

# AQUATIC INVADERS

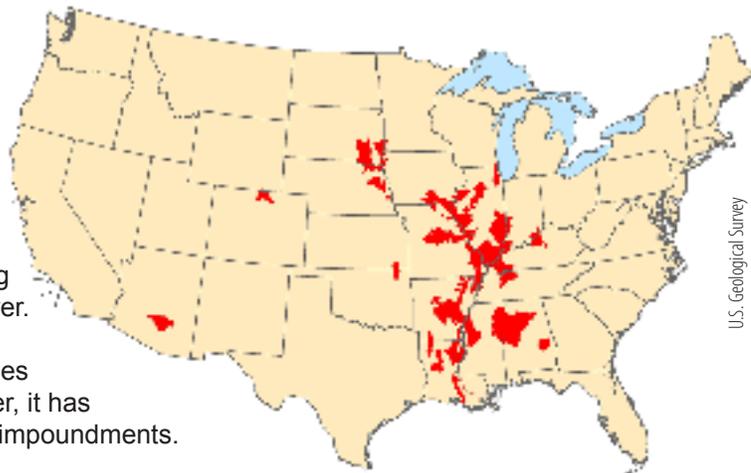


**COMMON NAME:** Silver carp

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*  
(Valenciennes 1844)

**NATIVE DISTRIBUTION:** Large lowland rivers of eastern China.

**U.S. distribution:** The silver carp was first introduced into the U.S. in 1973 to control plankton blooms in catfish ponds and sewage lagoons. By 1980, the species was found in natural waterways, probably the result of escapes from aquaculture facilities. Silver carp is now reported to occur in 16 states and is reproducing in the middle and lower Mississippi River.



**Habitat:** In its native range, the species occurs in large lowland rivers; however, it has also been stocked in farm ponds and impoundments.

**Life cycle:** This large fish can grow to over 1 m in length and attain a mass of 35 kg. The species is estimated to live to about 20 years. In their native habitat, females broadcast their eggs over seasonally flooded fields where they are fertilised by the males. Each females may release up to 2 million eggs in a spawning season.

**Cool facts:** The gill rakers of the silver carp are fused together to form a net-like structure that is used to seive plankton from the water column.

**Pathways of invasion:** Escape from aquaculture, bait bucket releases.

**Impacts:** The silver carp is an active fish that typically swims in the upper water layer. If disturbed, individuals will sometimes leap clear of the water. The sound of an outboard motor often causes individuals to leap out of the water and collide with boaters, causing serious property damage and human injury.

**Ways to prevent its spread:**

- Never release pets or any non-native organism into the environment.
- Never dump your bait bucket into any water body.

- Report invasive species to local officials and the USGS online at <http://nas.er.usgs.gov/> or by calling 877-7867-267 (877-STOP-ANS).

These tips apply to ALL non-native fish.

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*Don't forget: You may be able to find native fishes for your aquaria, water garden or bait bucket.*

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