



# Fend off Flying Fish

*Protect yourself, your passengers  
and your equipment from jumping Asian carp*

Bighead and silver carp (commonly referred to as Asian carp) are non-native fish invading and causing harm to lakes and rivers in the Mississippi River and Great Lakes regions. Because silver (and sometimes bighead) carp jump when disturbed by boat motors, they can also harm people who use these waterways. These “flying fish,” which may weigh 20 pounds or more, can pack a real wallop if they make contact with you or one of your passengers. Factor in the speed at which boats can travel, and a fish-human collision could be quite serious.



**Help ensure a safe outing by following these guidelines:**

- \* **Use basic safe-boating practices.** Always wear a life jacket, tell someone where you are going and when you’ll be back, and carry a cell phone or radio to call for help.
- \* **Protect the throttle mechanism.** If the throttle is hit by a jumping carp, your boat may accelerate rapidly. Rapid acceleration could throw you or your passengers from the boat or even cause the boat to crash.
- \* **Clip the “kill” switch to your clothing.** This will prevent the boat from continuing its progression if you get knocked out of or thrown from the boat.
- \* **Avoid following other boats at high speeds.** This will decrease your chances of being hit by fish jumping in response to the passing of other boats.
- \* **Use caution when traveling at low speeds** such as when leaving a boat ramp or dock, or when operating in idle. The vibration and/or noise from your motor may cause nearby Asian carp to jump. Because you’re moving slowly and thus staying in the vicinity, your chances of being hit by a jumping carp are high.
- \* **Protect your passengers.** Have passengers sit in the middle of the boat, hold small children, and install a net or Plexiglas™ shield to deflect jumping carp.

- \* **Avoid water skiing, tubing, and jet skiing in infested waters.**
- \* **Protect your equipment.** Store or mount equipment such as radios, depth finders, and fishing poles where fish jumping across or landing in the boat won't damage them (for example, behind the console, in a storage locker, or below the gunwales).
- \* **If you're surrounded by jumping carp,** bring the boat to a complete stop. Once the carp stop jumping, bang on the bottom of the boat to scare the fish away, and then boat slowly out of the area.



A boat rigged with a protective net and Plexiglas™ shield to protect the operator.



Bighead Carp



Silver Carp

### For more information

about bighead and silver carp or other invasive species,  
contact Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant at 217-333-6444 or visit  
[www.iiseagrant.org/AsianCarp](http://www.iiseagrant.org/AsianCarp)

Written by Patrice Charlebois and Kristin TePas.

Asian carp graphic by David Brenner.

Jumping carp photo by Nerissa Michaels, Illinois Natural History Survey, Illinois River Biological Station.

Protective rigging photo by Thad Cook, Illinois Natural History Survey, Illinois River Biological Station.

Big head and silver carp photos by David Riecks, UIUC/IL-IN Sea Grant.

Guidelines compiled from recommendations provided by Duane Chapman (USGS), Greg Sass (INHS/INRS/University of Illinois), Greg Conover (USFWS) and John Chick (INHS/INRS/University of Illinois).

This publication is jointly published by Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant and the Illinois Natural History Survey.

The Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant College Program is one of 32 National Sea Grant College Programs. Created by Congress in 1966. Sea Grant combines university, government, business and industry expertise to address coastal and Great Lakes needs. Funding is provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, the University of Illinois and Purdue University.