

**Invader  
Alert!**






Dangerous aliens are on the loose in the U.S.! These **invaders** can grow to be 4 feet long. They can weigh over 100 pounds. They have already invaded several rivers. And they are on the move!

These aliens are not space creatures. They are fish called Asian carp. And they are causing big problems in some of our nation's waterways.



An Asian carp's length can equal the height of an average 8-year-old.





Asian carp eat algae. Algae are tiny plants that grow in the water.

## Carp Explosion

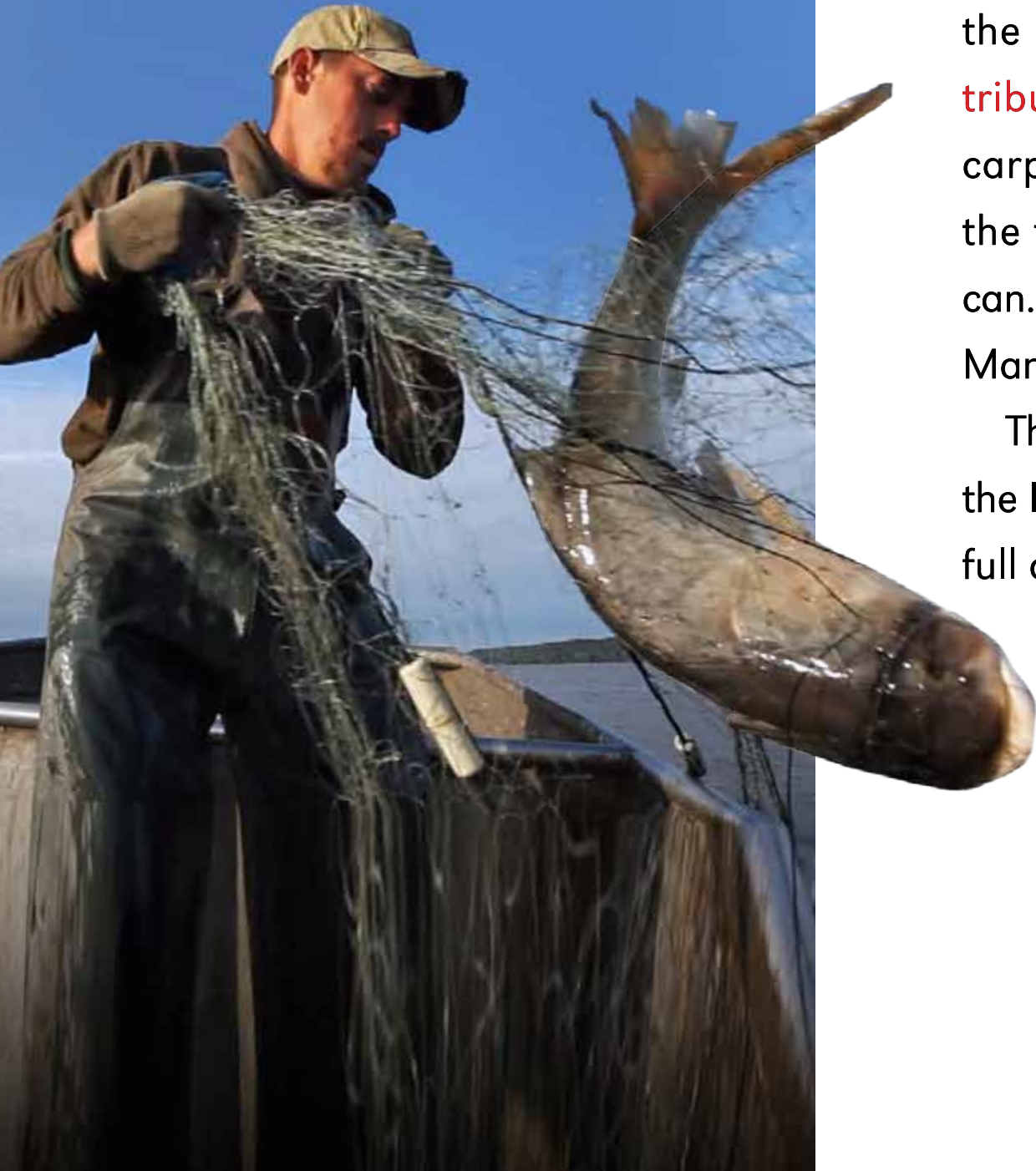
Why are the carp a problem? Asian carp are not **native** to the U.S. They were brought here from Asia to remove algae from ponds in the southern U.S. But flooding caused the ponds to overflow. Some carp ended up in the Mississippi River.



These young Asian carp recently hatched. An Asian carp can lay up to 1 million eggs in its lifetime.

In the U.S., these fish have no natural predators. That means no other animals want to eat them. So the carp population grew quickly.

A fisherman catches an Asian carp in Anderson Lake, near the Illinois River.



## Big Eaters

Asian carp are already in the Mississippi River and its **tributaries**. In some spots, the carp are taking over. They eat the food before the native fish can. That leaves less for local fish. Many of them are going hungry.

The problem is especially bad in the Illinois River. This river is now full of carp. The number of native fish, like bigmouth buffalo and shad, has dropped.


Those fish are getting skinnier too. Scientists think the carp are the **root of the problem**.



# On the Move

The red dots show the main spots in the U.S. where Asian carp are found. They are getting closer to the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes are the biggest freshwater **ecosystem** in the world.



A wide-angle photograph of Lake Michigan in Chicago. The water is a greenish-blue, and the sky is a clear, pale blue. In the foreground, a white motorboat with a black canopy is moving towards the right, leaving a white wake. The middle ground is filled with hundreds of sailboats of various sizes, mostly white, anchored in the water. In the background, the Chicago skyline is visible, featuring several prominent skyscrapers like the Willis Tower. The overall scene is a busy, scenic view of the city's waterfront.

Scientists worry that the carp will spread to the Great Lakes. Many people make a living by fishing in the lakes. If native fish die out, the local fishing **industry** could be destroyed.

Another concern is that leaping carp could scare away visitors to the lakes.

The Great Lakes are also connected to many other waterways. If carp reach the Great Lakes, they can get to

dozens more lakes and rivers.

Experts are working to prevent this. They are building electric underwater fences to keep the carp out of the Great Lakes. They hope to stop the invasion before it's too late.

So far, Lake Michigan is carp-free. If the carp make it here, they can easily move into Lake Huron and other waterways.