

Intensive fishing finds no more Asian carp beyond barrier

July 12 2017, by Todd Spangler, Detroit Free Press

Two weeks of intensive fishing in and around a Chicago waterway failed to produce any proof that more Asian carp have made it past electronic barriers intended to keep the invasive species out of Lake Michigan.

As the Detroit Free Press reported two weeks ago, a live 8-pound, 28-inch-long silver carp was caught beyond the barriers just nine miles from Lake Michigan on June 22. Silver carp, along with [bighead carp](#), are known collectively as Asian carp.

State and federal officials, environmentalists and others fear that if the voracious species of non-native carp reach the Great Lakes, they will destroy the habitat for native [fish](#). And there are growing concerns that the electronic barriers about 37 miles from Lake Michigan are not foolproof in terms of keeping fish out.

The capture of the silver carp below the T.J. O'Brien Lock and Dam in Chicago set off two weeks of intensive sampling and monitoring, which included four fishing crews that use devices to stun fish with electricity, three contracted commercial fishing crews and more than 43 miles of gill net to catch fish.

The Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee - a consortium of local, state and federal agencies - put out a statement today saying despite some 365 electro-fishing runs and more than 91 hours of efforts, no additional [silver](#) or bighead carp were detected.

Last month's find was only the second instance since 2010 when an Asian carp was found beyond the electronic barriers but many officials, including members of Michigan's congressional delegation, argued that it called for stronger measures to ensure that the species are kept out of the lakes.

They and others also used the capture of the Asian carp as an argument for President Donald Trump to release a report on recommendations for blocking Asian carp at another key choke-point in Illinois. The Trump administration has been holding up the release of the report since Feb. 28 despite bipartisan calls for it to be released.

The Alliance for the Great Lakes, an environmental group, said that while federal, state and local agencies "appeared to be breathing a sign of relief" that no other Asian carp were found beyond the barriers, the earlier find remains "incredibly disturbing news" especially when coupled with evidence that in some cases small fish may be pull through the electronic barriers along with barges passing them.

"The situation should be a wake-up call for agencies that have become complacent while Asian carp populations march steadily toward Lake Michigan. Instead, it appears to be met by government agencies and administration officials with a collective yawn," the group said.

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Citation: Intensive fishing finds no more Asian carp beyond barrier (2017, July 12) retrieved 28 January 2023 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-07-intensive-fishing-asian-carp-barrier.html>

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