



Low risk / impact in all
regions of the Okanagan

Widespread and of concern
in specific situations.

AKA: German carp, European carp

DESCRIPTION

- Small eyes and thick lips with barbells at each corner of the forward-protruding mouth
- Large scales and strongly serrated spines on their fins
- Large, deep body varying in colour from silver to olive-green, brass or grey on the back and sides
- Belly is yellowish and the lower fins are orange-red
- Single dorsal spine
- Cheek and gill covers are partially scaled
- Adults can grow 30.5 cm - 63.5 cm long, and may weigh up to 27 kg

Common Carp are large omnivorous freshwater fish. Carp are a food source in many cultures, and also are used as ornamental fish. For centuries, carp were used to stock fish hatcheries. Wild Common Carp are typically slimmer than domesticated forms; with body length about four times body height. Common Carp can grow to very large sizes if given adequate space and nutrients. As schooling fish, they prefer to be in groups of five or more. They spawn from late spring to early summer in repeated occasions.



BCFishn.com

Common Carp

LOOK-A-LIKE

Common Carp can be confused with **Grass Carp** (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) because of its larger size and scales. However, Grass Carp do not have a sucker-like mouth and do not have barbells like Common Carp do. The dorsal fin of a Grass Carp is smaller than that of a Common Carp. Lastly, Common Carp are a dark, more brown color while Grass Carp are usually silvery-white.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Grass Carp

HABITAT

Their native range includes Europe and Asia, although now they are considered an invasive species in most continents and some 59 countries. They were first noted in the Okanagan in 1912 and have been established ever since. Common Carp thrive in warm, shallow lakes and rivers that contain an abundance of aquatic vegetation, their primary food. They adapt to a variety of conditions, tolerating all types of bottoms and water clarity ranging from clear to murky. Although they can live in a wide range of temperatures, the ideal temperature is 23° to 30° C with spawning beginning at 17° to 18° C. Carp can easily survive winter in a frozen-over pond, as long as free water remains below the ice. Carp are also able to tolerate water with very low oxygen levels by gulping air at the surface.



IMPACT AND RISKS

- Common Carp are one of the most damaging aquatic invasive species due to its wide distribution and severe impacts in shallow lakes and wetlands.
- Their feeding disrupts shallowly rooted plants, muddying the water and stirring up sediment. This restricts sunlight, stunting the growth of aquatic plants. Species that rely on those plants for food and cover suffer.
- The muddying of water decreases the clarity, which makes waterways unattractive, destroys habitat, reduces the number of aquatic plants, and can make the water unsuitable for swimming or drinking.
- Common Carp release phosphorus that increases algae abundance.
- Common Carp can interbreed with the common Goldfish (*Carassius auratus*).



PREVENTION AND MITIGATION

- Avoid transporting young and adult carp between lakes while fishing, or during other recreational activities. Movement of live fish is prohibited in BC.
- Do not release aquarium fish into the wild.
- Properly Clean, Drain, Dry your boat and equipment before entering a new water body.
 - **CLEAN** off all plant parts, animals, and mud from boat and equipment (e.g. boots, waders, fishing gear). Use a power wash station if available
 - **DRAIN** onto land all items that can hold water (e.g. buckets, wells, bilge, and ballast)
 - **DRY** all items completely before launching into another body of water
- Report Common Carp, or any other invasive species via the Report Invasives phone app, that is available from the provincial website: www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species

Project funding and support provided by:

