



Australian Government  
Fisheries Research and  
Development Corporation



## NATIONAL CARP CONTROL PLAN RESTORING NATIVE BIODIVERSITY

### The Carp Problem - The Facts

#### FAST FACTS

The scientific name for  
carp is *Cyprinus carpio*

80%

Carp make up 80% of  
the total weight, or  
biomass, of fish in many  
Australian waterways

Carp aren't native  
to Australia

CARP ARE FOUND  
ALL OVER AUSTRALIA,  
EXCEPT THE NORTHERN  
TERRITORY



Carp eat almost  
anything (but rarely  
fish), grow quickly,  
mature early and  
produce millions  
of eggs



Carp are not closely related to Australian native species

#### Carp – What are they?

European Carp, or *Cyprinus carpio*, is an introduced fish species, meaning it is not native to Australia. Carp come from the genus *Cyprinus*, which contains other fish species such as goldfish and roach. There are no native cyprinids in Australia. The main feature that distinguish carp from other fish is their two pairs of fleshy whiskers, known as barbels, either side of the mouth which they use to find food.

Carp are referred to by many different names including: Common Carp, koi, mirror carp and leather carp. However, they are all referring to the same species (*Cyprinus carpio*).

Carp feed opportunistically on small prey items, aquatic plants and organic matter, grow quickly, mature early, produce millions of eggs and can tolerate extremes of temperature and water quality. This means they can often displace native species.



#### How did they get here?

Carp were introduced to Australia numerous times over the last 180 years, however it wasn't until a strain was released from a fish farm in Victoria in the early 1960s that they became widespread.

Carp are native to Europe and Asia, with the original European Carp said to have been found in the Danube River.

For more information  
VISIT: [www.carp.gov.au](http://www.carp.gov.au)

CALL: 1800 CARP PLAN (1800 2277 7526)



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## NATIONAL CARP CONTROL PLAN

### RESTORING NATIVE BIODIVERSITY

#### What is the problem with carp?

Carp are considered the worst freshwater aquatic pests in south-eastern Australia, particularly within the Murray-Darling Basin.

Research has shown carp now make up 80 per cent of fish biomass in many waterways in Australia.

Carp have many environmental and economic impacts throughout Australia, including:

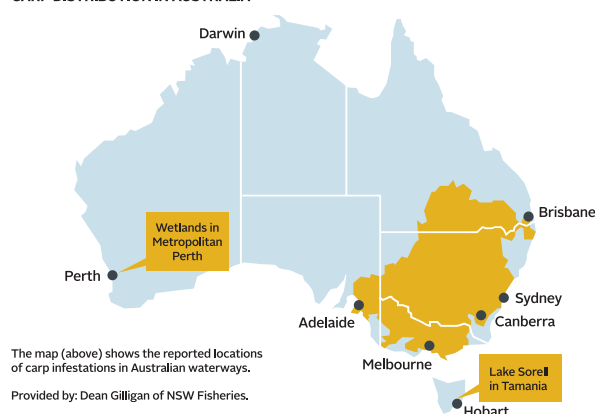
- » They are bottom feeders, which means they stir up the sediment in the water, causing muddy or turbid water. This reduces the amount of sunlight reaching aquatic plants, which are also uprooted by their feeding behaviour.
- » The stirred-up sediment smothers vegetation and native fish eggs, which can impact on food availability and reproduction of other fish species.
- » Nutrient level increases caused by carp excretion, can increase the frequency and extent of harmful blue-green algal blooms.
- » Carp displace native fish and impact on the recreational fishing sector, causing some to be listed as rare or threatened.
- » Aquatic ecosystems lose value for a range of uses as water quality declines. Examples include recreational fishing, ecotourism and water treatment.
- » In extreme circumstances, juvenile carp block irrigation pumps and equipment, increasing maintenance.

#### Where are they found in Australia?

Carp are present in every state and territory in Australia, except the Northern Territory. Carp dominate almost all of the Murray-Darling Basin waterways, except a small number of upland regions that have unsuitable habitat or are upstream of waterfalls or large dams, which act as barriers to colonisation.

Isolated populations of carp are also found in Western Australia, Tasmania, south-east Queensland and some coastal rivers.

CARP DISTRIBUTION IN AUSTRALIA



#### What are we doing to address the problem?

The National Carp Control Plan (NCCP) is being prepared to explore the possible release of the carp virus, Cyprinid herpesvirus 3. It is a \$15 million program under the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC), delivered on behalf of the Australian Government.

In essence, the NCCP is a program of risk assessment, research, planning and consultation to identify a smart, safe, effective and integrated suite of measures to control carp populations in Australia, with a key focus on possible use of biocontrol.

The NCCP aims to help recover the health of Australian waterways and aquatic biodiversity. The NCCP will be based on thorough and measured approaches, ensuring the benefits and risks of carp biocontrol are understood and the right recommendations are made to government in 2018 to ensure optimum outcomes for Australia.

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