



GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION



INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION

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IJC and GLFC Urge Bi-national Action to Prevent Invasive Species

U.S and Canada Should Ratify IMO, Develop Stricter Rules for the Great Lakes

Ennis, Ireland – At the 13th International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species, the International Joint Commission (IJC) and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) today released a document detailing progress in preventing the introduction of aquatic alien species in the Great Lakes. The document, [*Then and Now: Aquatic Alien Invasive Species and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Ecosystem*](#), highlights the urgent need for more action on the part of the governments of the United States and Canada.

The two Commissions recommend that both countries ratify and implement the International Maritime Organization (IMO) convention on ship's ballast water and sediments, pursue development of more stringent and more timely regional measures for the Great Lakes, and for the U.S. Congress to fully fund the electric fish dispersal barriers that are designed to keep the invasive Asian carp out of the Great Lakes.

"Aquatic alien invasive species pose one of the biggest threats to the future of the Great Lakes, but the government's slow actions to date are not sufficient to protect the biological integrity of the Great Lakes ecosystem," said the Rt. Honorable Herb Gray, chair of the Canadian Section of the IJC. "We can, we must, do better."

Then and Now is a follow up to a 1990 report (Exotic Species and the Shipping Industry: The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Ecosystem at Risk) issued by the two Commissions that made a series of recommendations to prevent the introduction of invasive species to the Great Lakes via ballast water discharge. Then and Now covers progress made since then through legislation and regulations, applied research and development, and in international considerations. It also examines other vectors, such as intentional releases from aquaria or live food fish and unintentional releases, including the dumping of baitfish and the spread of invasives by adhering

to the hulls of recreational boats. Of particular concern is invasion via canal such as the Asian carp species moving up the Illinois River and towards the Chicago Ship and Sanitary Canal, giving these voracious plankton feeders unfettered access to the Great Lakes.

"The Asian carp threatens to devastate a \$4.5 billion commercial and sport fishery in the Great Lakes," said Dennis Schornack, chair of the U.S. Section of the IJC. "The damage will be even more costly to both the environment and our economy if immediate action is not taken to complete the barriers that are designed to keep the Great Lakes from becoming a carp pond."

Featured in Then and Now is a timeline of key milestones in the history of invasive species in the Great Lakes, ranging from the introduction of the sea lamprey in the 1830s to the first report of a zebra mussel in the lakes in 1988 to actions by authorities through the Great Lakes in 2003 to prohibit the sale and transport of live Asian carp.

"We urge that the U.S. and Canada take immediate and aggressive action to protect the Great Lakes from further invasions," said Marc Gaden of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. "The two nations must work together to protect the Great Lakes, our shared international treasure."

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