

Jennifer Davis

University of Illinois at Springfield

Undergraduate Student

Asian Carp- The Invasive Flying Fish

Asian Carp have been a hot topic for the last several years due to their intense impacts to Illinois freshwater systems and aquatic species. Four species of carp were initially brought to the United States from Asia and Europe to help clean algae, parasites, and weeds out of water and lagoon systems. But these flying fish are now an invasive species. They have outcompeted many native fish in Illinois and Mississippi river systems, impacting aquatic systems from Minnesota to Louisiana and Ohio to South Dakota. The carp feed on everything: plankton, plants, mussels, shad, buffalo, bass, catfish, and even other Asian carp. Carp can also lower the water quality of an aquatic ecosystem, which can cause many species to die or move habitats.

Not only do the carp cause problems for aquatic ecology and local biodiversity, they also pose hazards to humans and cause economic problems, too. If the carp get into the Great Lakes, this could be detrimental to the fishing, sport fishing industries, and many other industries that depend on the freshwater lakes. To prevent this potential disaster, many organizations throughout the Midwest are trying to eradicate these invasive fish from local aquatic systems. Some businesses are now using carp for fishing bait, pet treats, or human consumption. State agencies and local organizations sponsor fishing tournaments every year to help eradicate these Asian carp. This poster will highlight information from my semester-long project researching the history, ecological and economic impacts, and possible solutions to the current Asian Carp invasion in Illinois waterways.