

## Black carp

### *Mylopharyngodon piceus*

#### Description

Imported for snail control in catfish farms in the early 1970s; escaped in Missouri in 1994 when holding ponds flooded. Still used by fish farmers to control snails that host a catfish parasite.

#### Identification

Up to 60 inches, 150 pounds; blackish brown to dark olive with a white belly, blackish grey fins; broad, blunt head, slightly downturned mouth, no barbels; no keel; large "chain-link" scales.

#### Habitat

Native to eastern Asia. Found in large rivers, lakes and ponds.

#### Reproduction

Mature at 6-11 years of age and at that time begin to reproduce annually. Females are capable of producing 129,000 to 1.18 million eggs each year. Young feed on zooplankton and change to mollusks, crustaceans, aquatic insects and fish eggs as they mature. They have





powerful teeth and can eat 3-4 lbs of mussels per day.

### **Impact**

Black carp stay near or on the bottom and feed heavily on snails and mussels, posing a risk to native mollusks, many of which are endangered or threatened. Their life span exceeds 15 years and they can eat 3-4 pounds of mussels a day.

### **Similar**

Closely resembles the grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) in which both are similar in body shape, size and placement of fins.

### **Credits**

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