

## Asian Carp and the St. Croix



Black, Grass, Silver, & Bighead Carp

There are four species of Asian carp we're concerned about.

- Grass carp have been around for a number of years in low numbers; they consume large quantities of aquatic vegetation, so are not a big issue for the St. Croix.
- Black carp have not been identified north of southern Iowa.
- We're focused on the other two species: bighead carp and silver carp (this latter species is the one that is famous for jumping out of the water and striking people on boats)-live fish and DNA samples tell us they are here.

## GOVERNOR DAYTON'S ACTION PLAN

### Stop the Spread of Asian Carp Into Minnesota Waters

September 12, 2011

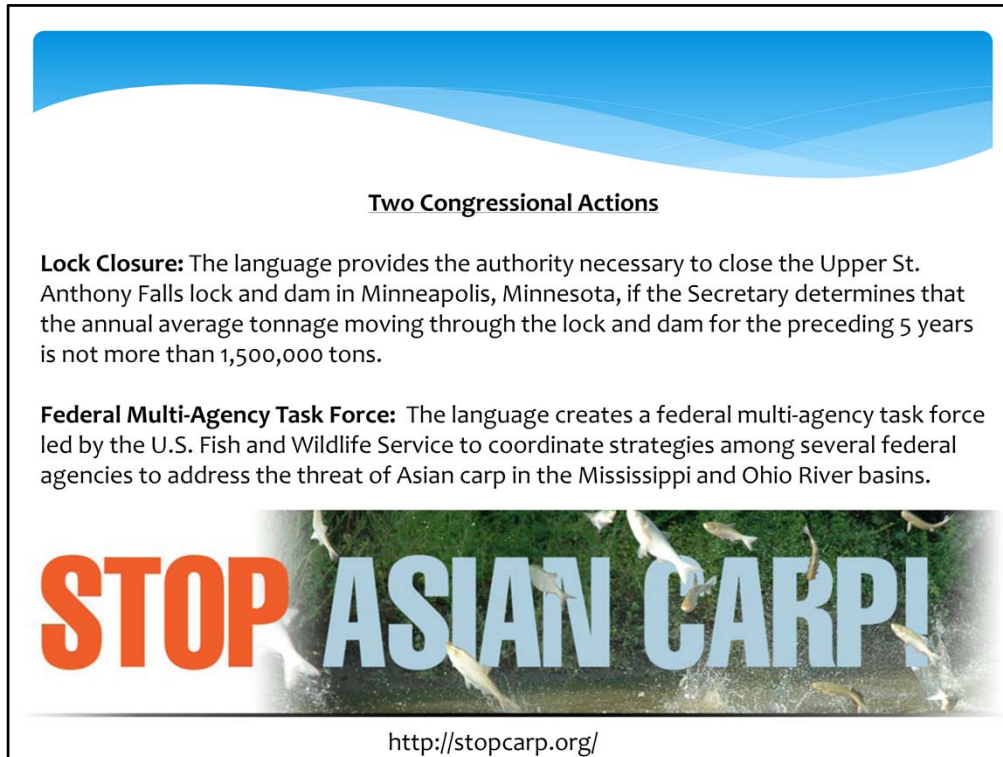
#### THE ACTIONS

1. Support a cooperative approach among state and federal agencies to limit the spread of Asian carp in Minnesota and its border waters;
2. Recognize that the Asian carp invasion is an urgent issue requiring immediate action and work together to obtain necessary funding and authority to support efforts to limit the spread of Asian carp in Minnesota and its border waters;
3. Formally charter a multi-organizational Asian Carp Task Force to facilitate strategic discussions, conduct collaborative problem solving, and provide recommendations to state and federal agencies on how to limit the spread of Asian carp into Minnesota;
4. Support immediate congressional action to give the Army Corps of Engineers emergency authority to close the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock, and Lock and Dam #1, if Asian carp are detected nearby;
5. Support immediate congressional action to fund a feasibility study that examines the economic, ecological, recreational, legal, and operational impacts of making Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock a permanent fish barrier; and
6. Support long-term actions recommended by the ad hoc Asian Carp Task Force:
  - a. Enhance information on Asian carp population size and movements;
  - b. Evaluate and if feasible install deterrent barriers at strategic locations to slow Asian carp movement, such as a "bubble barrier" at the mouth of the St Croix River;
  - c. Accelerate research on fish behavior control and removal technologies;
  - d. Improve habitat for native species.
7. Continue to be involved in future discussions addressing the threat of Asian carp in Minnesota.

SCRA has also participated in meetings of the Asian Carp Task Force, which is chaired by the NPS & MN DNR. It has focused on;

- science-based information about the current distribution of Asian carp,
- potential barrier sites, and
- development of an Asian Carp Action Plan for use by state and federal agencies.

The St. Croix has an open connection to the Mississippi River. The size of the opening and the volume of water passing through make construction of a barrier there virtually impossible.



**Two Congressional Actions**

**Lock Closure:** The language provides the authority necessary to close the Upper St. Anthony Falls lock and dam in Minneapolis, Minnesota, if the Secretary determines that the annual average tonnage moving through the lock and dam for the preceding 5 years is not more than 1,500,000 tons.

**Federal Multi-Agency Task Force:** The language creates a federal multi-agency task force led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to coordinate strategies among several federal agencies to address the threat of Asian carp in the Mississippi and Ohio River basins.

**STOP ASIAN CARP!**

<http://stopcarp.org/>

A number of environmental nonprofits in Minnesota have formed the Stop Carp Coalition, and the St. Croix River Association is a member. The group has supported barrier work on the Mississippi at Keokuk, Iowa, and near Winona, Minnesota.

The Coalition has focused a lot of its energy on a potential barrier in Minneapolis, which would not help the St. Croix. The coalition also has been working on congressional help. The House and Senate Water Resources passed the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) that includes provisions to fight the spread of Asian Carp. It appears the conference committee is moving quickly.

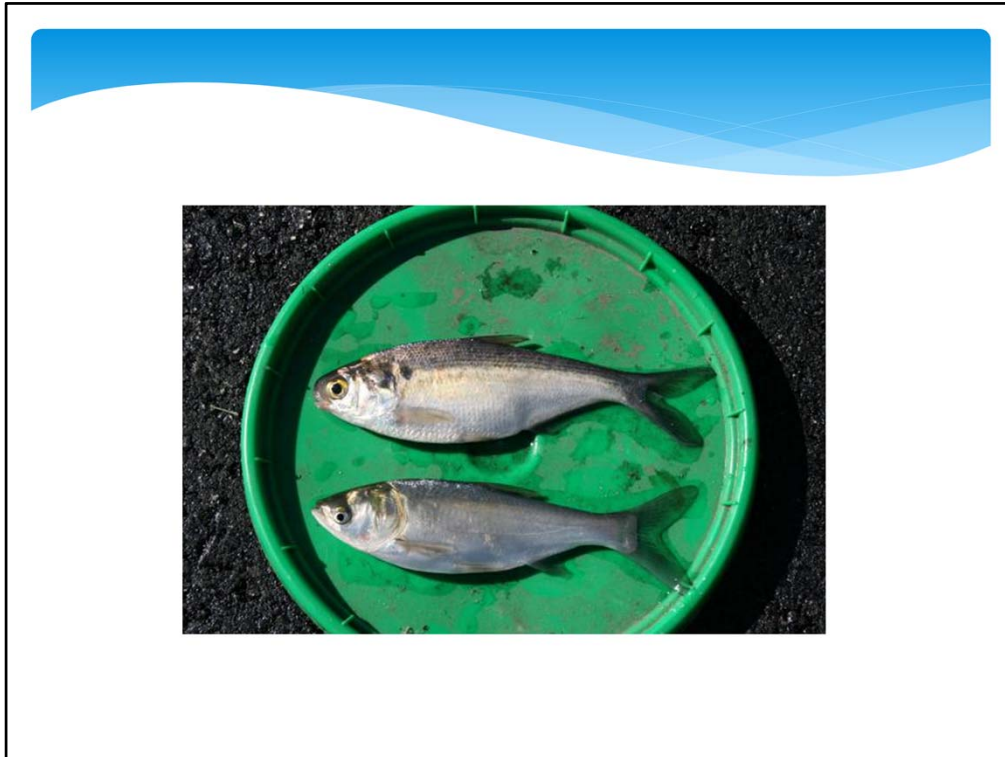
There is also a collective ask for President Obama to provide regional coordination, agency prioritization and sufficient funding to keep Asian carp out of Minnesota

There is still time...

To Protect Our River

**Asian Carp and the St. Croix River**  
*Public Forum*

What else has SCRA done? While Minnesota DNR has been very active on Asian carp issues, Wisconsin DNR has been less involved. SCRA co-sponsored a Wisconsin Asian carp summit with River Alliance of WI, in La Crosse to help raise awareness in Wisconsin.




While silver carp can jump up to 10 feet in the air, they can't come close to leaping the 65-foot dam at St. Croix Falls. The only way they could infest the upper river is if people plant them. The spread of zebra mussels and other invasives are prime examples of humans spreading unwanted species far and wide. Young Asian carp look a lot like fathead minnows, and there is concern anglers' bait buckets could be a vector to moving carp into the upper river.

SCRA hired a law student to research existing state laws and rules concerning bait sales and transport. This showed both states have, for the most part, adequate laws and rules in place. Wisconsin allows anglers to catch and use live bait from border waters (including the St. Croix) and transport it by boat along the border waters. This could, theoretically, allow someone to transport live bait caught on the Lower St. Croix around the St. Croix Falls dam in their trailered boat. Though not likely to happen often, Wisconsin should be encouraged to close that loophole.

Minnesota prohibits transport of live bait from infested waters to uninfested waters. Infested waters are listed in state rule, which are cumbersome and time-consuming to amend. Minnesota should be encouraged to develop a quicker method to designate an infested water body.

While the existing rules are pretty good in both states, public compliance remains an issue. SCRA has and will continue to support effective public education campaigns to reduce the risk of accidental introduction of invasive species in the upper river.



### **Other Strategies to Slow the spread of Asian carp**

- Install an experimental deterrent technology in Lock & Dam #19 at Keokuk, Iowa, a high dam where they could be installed in the lock chamber.
- Research and implement safe methods to eradicate Asian carp from Minnesota's water such as "bio-bullets" that are targeted to kill specific species.

#### Mississippi River Specific Protections

- The Minnesota Legislature approved funding to install barriers at Locks #1 and #2 and the DNR is gearing up to move forward with the project, to protect the Mississippi.
- Modify lock operations in the Twin Cities to reduce locking through by recreational traffic. Effort is underway to direct the Army Corps of Engineers to limit lockages to certain times of day. The National Park Service, Friends of the Mississippi River, Skipper Line and others have eliminated lockages from their river recreation programs on a voluntary basis.

Install an experimental deterrent technology in Lock & Dam #19 at Keokuk, Iowa, a high dam where they could be installed in the lock chamber. Presently, Asian carp occur in far greater numbers downstream of Lock & Dam #19, and so far Black Carp have not been found upstream of the lock.



**Two questions for the Advisory Committee:**

1. What could SCRA do to boost Wisconsin DNR's involvement in Asian carp issues on the St. Croix River? Wisconsin DNR recently won a long fight to remove a dam that was a barrier to native fish migration in the eastern part of the state, and some in the agency fear supporting barriers elsewhere could be seen as inconsistent. Also, Wisconsin is much more focused on the Asian carp threat to Lake Michigan than to the rivers on its western border.
2. Should SCRA pursue a ban on live bait upriver of the St. Croix Falls dam? This may be the only effective way to ensure a careless angler doesn't introduce Asian carp to the upper river. But banning live bait could be controversial and politically risky. Would it be unwise for SCRA to take the lead on such a volatile issue?