can be provided upon request.

August 2025 Highlights

The results of the mobile hydroacoustic fish surveys are presented below:

- Hydroacoustic barrier scan on August 4th, 2025, identified zero targets within and just below the EDBS.
- Figure 1 shows the average targets detected across all three replicate surveys.
- No hydroacoustic pool scans were completed in the month of August.

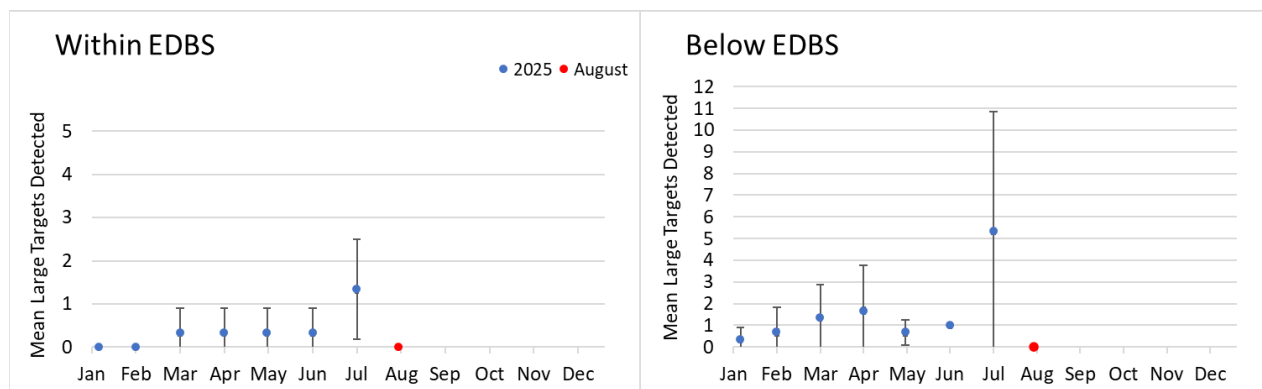


Figure 1. Comparison of the mean and standard deviation for three replicate surveys from the current mobile surveys with previous surveys from 2025.

SUPPORT FOR EARLY DETECTION OF INVASIVE CARP IN THE UPPER ILLINOIS WATERWAY

USFWS Wilmington

Introduction

The purpose of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Wilmington Substation's early detection monitoring (EDM) is to detect juvenile and adult invasive carp (Bighead, Silver, Black, and Grass Carp) at the invasion front. A combination of traditional boat electrofishing, electrified dozer trawling, mini-fyke netting, and gill netting are used in main-channel border, side-channel, and backwater habitats in the Marseilles, Dresden Island, Brandon Road, and Lockport Pools of the upper Illinois Waterway (IWW), and lower Kankakee River. Rarefaction analysis is performed annually to ensure an extremely high probability that sampling efforts are detecting any changes in invasive carp population status. The application of fishing gears across pools and habitats, utilizing fixed and random sites, is assessed annually based on the results of this analysis. The USFWS Great Lakes EDM Program is an adaptive management tool focused on invasive species detection.

August 2025 Highlights

- Seventy-nine Silver Carp (667 mm – 941 mm TL [Total Length]), one Grass Carp (942 mm TL), and one Bighead Carp (844 mm TL) were captured in the Marseilles Pool during August 2025.
- One Silver Carp (855 mm TL) was captured in the Dresden Island Pool during August 2025.
- One Silver Carp (894 mm TL) was captured in the Lower Kankakee River during August 2025.
- No small-bodied (< 153 mm TL) invasive carp were captured by EDM in August 2025.
- No large-bodied ($\geq$ 153 mm TL) invasive carp were captured outside their known range by EDM in August 2025.

Table one summarizes the USFWS invasive carp EDM from August 2025 for each pool monitored under the project.

Table 1. Summary of USFWS EDM effort during August 2025.

	Marseilles	Dresden Island	Kankakee	Brandon Road	Lockport	Des Plaines
Electrofishing Effort (hours)	5	3.76	3.75	2.5	2.25	2.2
Electrofishing Sites	20	15	15	10	9	9
Dozer Trawl Effort (hours)	1.77	0.92	0	0	0	0
Dozer Trawl Sites	21	11	0	0	0	0
Mini-fyke Effort (net nights)	19.36	17.62	0	0	0	0
Fyke Net Effort (net nights)	0	0	0	0	0	3.03
Gill Net Effort (yards)	0	0	0	0	0	200
Gill Net Sites	0	0	0	0	0	2
Small Carp Captured	0	0	0	0	0	0
Large Carp Captured	81	1	1	0	0	0
Species Richness	46	39	34	21	15	25
Total Catch	15411	15996	3933	612	301	1190
Most Abundant Species	Gizzard Shad < 6 inches	Gizzard Shad < 6 inches	Gizzard Shad < 6 inches	Gizzard Shad < 6 inches	Gizzard Shad	Gizzard Shad < 6 inches

MONITORING INVASIVE CARP REPRODUCTION IN THE ILLINOIS WATERWAY

IL DNR, INHS

August 2025 Highlights

The agencies did not submit a response for the August monthly report.

DES PLAINES RIVER OVERFLOW MONITORING

USFWS

August 2025 Highlights

The agency did not submit a response for the August monthly report.

SUMMARY OF THE TELEMETRY SUPPORT FOR THE SEICARP MODEL

USFWS

Introduction

This project provides support for the inter-agency telemetry array deployed in the Illinois River basin. The 2025 plan of work for USFWS placed 150 acoustic transmitters in Silver Carp and Bighead Carp across the Peoria, Starved Rock, and Marseilles Pools. Forty-five of these tags were implanted in bigheaded carps in Marseilles Pool to support detection efforts by agency partners outside USFWS. USFWS maintained 18 receivers across the Peoria and Starved Rock Pools in 2024. In 2025, two additional receivers were added to Starved Rock Pool. The data gained from the additional tagged fish and additional receivers will improve the accuracy of MRWG modeling work, allowing improved estimates of current levels of exploitation and bolstering estimates of large-scale pool-to-pool movement. The receiver names and locations in the telemetry array are listed in table 1 and figure 1.

August 2025 Highlights

Agency stated, “The telemetry project (IM-9) didn't have any scheduled work to perform last month, so there are no updates to provide.”

TELEMETRY MONITORING PLAN

USACE

August 2025 Highlights

The agency did not submit a response for the August monthly report.

ALTERNATE PATHWAY SURVEILLANCE IN ILLINOIS – LAW ENFORCEMENT

IL DNR

August 2025 Highlights

The case against a Tennessee fish broker, indicted on a Class A misdemeanor charge for the unlawful importation of VHS-susceptible species into Cook County, IL, was resolved through an agreement with the defendant and prosecutors. Channel catfish commercially harvested in Tennessee were sold to live fish markets in Chicago without the required fish health inspection reports, importation permits, or a non-resident aquatic life dealer's license. \$4,000 was allocated for the Illinois Conservation Police Operations Assistance Fund to support future investigations, such as this one. Commercial inspections were conducted on a fee fishing area in Amboy, IL, and a minnow dealer in Wonder Lake, IL, to determine compliance with IDNR regulations. The minnow dealer was issued a written warning for selling minnows without a license. All the aquatic life imported, stocked, purchased, and sold were legal species. An Ohio aquarium/pond supply company was cited for unlawfully selling and shipping live injurious plant species in Illinois despite previous outreach efforts. The three IDNR injurious-listed species: Yellow flag iris, Anacharis, and Parrot feather were confiscated as evidence.



INVASIVE CARP POPULATION MODELING TO SUPPORT AN ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

USGS, USFWS

Introduction

This project will develop objective, data-driven models to inform decisions concerning invasive carp control efforts in the Illinois River. This project supports ongoing modeling efforts to provide recommendations about the magnitude and spatial allocation of fishing effort and deterrent barriers to reduce the risk of Silver Carp and Bighead Carp introduction and establishment in the Great Lakes.

August 2025 Highlights

The modeling work group is developing the FY26 templates and a community data analysis to inform sampling effort within the EDM program.

INVASIVE CARP STOCK ASSESSMENT IN THE ILLINOIS RIVER

IL DNR

August 2025 Highlights

The agency did not submit a response for the August monthly report.

BLACK CARP BOUNTY PROGRAM

ILDNR

Introduction

In 2015, the Black Carp Bounty Program was created to increase the number of black carp specimens made available for research to provide improved information on the status and characteristics of these carp in the Mississippi River and its tributaries. Knowledge of black carp geographic distribution, population characteristics, and diet are needed to inform development of management strategies to control black carp abundance, impacts, and further range expansion.

Nearly all black carp detected in the Mississippi River and tributaries are caught and reported by commercial fishers, largely due to the difficulty in sampling black carp in large rivers and limited agency and university sampling efforts focused on this species. The Black Carp Bounty Program was created to provide a reward of \$100 per fish to provide incentive for commercial fishers to target black carp in the wild, report any black carp that they catch to agency biologists, and donate the fish for black carp research.

August 2025 Highlights

The table below summarizes the total number of Black carps caught since transition of the program from Southern Illinois University to IDNR to Tetra Tech.

Month	# of Fish
2023 *	11
2024	116
2025 Part Year	-
<i>January</i>	10
<i>February</i>	6
<i>March</i>	4
<i>April</i>	9
<i>May</i>	20
<i>June</i>	15
<i>July</i>	21
<i>August</i>	16
2025 Part Year Subtotal	101
GRAND TOTALS	228

* Records start July 1, 2023.

ENHANCED DETECTION OF BLACK CARP IN THE LOWER ILLINOIS RIVER

IL DNR, INHS

August 2025 Highlights

The agencies did not submit a response for the August monthly report.