



Stop Carp Coalition

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New Poll: Minnesotans Support Action on Asian Carp

63% favor closing locks in Minneapolis to stop invasive fish

MINNEAPOLIS (August 7, 2013) – Minnesotans of all political colors support closing the locks in Minneapolis to stop the spread of the invasive Asian carp, according to new poll released today by conservation organizations. Support for lock closure crosses party lines, with majorities of Republicans, Democrats, and Independents in favor. Lock closure is one important step in the fight to stop Asian Carp from invading Minnesota’s waterways, including the Great Lakes.

Read the poll and graphic of findings at <http://stopcarp.org/>

“Our polling indicates that protecting Minnesota’s waters from Asian carp unites Republicans, Democrats and Independents,” said Emma White, senior director at Belden Russonello Strategists, LLC, the Washington, D.C.-based firm which wrote and administered the poll. “Voters of all political stripes support closing locks on the Mississippi River as a way to prevent Asian carp from moving further upstream into Minnesota’s rivers and lakes.”

The [Stop Carp Coalition](#) released the poll as they call on officials to stop the advance of the invasive fish into Minnesota’s waterways.

“Our lakes and rivers are part of what makes Minnesota special, and we should do what we can to protect them,” said Jason Dinsmore, regional representative for the National Wildlife Federation. “Asian carp have been found in the Mississippi River just south of the Twin Cities, and we need to make sure they do not get any farther into our rivers and lakes. Asian carp consume food that other fish need to survive, harming other fish and their habitat and threatening the web of life we all depend on. Once Asian carp get in, it is too late to get them out. We can stop them by closing a lock in the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, but we need to act now or it may be too late.”

“Our Minnesota values and way of life are at risk. These values include protecting our proud outdoor recreation tradition, preserving our native walleye populations, our inland lake heritage, and national parks, including the Mississippi National River Recreation Area and St. Croix National Scenic Riverway,” said Christine Goepfert, upper Midwest program

manager for the National Parks Conservation Association. “Once the lock is closed, then we can focus our efforts on additional strategies to protect our waters downstream by installing deterrents at other locks in order to slow the spread of Asian carp and continue to support research to fight this threat.”

Poll Findings

The survey of 404 registered voters in Minnesota was conducted June 27 to 30. The margin of sampling error is ± 4.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The poll was funded by the McKnight Foundation. Highlights of the poll include:

1. **Most Minnesota voters are familiar with Asian carp.** Six in ten Minnesota voters report having heard a lot (32%) or some (31%) about “a fish called the Asian carp,” while another 22% say they have heard a little, and only 15% have not heard of Asian carp at all.
2. **Minnesota citizens are concerned about Asian carp invading the state.** Fully 93% of Minnesota voters would be concerned if the Asian carp got into lakes and rivers throughout Minnesota. Politically, Democrats are the most concerned about the spread of Asian carp (64% say very concerned), but majorities of Republicans (53%) and independents (56%) also share a high level of concern about Asian carp.
3. **Voters support lock closure to prevent the spread of Asian carp.** There are high and bipartisan levels of support for closing the locks to prevent the spread of Asian carp. Sixty-three percent favor a proposal to “create a physical barrier to stop the carp by closing the locks, or gate, in the Mississippi river in Minneapolis,” including majorities of Democrats (66%), Republicans (66%), and independents (59%).

Asian carp are knocking on the door of the Twin Cities, and conservation groups are urging public officials to pass federal legislation—the Upper Mississippi CARP Act (H.R. 709/S. 365)—to close the Upper St. Anthony Falls lock to prevent the non-native fish from colonizing more Minnesota lakes and rivers.

“Closing the locks is the most effective solution to prevent their upstream march,” said Barb Halbakken Fischburg with the Minnesota Coalition of Lake Associations. “We urge the state’s federal congressional delegation to pass legislation to close the Upper St. Anthony Falls lock to protect our environment and economy. We must protect those inland waters and natural eco-systems. It is paramount for Minnesota.”

Wildlife managers fear that the non-native fish could devastate native fish and their habitat. Asian carp have colonized large swaths of the Mississippi and Illinois rivers—accounting for more than 90 percent of living organisms in some stretches of water.

“Asian carp have a track record of economic and environmental devastation,” said Gary Botzek, executive director for the Minnesota Conservation Federation. “We want to prevent that in Minnesota. The good news is that we have a solution that stops Asian carp from moving further upstream. But public officials cannot drag their feet. They have to act with urgency.”

Fishing supports 43,000 Minnesota jobs, generates \$2.8 billion in direct annual expenditures, and contributes more than \$640 million a year in tax revenues to the state and federal government, according to the Minnesota DNR.

“Asian carp have the potential to do great damage to commercial and recreational fishing, which are worth billions of dollars a year to Minnesota’s economy,” said Lance Ness, president of Anglers for Habitat. “The threat to jobs and the economy is greater if we do not act. We have solutions to this problem. It is time to use them.”

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About Stop Carp Coalition: The Stop Carp Coalition is a group of non-governmental organizations that is collaborating to bring attention to the Asian Carp issue in Minnesota, educate the public and elected officials about impacts to our environment and economy, mobilize our combined thousands of members and supporters, and advocate for quick and strategic initiatives to slow and/or stop the invasion of these harmful invasive species in Minnesota waters. To learn more, please visit. www.stopcarp.org.