

Jumping silver carp discovered in Wisconsin waters

By [Dan Egan](#) of the *Journal Sentinel*

Posted: Dec. 2, 2008

The notorious jumping silver carp has made its way into Wisconsin.

The super-sized cousin to the common carp was discovered late last week in Wisconsin waters of the Mississippi River. It is the first time silver carp, one of four species of Asian carp, have been confirmed in the state, according to the state Department of Natural Resources.

The imported fish have been steadily making their way north in the Mississippi River basin since they escaped containment in Arkansas more than three decades ago. Biologists figured it was only a matter of time until the filter-feeding fish that can grow to 60 pounds made it this far north.

Silver carp are trouble for recreational boaters because of their penchant for leaping out of the water. Also, they feast on the bottom of the food chain, and that can have a big impact on native fish that directly or indirectly rely on the same food.

"A common question is to ask what will be the impact of the Asian carp to the river that we love," DNR's Ron Benjamin said in a news release. "The short answer today is it clearly isn't good."

This is the first time they have been found north of Clinton, Iowa - a huge jump in their range. It also means the Wisconsin River could be exposed to the fish, and that could open the door to infestations in inland lakes across the state.

The bigger worry is that the fish will make the jump into the Great Lakes via the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, though that has yet to happen. An electric fish barrier is all that stands between the Asian carp and Lake Michigan. A new, more robust barrier has been built, but the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has yet to permanently turn it on out of safety concerns for boaters.

The Mississippi silver carp was caught in a commercial fishing net near La Crosse. The catch included two bighead carp.

State biologists don't know how many of the fish are in the river and whether they will be able to thrive this far north, but fish experts have said Asian carp should do just fine in Wisconsin waters.