



Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee

City of Chicago

Illinois Department of
Natural Resources

Metropolitan Water
Reclamation District

U.S. Army Corps of
Engineers

U.S. Coast Guard

U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency

U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Service

U.S. Geological Survey

Great Lakes Fishery
Commission

Illinois Environmental
Protection Agency

Indiana Department of
Natural Resources

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Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee Announces Three-Month Monitoring and Sampling Plan

The Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (RCC) is announcing its latest monitoring and sampling plan to guide Asian carp control efforts in the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS).

“This sampling plan will provide us with important data needed to make future decisions,” said John Rogner, Assistant Director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. “Keeping Asian carp from establishing a population in Lake Michigan remains our ultimate goal and we think this new monitoring plan will help us achieve our objectives.”

“These new monitoring efforts will help us make the most strategic decisions for keeping Asian carp from becoming established in the Great Lakes,” said Charlie Wooley, Deputy Regional Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). “The new monitoring plan will provide the quantitative information necessary to determine the most successful control methods for Asian carp, if they are present in the area.”

To date, the Regional Coordinating Committee’s efforts have focused on monitoring and sampling the CAWS to determine whether positive hits of Asian carp environmental DNA (eDNA) found in multiple locations upstream of the electric barrier indicate the presence of Asian carp. Traditional sampling techniques including gillnetting and electrofishing did not yield the capture of any Asian carp in areas surveyed during the initial six week sampling period.

Based on the eDNA tests, the new sampling and monitoring plan will take those traditional fishing methods to the North Shore Channel where a three

day sampling effort using electrofishing gear and commercial fishing nets will be used in an attempt to locate Asian carp. The operation will require the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to close a portion of the North Shore Channel starting on Tuesday, May 11 and will reopen the morning of Friday, May 14. The area targeted for sampling extends ¼ mile south of Oakton Street- approximately five miles north to the Wilmette Pumping Station. The North Shore Channel is almost exclusively used by paddlers because of its shallow depths and not navigable to most commercial and recreational boats.

The new plan also calls for a rotenone sampling operation upstream of the electric barriers near the O'Brien Lock and Dam to determine whether- and if so, how many- Asian carp might exist in that location where positive eDNA samples have been taken.

The planned application and subsequent fish recovery will begin with waterway closure on Thursday, May 20 and last five to six days. The application will take place on the Little Calumet River approximately one mile downstream of T.J. O'Brien Lock and Dam, east of the I-94 overpass, and will cover a stretch of two miles downstream of the starting location. The waterway will be treated in one day, and the recovery phase of the operation will last between four to five days. During that time, the FWS, IDNR, and other participating agencies will aim to recover as many fish in the application area as possible to determine the abundance and type of fish present in the treated area. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will support this effort by modifying operations at T.J. O'Brien Lock and Dam as needed during the operation.

The toxicant will eradicate Asian carp and other fish in the canal, but does not present a risk to people or other wildlife when used properly.

During the application and recovery phases, the USCG will implement a safety zone to protect waterway users and workers conducting sampling operations in the vicinity of the O'Brien Lock. Access to the canal will be restricted for a period of five to seven days, meaning that boaters will not be able to transit the safety zone until sampling operations are completed and the safety zone is rescinded by the U.S. Coast Guard. Any safety zone notice for these sampling operations will be published in the federal register and will also be posted online at <http://www.uscg.fishbarrierinfo.com>.

The Monitoring Plan has several objectives with an overall goal of preventing Asian carp from establishing self-sustaining populations in the Great Lakes including:

- Determine the distribution and abundance of Asian carp in the CAWS, if they are present.
- Establish parameters of acceptable risk and determine our current risk level.
- Remove Asian carp in the CAWS to a level below what is considered an acceptable risk.
- Determine the leading edge of major Asian carp populations and reproduction.

Rotenone, a fish toxicant commonly used in fisheries management, was previously used on a six mile stretch of the Chicago Sanitary and Shipping Canal in December of 2009 while the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers shut down the Electric Barrier System for routine maintenance. That effort yielded one Bighead carp caught just above the Lockport Lock and Powerhouse approximately six miles downstream of the Electric barrier. No Asian carp have been found above the electric barrier to date.

Knowledge of the population size and location of possible Asian carp in CAWS is critical data that will inform biologists and decision makers on selecting and prioritizing appropriate actions to keep Asian carp from moving into Lake Michigan.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues to report eDNA results through the RCC's multi-agency <http://asiancarp.org> Web site.

The RCC includes representatives from the City of Chicago, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Great Lakes Fishery Commission, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

These partners are working to address the threat Asian carp pose to the Great Lakes through the development and implementation of the Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework. The Framework, which is guided by the latest scientific research, is expected to encompass more than two dozen short- and long-term actions and up to \$78.5 million in investments to combat the spread of Asian carp.

For up to date information about the efforts of the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee please see an updated version of the Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework now available at www.asiancarp.org.