# MONITORING AND RESPONSE WORK GROUP
# MONTHLY ACTIVITY UPDATES
## JANUARY/FEBRURARY 2026

# CONTRACTED COMMERCIAL FISHING BELOW THE ELECTRIC DISPERSAL BARRIER

IDNR

## Introduction

Contracted Commercial Fishing Below the EDBS uses contracted commercial fishers to reduce invasive carp abundance and monitor for changes in range in the Des Plaines River and upper Illinois River downstream of the EDBS. By decreasing invasive carp abundance, we anticipate reduced migration pressure towards the barrier, lessening the chances of invasive carp gaining access to upstream waters in the CAWS and Lake Michigan. Monitoring for upstream expansion of invasive carp should help identify changes in the leading edge, distribution, and relative abundance of invasive carp in the IWW. The “leading edge” is the furthest upstream location where multiple Bighead Carp or Silver Carp have been captured with conventional sampling gears during a single trip or where individuals of either species have been caught in repeated sampling trips to a specific site. Trends in catch data over time may also contribute to understanding invasive carp population abundance and movement between and among pools of the IWW.

Agency stated there are no updates for January and February 2026.

# BARRIER MAINTENANCE AND FISH SUPPRESSION

IL DNR, USACE

## Introduction

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) operates three electric dispersal barriers (Barrier 1, Barrier 2A, and Barrier 2B) for aquatic invasive species in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (CSSC), collectively referred to as the EDBS. USACE has operated electric barriers in the CSSC since 2002. Over the years, several operational and procedural improvements have been implemented to improve the effectiveness and continuously deliver an uninterrupted flow of electricity to the water to deter fish. USACE fisheries team conducts biweekly electrofishing monitoring for invasive carp in Lockport and Brandon Road Pools.

## Jan/Feb 2026 Highlights

The agency did not submit an update for January/February 2026.

# 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 71 fishers have entered into contracts to catch invasive carp from these pools, with 39 currently under contract. From inception through January 2026, 32,920,835 pounds of invasive carp have been caught among all three pools. Of these total catches, 2.56% are Bighead, 88.05% are Silver, and 9.39% are Grass carp.

## January 2026 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** | **5,810,608** | **46,585** | **5,378,825** | **385,199** |
| **2026** | - | - | - | - |
| ***January*** | 367,682 | 0 | 339,183 | 28,499 |
| **2026 Part-Year Subtotal** | **367,682** | **0** | **339,183** | **28,499** |
| **GRAND TOTALS** | **32,920,835** | **843,910** | **28,986,703** | **3,090,222** |

* September 2019 program inception.

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

# INVASIVE CARP ENHANCED CONTRACT FISHING REMOVAL PROGRAM

ILDNR

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## February 2026 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** |
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| **2025** | **5,810,608** | **46,585** | **5,378,825** | **385,199** |
| **2026** | - | - | - | - |
| ***January*** | 367,682 | 0 | 339,183 | 28,499 |
| ***February*** | 276,339 | 2,140 | 239,355 | 34,844 |
| **2026 Part-Year Subtotal** | **644,021** | **2,140** | **578,538** | **63,343** |
| **GRAND TOTALS** | **33,197,174** | **846,050** | **29,226,058** | **3,125,066** |

* 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 2,821,509 pounds of invasive carp have been purchased. Of these total catches, .74% are Bighead, 93.38% are Silver, and 5.88% are Grass carp.

## January 2026 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 *** | **2,453,826** | **20,851** | **2,295,436** | **137,539** |
| **2026** | - | - | - | - |
| ***January*** | 367,682 | 0 | 339,183 | 28,499 |
| **2026 Part Year Subtotal** | **367,682** | **0** | **339,183** | **28,499** |
| **GRAND TOTALS** | **2,821,509** | **20,851** | **2,634,620** | **166,038** |

* July 2025 program inception.

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

# INVASIVE CARP CONTRACTED FACILITATION PROGRAM

ILDNR

## Introduction

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## February 2026 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 *** | **2,453,826** | **20,851** | **2,295,436** | **137,539** |
| **2026** | - | - | - | - |
| ***January*** | 367,682 | 0 | 339,183 | 28,499 |
| ***February*** | 307,577 | 1,308 | 243,836 | 62,434 |
| **2026 Part Year Subtotal** | **675,259** | **2,308** | **583,019** | **90,933** |
| **GRAND TOTALS** | **3,129,086** | **22,159** | **2,878,456** | **228,472** |

* 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. Having a greater understanding of the temporally varying abundances and spatial distributions of fishes in the vicinity of the electric dispersal barrier system (EDBS) is important to barrier management as it allows operational and maintenance decisions to be made while considering potential risk factors. These surveys will provide abundance estimates of fish targets ≥12 inches, as well as geospatial distribution, and fish target depth information which will also assist commercial fishers in targeting areas with high abundances of large fish targets. When hydroacoustic estimates of length and depth of targets is paired with corresponding telemetric data, managers can make inferences about possible fish species and implement further management decisions. Hydroacoustic surveys conducted at the EDBS may produce targets that are detected across replicate surveys and 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.

## January/February 2026 Highlights

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

- Hydroacoustic barrier scan on January 6th, 2026, identified four 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 January.
- Agency stated there were no updates for February 2026.

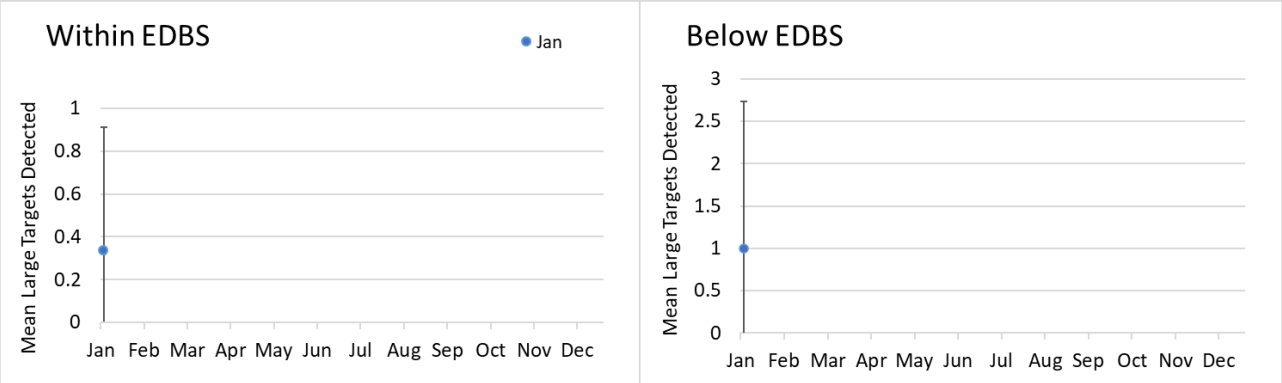


*Figure 1. Comparison of the mean and standard deviation for three replicate surveys from the current mobile surveys with previous surveys from 2026.*

# 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.

## January/February 2026 Highlights

Agency stated there were no updated for the Jan/Feb 2026 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.

## January & February 2026 Highlights

- USFWS recovered their remaining four receivers from the telemetry array in the lower Peoria Pool on January 13, 2026. These four receivers were not recovered earlier due to ice and weather conditions. The data on receivers covered periods from September 8, 2025 to January 13, 2026. The data was added to the USFWS telemetry database and United States Geological Survey's Riverine Acoustic Fish Tracking (RAFT) database on January 29, 2026.
- A total of 9551 detections were recorded from only 5 unique transmitters. Three unique tags were detected on a single receiver while the remaining two unique tags were detected as a single detection (table 1).
- Agency said there were no updates for February 2026.

*Table 1. Receiver deployments and summary of detections from March-July. "US" denotes "upstream", "DS" denotes "downstream", "MC" denotes "main channel", and "RM" denotes "river mile". River mile is denoted for the Fox River receivers in relation to their longitudinal location along the Illinois River. Receiver number references its location in the map in figure 1. Note that Station Numbers 1-4 are blank due to them not being recovered due to ice conditions.*

| Station Number | Receiver ID | Receiver Number | Unique Tags | Number of Detections |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | RM164.8 Lower Peoria_Lake_Point_River Left | 489204 | 3 | 9549 |
| 2 | RM166.6 Peoria Lake Narrows | 489205 | 2 | 2 |
| 3 | RM173 Upper Peoria Lake_River Right | 137065 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | RM173 Upper Peoria Lake_River Left | 489207 | 0 | 0 |
| - | - | **Totals** | 5 | **9,551** |

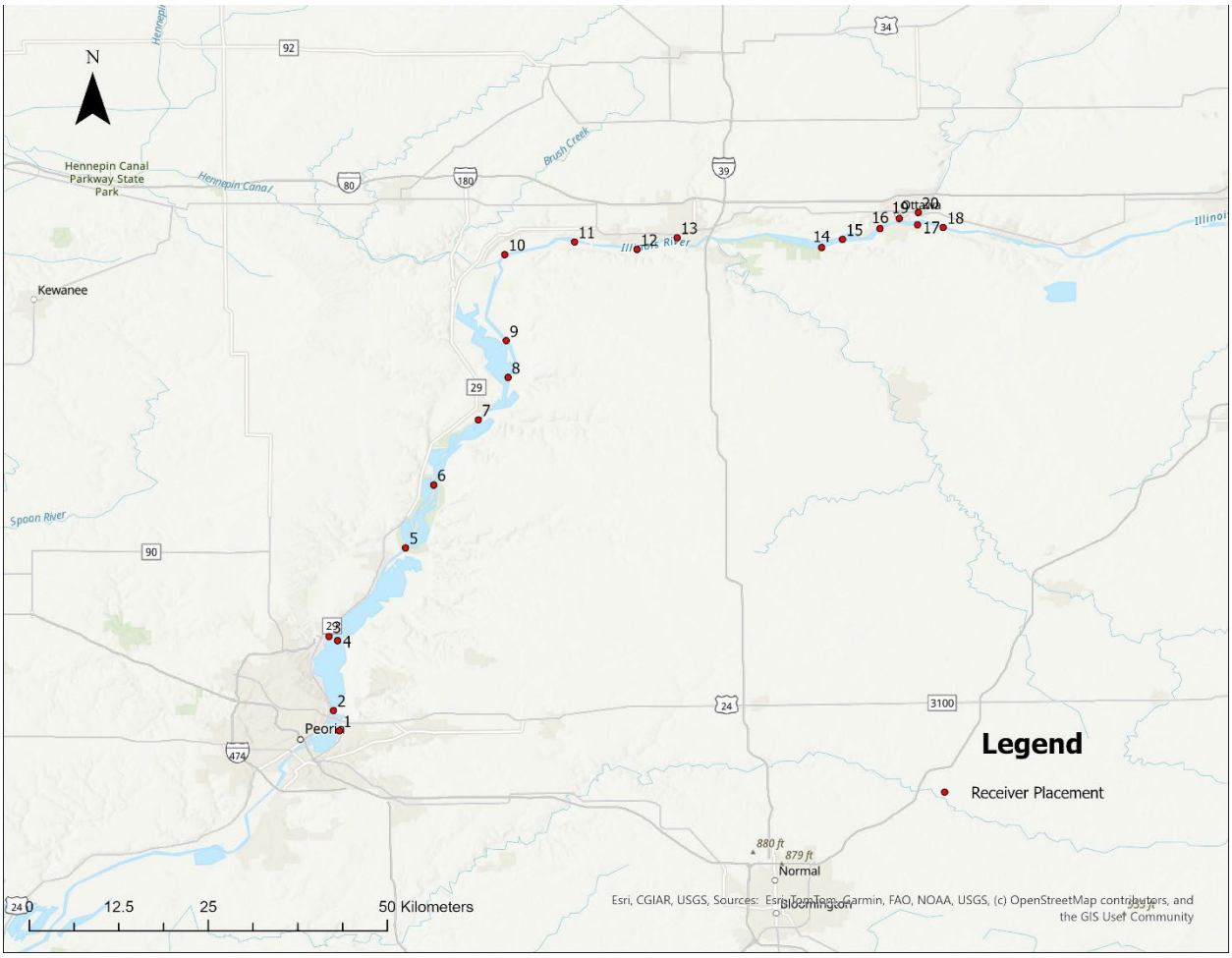


*Figure 1. USFWS Wilmington receiver placements in Peoria and Starved Rock Pools. The numbers reference the receiver's name and location in table 1.*

# TELEMETRY MONITORING PLAN

USACE

## Introduction

The telemetry monitoring plan includes tagging fish with individually coded ultrasonic transmitters in the Upper IWW. The acoustic network is comprised of stationary receivers supplemented (when necessary) by a mobile hydrophone unit to collect information from acoustic transmitters (tags) implanted into Bighead Carp, Silver Carp, and surrogate species. Acoustic receiver coverage within the Upper IWW primarily focuses on the EDBS, with secondary coverage surrounding lock and dams and emigration routes, such as tributaries and backwater areas. As of 2025, USACE operates 41 receivers between the confluence of the Cal-Sag and CSSC and the Dresden Island Lock and Dam.

## Jan/Feb 2026 Highlights

The agency did not provide an update for January/February 2026.

# ALTERNATE PATHWAY SURVEILLANCE IN ILLINOIS – LAW ENFORCEMENT

IL DNR

## Introduction

This project enforces laws enacted to prevent the expansion and/or introduction of aquatic invasive species (AIS) within the waters of the State of Illinois and jurisdictions throughout the Great Lakes basin. The IL DNR Invasive Species Unit (ISU) specializes in closely regulating water-related industries that are likely to be a source of future introductions or expansion of AIS into state waters. Industries include sport and commercial fishing, aquaculture, fish transportation, bait, pet, aquarium, fish stocking, and live food markets.

## January 2026 Highlights

ISU inspected a commercial roe dealer business and its records as part of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' random commercial inspection program. The dealer received a written warning for not submitting all the monthly commercial roe dealer reports as required.

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## February 2026 Highlights

ISU completed an investigation into an email threat sent to natural resource agencies within the Great Lakes Basin, threatening to release live invasive carp into Lake Michigan unless a payment of 3 bitcoin (approximately $250,000 USD) was paid to the sender's account. Search warrants were obtained for email accounts associated with the extortion attempt, which determined that the culprits were acting outside the United States. The Bitcoin account listed in the email was also analyzed. Many federal and state law enforcement resources were utilized during the investigation. Ultimately, the investigation concluded that the email was a scam, presenting no credible threats to the Great Lakes.

# 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.

## January 2026 Highlights

The modeling work group reported on 2025 accomplishments at the annual MRWG meeting the week of Feb. 2, 2026. Project updates included guidance on sampling intensity for the EDM project using species accumulation curves, the conclusions of a project using zooplankton as dynamic assessment targets to understand the status of invasive carp populations, updated population benchmarks using a length-based Bayesian assessment model, and an update on the status of the statistical catch-at-age model.

# INVASIVE CARP POPULATION MODELING TO SUPPORT AN ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

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## February 2026 Highlights

Since the annual MRWG meeting during early February, the modeling work group has met with ILDNR to discuss an additional species accumulation curve analysis to determine if the Seasonal Intensive Monitoring Program's sampling effort is appropriate for detective invasive carps in areas near and above the electric dispersal barrier system. The modeling work group also met with the telemetry work group to ensure that there is a mutual understanding for what data are needed to support the SCAA model. In addition, the modeling workgroup scheduled quarterly meetings to provide updates to the MRWG co-chairs and other workgroup leads and resubmitted a manuscript describing the use of occupancy models to examine the effects of reallocating effort on the Early Detection Monitoring Program's ability to detect invasive carps in the upper Illinois River.

# INVASIVE CARP STOCK ASSESSMENT IN THE ILLINOIS RIVER

IL DNR

## Jan/Feb 2026 Highlights

The agency did not submit a response for the January/February 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.

## January 2026 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** | 173 |
| **2026** | - |
| ***January*** | 8 |
| **2026 Part-Year Total** | 8 |
| **GRAND TOTALS** | **308** |

* Records start July 1, 2023.

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## February 2026 Highlights

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| Month | # of Fish |
|---|---|
| **2023 *** | 11 |
| **2024** | 116 |
| **2025** | 173 |
| **2026** | - |
| ***January*** | 20 |
| ***February*** | 41 |
| **2026 Part-Year Total** | 61 |
| **GRAND TOTALS** | **361** |

* Records start July 1, 2023.

# ENHANCED DETECTION OF BLACK CARP IN THE LOWER ILLINOIS RIVER

IL DNR/INHS-IRBS

## Introduction

Exotic black carp *Mylopharyngodon piceus* have invaded the Illinois River system and have been recently captured in the Alton, La Grange, and Peoria reaches of the lower Illinois River. Currently, the invasion of black carp is represented by only a few reported individuals and little is known about the size of the population or potential scope of ecosystem changes that may result from the invasion. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has been closely monitoring the range expansion of black carp up the Illinois River, despite limited catches reported to date.

Critical to any inferences made about the range expansion of black carp is better knowledge of their population levels in invaded reaches. The limited number of black carp reported have been from incidental commercial fishermen catches while targeting other species (e.g., bighead carp, silver carp, common carp, grass carp, buffalo spp., catfish spp.). These captures and associated data (e.g., length, weight, age, diet, otolith microchemistry.) are valuable, but the limited number of reported individuals makes it difficult to assess their prevalence/establishment in the lower Illinois River. More robust estimates of the current population level are essential to management and potential control of black carp in the Illinois River.

## January 2026 Highlights

We started our sampling season on June 15th and have set a total of 388 hoop nets throughout 194 locations in the Alton Reach of the Illinois River. We have captured a total of 1542 fishes in small and large hoop nets baited with clam, cottonseed, and non-baited. Freshwater Drum was our most common catch, followed by common carp and channel catfish (Table 1). Red-eared slider (n=150) turtles were our primary turtle species followed by spiny softshell turtles (n=83) primarily in nets baited with clams. We did capture one black carp on August 27, 2025, in the Godar-Hurricane Side-channel upstream of Hardin, Illinois near river mile 27. This individual weighed 15.204kg and measured 1154mm in total length and was captured in a 4ft diameter non-baited hoop net.

Table 1: Hoop net total fish catch by bait type and by sampling period from Alton Reach of Illinois River June 15-October 31, 2025.

| - | Period 1 | | | Period 2 | | | Period 3 | | | - |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Species | Clam | Cotton Seed | No Bait | Clam | Cotton Seed | No Bait | Clam | Cotton Seed | No Bait | Sum |
| Black Carp | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| Bighead Carp | - | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | 7 | 5 | 3 | 18 |
| Black Buffalo | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 1 | - | 5 |
| Black Bullhead | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |

| - | Period 1 | | | Period 2 | | | Period 3 | | | - |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Species | Clam | Cotton Seed | No Bait | Clam | Cotton Seed | No Bait | Clam | Cotton Seed | No Bait | Sum |
| Black Crappie | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 16 |
| Blue Catfish | 15 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 1 | - | - | 2 | 34 |
| Bluegill | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | 4 |
| Bigmouth Buffalo | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Brown Bullhead | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| Bowfin | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 2 |
| Carp | 5 | 76 | 28 | 9 | 133 | 37 | 13 | 112 | 17 | 430 |
| Channel Catfish | 73 | 34 | 53 | 28 | 14 | 6 | 9 | 19 | 15 | 251 |
| Flathead Catfish | 15 | 13 | 65 | 12 | 9 | 25 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 153 |
| Freshwater Drum | 61 | 94 | 95 | 29 | 42 | 41 | 27 | 40 | 21 | 450 |
| Grass Carp | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 9 | - | - | - | - | 12 |
| Gizzard Shad | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 4 |
| Longnose Gar | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Orangespotted Sunfish | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| River Carpsucker | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | 3 | 2 | 7 |
| Sauger | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Shorthead Redhorse | - | - | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | 3 | 6 |
| Smallmouth Buffalo | 8 | - | 3 | 1 | 30 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 56 |
| Shortnose Gar | 2 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 12 | 8 | 4 | 49 |
| Silver Carp | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 13 |
| White Bass | - | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 |
| White Crappie | - | - | 2 | 2 | 3 | - | 1 | 3 | 2 | 13 |
| Sum | 182 | 227 | 263 | 100 | 262 | 119 | 93 | 206 | 90 | 1542 |

We captured a single black carp in a non-baited hoop net on August 27, 2025, in the side-channel of Hurricane Island on the Alton Reach of the Illinois River. The location is near river mile 27 between Hardin and Kampsville, IL and the fish was returned to Illinois River Biological Station to remove aging structures (otoliths and dorsal spine) and report the capture information to the Black Carp Work Group. We plan to keep an increased allocation of effort in the Alton Reach and in side-channel habitats to increase likelihood of successful captures in the Illinois River. Such efforts support the Black Carp Work Group (BCWG) structured decision-making (SDM) at minimizing the risk of Black Carp expansion into Lake Michigan and their associated impacts on native mollusks and benthivores while obtaining fisheries independent data. Additionally, we plan on future rapid responses to commercial captures and further targeted sampling, helping us to better determine the most effective bait type for catching black carp.

# ENHANCED DETECTION OF BLACK CARP IN THE LOWER ILLINOIS RIVER

IL DNR/INHS-IRBS

## Introduction

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Critical to any inferences made about the range expansion of black carp is better knowledge of their population levels in invaded reaches. The limited number of black carp reported have been from incidental commercial fishermen catches while targeting other species (e.g., bighead carp, silver carp, common carp, grass carp, buffalo spp., catfish spp.). These captures and associated data (e.g., length, weight, age, diet, otolith microchemistry.) are valuable, but the limited number of reported individuals makes it difficult to assess their prevalence/establishment in the lower Illinois River. More robust estimates of the current population level are essential to management and potential control of black carp in the Illinois River.

## February 2026 Highlights

We presented our findings at the annual MRWG meeting from the 2025 sampling season. We have been communicating with Kroboth et al. at CERC to coordinate some targeted sampling together in efforts to acoustic tag adult black carp in the lower Illinois River and above/below the Mel Price Lock and Dam on the Mississippi River for this upcoming 2026 field season. We have also been working together to identify some more suitable habitats and locations for increased targeted sampling efforts using bathymetry and past commercial capture locations with respect to different hydrological flow patterns within the Illinois River and the Mississippi River.

# BLACK CARP CITIZEN SCIENCE PROGRAM

Columbia FWCO

## January 2026 Highlights

During January 2026, the Black Carp Citizen Science Program received catch information for 18 black carp captures. Fish were captured in the Lower Mississippi and Upper Mississippi Regions (Figure 1). Catch data is shown in Table 1. Fish age results will be recorded in USFWS's CarpDat database. The citizen science program is made possible through the partnership with commercial fishers and state and federal partners who continue to report black carp captures supporting the collection of important Black Carp demographic data within the Mississippi River Basin.

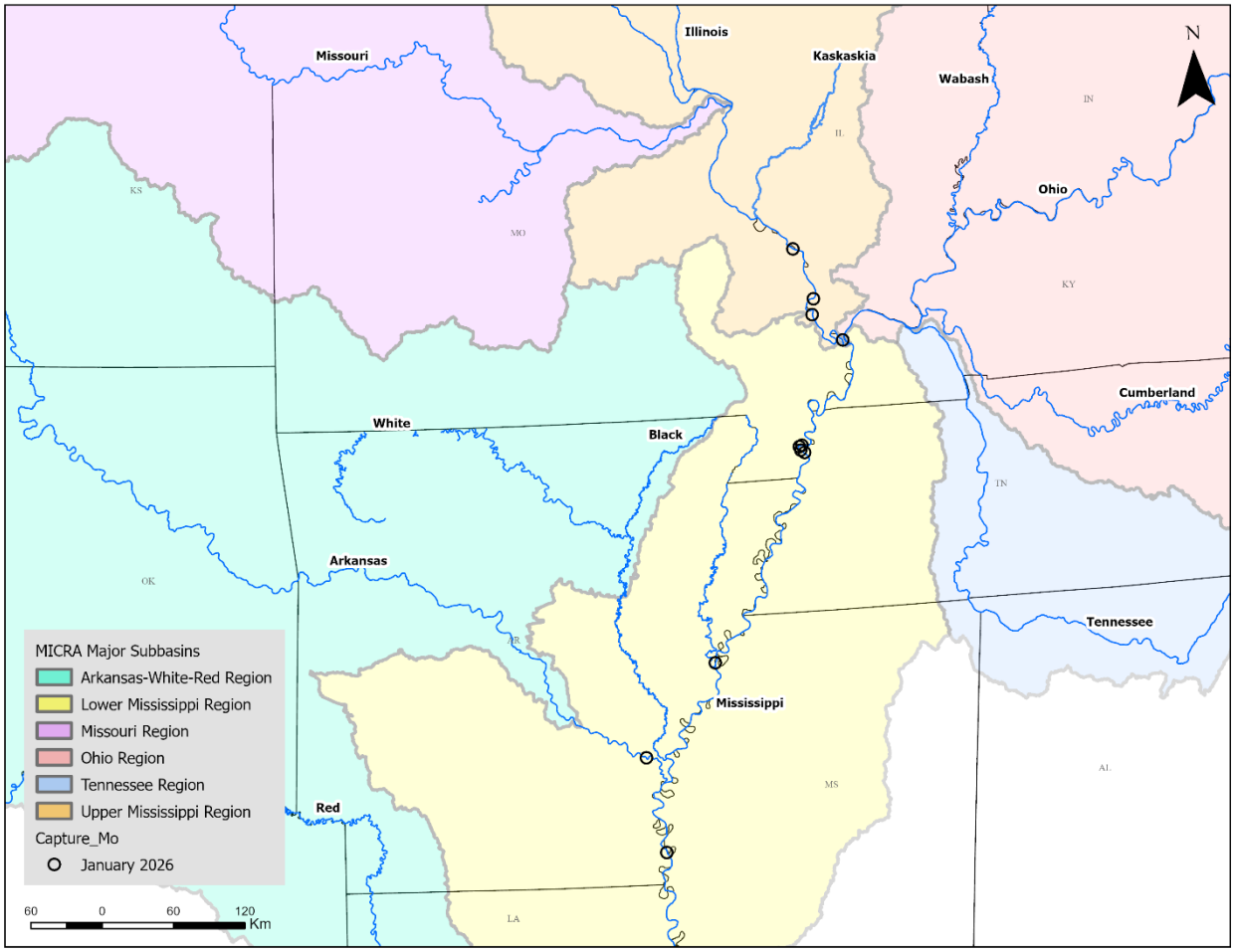


Figure 1. Black Carp capture locations within the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA) Major Subbasins. Reported captures for the month were from the Lower Mississippi and Upper Mississippi Regions. Map produced on 2026-02-23.

Table 1. Black Carp catch data including FWCO ID, capture date, agency, river, river basin, location, total length, fork length, weight, and capture method. *LMR = Lower Mississippi Region, Upper Mississippi Region = UMR; °GN = Gill Net.

| USFWS Columbia FWCO ID | Date | Agency | River | *River Basin Region | Lat. | Long. | Total Length (mm) | Fork Length (mm) | Weight (kg) | °Capture Method |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BLCP010126-001-FWS | 1/1/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | UMR | 37.7219 | -89.6116 | 940 | NR | 10.9 | GN |
| BLCP010426-001-FWS | 1/4/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | LMR | 33.2463 | -91.1242 | 1219 | 1104 | 24.7 | GN |
| BLCP011526-001-FWS | 1/15/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | UMR | 37.2195 | -89.4701 | 891 | 813 | 7.65 | GN |
| BLCP011526-002-FWS | 1/15/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | LMR | 36.2367 | -89.6760 | 1029 | NR | 12.7 | GN |
| BLCP011526-003-FWS | 1/15/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | LMR | 36.2367 | -89.6760 | 1270 | NR | 22.68 | GN |
| BLCP011526-004-FWS | 1/15/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | LMR | 36.2367 | -89.6760 | 1016 | NR | 13.61 | GN |
| BLCP011526-005-FWS | 1/15/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | LMR | 36.2367 | -89.6760 | 965 | NR | 11.34 | GN |
| BLCP011726-001-FWS | 1/17/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | LMR | 36.1903 | -89.6302 | 1219 | NR | 17.24 | GN |
| BLCP011726-002-FWS | 1/17/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | LMR | 36.1903 | -89.6302 | 1257 | NR | 22.68 | GN |
| BLCP012126-001-FWS | 1/21/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | LMR | 36.2457 | -89.6513 | 1067 | NR | 15.88 | GN |
| BLCP012226-001-FWS | 1/22/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | UMR | 37.3379 | -89.4472 | 1465 | 1380 | 36.75 | GN |
| BLCP012326-001-FWS | 1/23/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | UMR | 37.0137 | -89.1953 | 1054 | 978 | 11.3 | GN |
| BLCP012726-001-FWS | 1/27/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | LMR | 36.2367 | -89.6760 | 1016 | NR | 12.7 | GN |
| BLCP012826-001-FWS | 1/28/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | LMR | 34.6528 | -90.5855 | 1010 | 826 | 11.7 | GN |
| BLCP012826-002-FWS | 1/28/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | LMR | 34.6528 | -90.5855 | 1005 | 913 | 13.7 | GN |
| BLCP012826-003-FWS | 1/28/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | LMR | 33.9667 | -91.2655 | 836 | 765 | 7.3 | GN |
| BLCP013026-001-FWS | 1/30/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | LMR | 36.2101 | -89.6650 | 1168 | NR | 17.2 | GN |
| BLCP013026-002-FWS | 1/30/2026 | Commercial fisher | Mississippi | LMR | 36.2101 | -89.6650 | 1041 | NR | 18.14 | GN |
| **Average** | - | - | - | - | - | - | **1082** | **968** | **16.0** | - |