



## **2012 Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework**

### **The Obama Administration's Proactive Strategy to Protect the Great Lakes**

On February 23, 2012, the Obama Administration released the 2012 Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework (2012 Framework) outlining 58 new and continuing actions that build upon the proactive efforts to protect the Great Lakes from Asian carp undertaken in the 2010 and 2011 Frameworks. The Framework focuses on sustainable, long term controls while permanent solutions are developed.

#### **Asian Carp and the Great Lakes**

Aquatic nuisance species (ANS) have significantly degraded the Great Lakes food web in recent decades. Today, the most acute ANS threat facing the Great Lakes is Asian carp (silver and bighead) through the Chicago Area Waterway System and 18 other potential pathways that can connect the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. Asian carp are voracious eaters and heavy breeders. Some varieties can grow to more than 100 pounds and are capable of eating 20 percent of their body weight in a day, stripping the food web of key food sources for native species.

#### **The Obama Administration and Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee**

To ensure a comprehensive response, the Obama Administration formed the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (ACRCC) in 2009. Led by the White House Council on Environmental Quality's Asian Carp Director, the ACRCC now includes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, and all Great Lakes states, as well as the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, and the City of Chicago.

Since 2010, the Obama Administration has invested more than \$150 million dollars to protect the Great Lakes from Asian carp. The scale of the effort has been unprecedented for invasive species prevention and unifies Federal, State, and local actions, employs a comprehensive approach to prevent a self-sustaining Asian carp population, and develops longer-term biological controls. The 2010 and 2011 Frameworks included 45 Federally-funded initiatives, all of which have been completed or are under way. The ACRCC's ongoing implementation of the Framework has proven successful in coordinating actions to comprehensively address the Asian carp threat, and can serve as a model for management of aquatic invasive species across the nation.

#### **The 2012 Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework**

The 2012 Framework outlines the priority actions planned and under way to address the threat of Asian carp invading the Great Lakes, including both management actions to prevent Asian carp introduction and establishment, and research to develop permanent controls on Asian carp populations. The Framework is designed to be flexible, ensuring the ACRCC can tailor actions to changing conditions.

#### **2012 Framework Actions**

- Continuing the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) to identify the most cost-effective and efficient ways to prevent the transfer of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. An interim report has identified 90 known technologies that could prevent the transfer of ANS.
- Improving the evaluation of electric barrier effectiveness through fish tagging and utilization of sonar equipment.
- Beginning the construction of the permanent barrier to replace electrical Barrier 1, the original electrical barrier built in 2002.
- Deploying an enhanced, more efficient system to monitor, sample, and capture Asian carp if present above the electric dispersal barriers.

- Increasing collaboration with stakeholders groups, commercial fishermen, industry, and recreational boaters.
- Increasing investment in research and development of long-term fish management strategies for Asian carp, environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling, and habitat assessments.
- Field testing new technologies, such as water guns, to herd or eradicate aquatic invasive species.
- Continuing development and field testing of biological methods to reduce Asian carp breeding.
- Developing alternate traps and technologies to enhance capture rates.
- Conducting research and testing to reduce the uncertainty of eDNA results.
- Stopping the illegal transport of Asian carp and other ANS across State lines.

#### **Key accomplishments since 2010**

- Expanded the ACRCC to include all Great Lakes states and increased stakeholder outreach.
- Enhanced the fish barrier system to include strengthened electric barriers, physical barricades to stop Asian carp transfer during floods, and closed off smaller waterway connections to the Great Lakes.
- Utilized emergency authority provided through Section 126 of Energy and Water Development Act of 2010 to block flood waters from the Des Plaines River with a 13-mile fish barrier and a permanent block in the Illinois and Michigan Canal to keep Asian carp from crossing into the Chicago Waterway.
- Installed a 1,500 foot fish barrier fence at Eagle Marsh, near Fort Wayne, IN, to block advancement of Asian carp from the Wabash River to the Maumee River and Lake Erie.
- Identified 18 pathways across all the Great Lakes states with the potential to transfer ANS between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basins.
- Implemented the Asian Carp Prevention and Control Act following the President's signing of the bill in 2010. This legislation prohibits live bighead carp from being shipped or imported across state and national lines.
- Formed partnerships within Illinois enabling over 2,200 high quality meals to have been served to bolster nutritional programs within the state as part of "Target Hunger Now!".
- Conducted over 40,000 hours of netting, electrofishing, and keen observation above the electric dispersal barriers, with no new live Asian carp having been found in the Chicago area waterway system.

#### **GLMRIS**

All of these Administration efforts outlined in the Frameworks have been effective in controlling Asian carp in the short term, allowing for time to identify and implement permanent control actions. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), in consultation with other Federal agencies, Native American tribes, State agencies, local governments, and non-governmental organizations, is conducting the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS). GLMRIS is one component of the Frameworks, and evaluates all options and technologies to permanently prevent the spread of ANS between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River.

##### **GLMRIS interim reports already released:**

- ANS White Paper
- NEPA Scoping Report
- Commercial Cargo Navigation Data
- Commercial Non-Cargo Navigation
- ANS Control Technologies Report

##### **GLMRIS interim reports to be released in 2012:**

- Commercial Fisheries Report
- ANSs Controls Report for Wabash-Maumee Basins Connection, Fort Wayne, Indiana
- Other Aquatic Pathways Risk Characterization Report
- Great Lakes/Mississippi River Fishing Data Interim Report

#### **Next Steps**

Federal and State agencies will continue to work together and in collaboration with local agencies and other stakeholders to protect the Great Lakes from Asian carp. The Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework is an adaptive plan, allowing for new partners and new actions to be added as appropriate. For the latest information, visit [www.asiancarp.us](http://www.asiancarp.us).