

DEBBIE DINGELL

12TH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

116 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-4071

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
RANKING MEMBER  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATION

HOUSE COMMITTEE  
ON THE BUDGET

# Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

DISTRICT OFFICES:

19855 WEST OUTER DRIVE  
SUITE 103-E  
DEARBORN, MI 48124  
(313) 278-2936

301 WEST MICHIGAN AVENUE  
SUITE 400  
YPSILANTI, MI 48197  
(734) 481-1100

WEBSITE: DEBBIEDINGELL.HOUSE.GOV

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The Honorable Louie Gohmert  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations  
House Natural Resources Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Gohmert:

This letter is to respectfully request an oversight hearing of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations to examine the economic and ecological impacts of Asian carp—bighead, black, grass, and silver—on the Great Lakes. Asian carp is an invasive species that threatens the health and vitality of the Great Lakes recreational fishing economy, as well their ecosystems and native fish populations.

The Great Lakes recreational and commercial fishing industries generate \$4.5 billion annually in economic activity.<sup>1</sup> With 250 species of fish, they are a prime destination for recreational anglers.<sup>2</sup> However, Asian carp pose serious threats to the stability of the fishing industries should they become established in the Great Lakes.

Asian carp are non-native fish to North America with no natural predators in our waters. They are known for their insatiable appetites consuming up to 20 percent of their body weight per day and reaching weights of up to 110 pounds.<sup>3</sup> One of the staples of the Asian carp diet is plankton, which is the foundation of the aquatic food chain.<sup>4</sup> Most native great lakes fish feed on plankton during their early life stages; Asian carp can out-compete them for food.<sup>5</sup> This can lead to reduced native fish populations, some of which serve as prey to sportfish, and severely affect the region's fishing economies.

<sup>1</sup> [http://nyis.info/?action=invasive\\_detail&id=29](http://nyis.info/?action=invasive_detail&id=29)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.glerl.noaa.gov/pr/ourlakes/economy.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/miss/learn/nature/ascarpover.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nwf.org/Wildlife/Threats-to-Wildlife/Invasive-Species/Asian-Carp.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> [http://nyis.info/?action=invasive\\_detail&id=29](http://nyis.info/?action=invasive_detail&id=29)

Even more alarming, Asian carp are rapidly advancing toward the Great Lakes. A bighead carp was captured in Lake Calumet, only 6 miles away from Lake Michigan.<sup>6</sup> Asian carp are virtually impossible to eliminate once they have established themselves in a new habitat. They are fast breeders and a single female can lay over a million eggs a year.<sup>7</sup> The Great Lakes have suitable breeding conditions and contain no natural predators, which makes for ideal ecosystems for the Asian carp.

Asian carp present a considerable danger to people, boats, and other property. When startled and scared by boat engines, Silver carp can jump as high 10 feet out of the water. With nearly 1 million boaters operating their vessels on the Great Lakes, they are at great risk for bodily injury or equipment damage.<sup>8</sup> Should Asian carp enter the Great Lakes, it could have a significant and adverse impact on the region's recreational fishing economy.

Oversight on this issue is overdue. An improved understanding of the economic and ecological impacts of the Asian carp on the Great Lakes will help us better address these issues and guide us in our efforts to protect the region from this invasive species.

Should you have any questions, please contact Vic Edgerton of the House Natural Resources Committee Democratic staff at 202-225-6065.

Sincerely,  


Debbie Dingell  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nwf.org/News-and-Magazines/Media-Center/News-by-Topic/Wildlife/2010/06-23-10-Asian-Carp-Captured-Near-Lake-Michigan.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> <https://uwaterloo.ca/news/news/tiny-number-asian-carp-could-be-big-problem-great-lakes>

<sup>8</sup> <http://glc.org/files/docs/2007-rec-boating-economic-punch.pdf>