



LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

“... conserving our natural resources and your right to enjoy them.”

affiliated with



Resolution No. 1A, 2013

SUBJECT: ENHANCED COMMERCIAL HARVEST AND MARKETING OF ASIAN CARP IN LOUISIANA

WHEREAS, for the purposes of this resolution the term “Asian Carp” refers to four species: black carp (*Mylopharyngodon piceus*), bighead carp (*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*), grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) and silver carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*); and

WHEREAS, feral (wild) bighead, grass and silver carp have all established reproducing populations in several major rivers in the United States; and

WHEREAS, “the continued captures of adult black carp in... the Mississippi River Basin provide strong evidence that the species is reproducing and already firmly established” in the United States (Nico et al. 2005); and

WHEREAS, bighead carp, black carp, grass carp and silver carp have been reported from 23, 4, 45, and 15 states, respectively; and

WHEREAS, scientific risk modeling based on climate match predicts the potential geographic range of Asian carp to include most of the United States and much of North America (Mandrak and Cudmore 2004; Nico et al. 2005; Cudmore and Mandrak 2011); and

WHEREAS, Asian carp have become established and thrive in the altered conditions of river ecosystems in the interior of the United States; and

WHEREAS, bighead carp and silver carp directly compete with native planktivorous fishes and the abundance and condition of native fishes have decreased in portions of the Mississippi River Basin following the establishment of bighead and silver carp (Irons et al. 2007, Phelps et al. *unpublished data*); and

WHEREAS, native, large river fishes such as the paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*) have struggled in these disturbed waters and introduced Asian carp have become established and thrive in the altered habitats of the Mississippi River System; and

WHEREAS, it is unknown whether Asian carp will become further established in Louisiana’s coastal marsh nursery for shrimps, crabs, and over a hundred species of fishes, and if they do, they could potentially decimate fisheries for these species; and

WHEREAS, silver carp pose a threat to human safety due to their jumping behavior when startled and have caused numerous personal injuries and property damage to recreational boaters and fishers (Kolar et al. 2007); and

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WHEREAS, fishing, hunting, boating, and other wildlife-associated recreation may be adversely affected by feral populations of bighead and silver carp (Kolar et al. 2007); and

WHEREAS, the life history traits of Asian carp indicate that these four species have a high probability of causing ecological and economic effects where populations become established (Mandrak and Cudmore 2004, Kolar et al. 2007; Nico et al. 2005) and in some locations of the Mississippi River Basin, such effects have occurred; and

WHEREAS, using risk assessment methods described by the Risk Assessment and Management Committee (1996), the US Geological Survey concluded that the organism risk potentials for bighead, black, and silver carp were all high meaning that these fish present an unacceptable risk (Kolar et al. 2007; Nico et al. 2005); and

WHEREAS, the US Fish and Wildlife Service added all forms of live bighead, black and silver carp to the list of injurious wildlife under the Lacey Act, prohibiting their importation and interstate transport except for limited permitted purposes; and

WHEREAS, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, composed of 13 federal agencies, organized an Asian Carp Working Group to develop a comprehensive national Asian Carp management and control plan; and

WHEREAS, the Asian Carp Working Group developed a plan for the management and control of Asian carp, (Conover et al.); and

WHEREAS, on page 82 of the plan it states; “However, harvest enhancement is the only method likely to result in substantial lowering of Asian carp populations over the near term. Likewise, over the long term enhanced harvest is likely to be an important component of an integrated management approach to extirpate or reduce and maintain populations of Asian carps at levels of insignificant effect. It is the opinion of this Working Group that harvest enhancement should be a primary tool in the control of Asian carps”; and

WHEREAS, Asian carps are both tasty and nutritious, and are sometimes overharvested in their native China, this approach appears practical; and

WHEREAS, harvest enhancement would not require a great expenditure of money, and would result in a beneficial use of a resource presently considered harmful.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the U.S. government, and the affected states, (especially the State of Louisiana), do whatever is necessary to enhance harvest of Asian carp, including, but not limited to: public relations programs promoting consumption of Asian carp; subsidy of companies processing Asian carp for market; promotion of new markets; review of any regulations hampering commercial harvest of Asian carp; increase in the number of commercial fishers through assistance in startup costs; and research and development on more effective harvest gear, with subsequent dissemination of the results to commercial fishers.

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Literature Citations

Conover, G., R. Simmonds, and M. Wahlen, editors. 2007. Management and control plan for bighead, black, grass, and silver carps in the United States. Asian Carp Working Group, Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, Washington, D. C. 223 pp.

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Irons, S.S., G.G. Sass, M.A. McClelland, and J.D. Stafford. 2007. Reduced condition factor of two native fish species coincident with invasion of non-native Asian carps in the Illinois River, U.S.A. Is this evidence for competition and reduced fitness? *Journal of Fish Biology* 71:258-273.

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Nico, L.G., J.D. Williams, and H.L. Jelks. 2005. Black carp: biological synopsis and risk assessment of an introduced fish. American Fisheries Society, Special Publication 32. Bethesda, Maryland.

Phelps, Q.E., J.W. Crites, D.P. Herzog, J. Ridings, R.A. Hrabik, D. Glover, S.J. Tripp, and J.E. Garvey. Draft Manuscript. Interactions between non-native and native large river planktivores. 7pp.

Risk Assessment and Management Committee. 1996. Generic nonindigenous aquatic organisms risk analysis review process (for estimating risk associated with the introduction of nonindigenous aquatic organisms and how to manage for that risk). Report to the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 32 pp.

Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in Convention Assembled, February 24, 2013 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

The Louisiana Wildlife Federation is a statewide conservation education and advocacy organization with more than 8,500 members and 25 affiliate groups. Established in 1940, it is affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation and represents a broad constituency of conservationists including hunters, fishers, campers, birders, boaters, and other outdoor enthusiasts.