

Asian carp in the Great Lakes: how high the risk?

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A binational report released by DFO stated that Asian carp could find hospitable conditions in all five of the Great Lakes if they gain a foothold. The report is based on a 16-month assessment of risk to the lakes from the invasive carp, which have infested the Mississippi Rivers and many of its tributaries. The threat is that carp will enter Lake Michigan through a Chicago-area waterway network. The analysis by U.S. and Canadian scientists says it could take as few as 10 male and female pairs to establish a population in the lakes if they find good spawning areas. It says more than 70 rivers across the Great Lakes could serve that purpose. The report suggests that the major ecological consequence resulting from the establishment and spread of Asian carp into the Great Lakes would likely be an overall decline in certain native fish species, including some commercially and recreationally important ones. Such declines could occur because Asian carp would compete with prey fish that primarily eat plankton. This could lead to reduced growth rates and declines in abundance of prey fish species, and thus predatory fish would also likely decline.

TAGS: sustainable, fish, fisheries, fishing, Asian carp, Great Lakes