



**TARGET HUNGER NOW!** is one of the largest humanitarian efforts undertaken by the State of Illinois. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Feeding Illinois and our corporate partners are coordinating this innovative program to encourage hunters and anglers to donate deer and Asian carp for processing into healthy, ready-to-serve meals. This effort feeds communities, lessens the Asian carp threat to our waterways, protects the Great Lakes, Illinois sport fishing industry and protects and creates jobs including Illinois' \$15 billion waterway shipping industry.

## **ERADICATE ASIAN CARP**

Nationally and statewide, we are facing major challenges with many invasive species, including Asian carp. The ultimate goal of federal and state officials of the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee is to completely eradicate this non-native fish and prevent them from establishing a population in the Great Lakes. While many valuable markets are being created for Asian carp, Target Hunger Now! is the best path for showcasing the use of this fish. This program will help by increasing the harvesting, processing, and distribution of millions of pounds of protein-rich fish to feed our Illinois citizens and its success will open doors to new market and commercialization possibilities.

## **THE EVENT**

On January 26, 2012, The Illinois DNR and Louisiana chef Philippe Parola will again use Asian carp to prepare quality, easy to make meals for nearly 200 children and adults at South Side Mission in Peoria. Asian carp is a popular fish in European and Asian markets, but its reputation in the United States is far less than favorable because of its unfortunate name. Unlike native, bottom-feeding carp, Asian carp is a clean fish that feeds on plankton and algae in the upper water columns of rivers. This event aims to change that reputation by demonstrating that Asian carp can easily be used to make healthy and tasty meals for everyone.

The next Target Hunger Now! event serving Asian carp meals will be on **January 26, 2012, from Noon – 2 p.m. at South Side Mission, 1127 S. Laramie, Peoria, IL.**

## **WHY ASIAN CARP?**

Like most fish, Asian carp is rich in protein. According to Feeding America, protein is the single most expensive food source to provide to the less fortunate. Because it is so expensive, it also means that protein is the food source most lacking in diets of those who are in most need. In March of 2011, the Illinois Department of Public Health approved Asian carp harvested from the Mississippi and lower Illinois Rivers for human consumption.

## **ENSURE FOOD SECURITY**

Food insecurity means a child or adult doesn't know from where their next meal will come. The recent economic downturn has deeply impacted Illinois, and food insecurity is an immediate and increasing problem. Over 1.6 million individuals participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in February 2011, an increase of 14 percent from 2010. Nearly a half-million Illinois children are in households facing food insecurity, and almost 2 million Illinois children were enrolled in the National School Lunch Program in the 2010-11 school year. There has never been a more important time for innovative solutions and leadership for solving the problems facing our State.

Through Target Hunger Now! as much as 40,000 pounds of fish can be processed daily. This year, the effort will also distribute 100,000 pounds of venison throughout the Illinois food bank system. This equates to approximately 3.3 million protein-rich meals available free to those who are facing hunger in our communities.

As our food banks face major reductions in usable commodity food products, the introduction of a healthy, new food supply is more important than ever to our food distribution systems and those who need healthy, protein-rich Asian carp the most.

## **PROTECT ILLINOIS INDUSTRIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Illinois' \$15 billion-dollar shipping industry has been threatened through ongoing legal actions by neighboring Great Lakes states in an attempt to close Chicago's navigation locks. Using Asian carp as a healthy food source for food banks is a major step towards eradication of the fish in Illinois waters and protects the waterway shipping industry from forced closures of our locks and dam systems. The Asian carp threat also continues to have a negative impact on Illinois' commercial and sport fishing industries and tourism and leads to revenue and job loss. Asian carp are voracious eaters consuming more than 40 percent of their body weight per day in plankton. They compete with our native fish species for food and can quickly overtake native populations of fish in our rivers, lakes and streams. The planned overfishing program of Asian carp will help protect these multi-billion dollar industries in Illinois and the Great Lakes while protecting revenues and ensuring jobs. The overfishing program for Asian carp will also provide an abundance of fish available to feed our fellow Illinoisans.

## **CREATE JOBS**

Secured program funding will increase processing of both venison and Asian carp. Many small Illinois businesses, including meat and fish processing plants and large commercial fishing crews, will add jobs to meet the increased demand for processed venison and Asian carp. The success of Target Hunger Now! will create a demand for Asian carp and drive market opportunities that will create job opportunities in multiple industries.

With your help, IDNR and its partners can bring hungry citizens a steady supply of protein-rich venison and Asian carp while eradicating the Asian carp threat, preserving our commercial shipping and sport fishing industries, and protecting and creating jobs. This is the time for us all to take aim and **Target Hunger Now!**