



Weed eating grass carp to be permitted in Illinois waters

A sterile form of the grass carp may now be used in Illinois for controlling aquatic vegetation. Based on the findings of a cooperative research study between the Department of Conservation and the Illinois Natural History Survey, regulations were recently changed to give lake and pond managers an alternative to the use of aquatic herbicides, according to Jim Allen, of DOC's Division of Fisheries.

The grass carp, or white amur, is a native of Asia and was imported into the United States in 1963. It has been highly controversial among state natural resource agencies due to the fear of a population explosion and resultant impacts to bottomland lakes and wetlands adjacent to rivers and streams. The sterile grass carp, termed "triploid" due to

a triple number of cell chromosomes, offers less risk to the environment.

The research showed that the "triploid" consumes vegetation in a manner similar to the fertile fish. However, because some aquatic "weeds" are preferred over others, and other variables, including the location of the water area in the state, the percent of vegetative cover, water depth and amount of control desired, there is no standard stocking recommendation. Requests for "triploid" stocking rates will be referred by the Division of Fisheries to district biologists. Lake and pond owners are encouraged to seek this professional advice. If too many fish are stocked, all the vegetation could be eliminated and escape cover, needed by young game fish for survival, may not be available.

A list of fish dealers will be made

available to persons requesting stocking information. A special, no cost permit is required of anyone who imports "triploids" from out of state. The Division of Fisheries will check shipments to determine whether the grass carp are sterile. Persons who buy fish from a local dealer are required to have a bill of sale in their possession while the fish are being transported.

The best time for stocking fish is late spring, after vegetation has become established. Effective control should not be expected the first year; two or more years are required for best results. For maintenance, additional fish will be needed in about seven years.

For further information write: Department of Conservation, Division of Fishers, 524 South Second Street, Springfield, IL 62706.

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