



## Eat those Asian carp -- and call 'em 'silverfin'

Wednesday, January 6, 2010

BATON ROUGE (AP) — Eat lots of Asian carp, and call them "silverfin". That's the latest message from Louisiana's Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

It's part of a new campaign to try to control bighead and silver carp, which were introduced into the United States in the 1970s to help manage aquaculture ponds and wastewater lagoons farther north. The fish made it into Louisiana waterways in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

"We will never be able to fully eradicate these fish, so we are trying to make the best out of what these fish have to offer," said Gary Tilyou, administrator for inland fisheries. "By creating a demand for the meat, we hope to create a commercial and recreational freshwater fishing industry for Asian carp."

Silver carp, which can grow up to 50 pounds, are known for leaping several feet out of the water when disturbed by boat propellers. Sometimes they jump into boats or even into boaters.

Both silver and bighead carp threaten Louisiana freshwater species that feed on plankton, as they do. Plankton is also the main diet for shad, bigmouth buffalo and paddlefish, and for very young catfish, bass and other freshwater species.

On Thursday, the department will propose letting fishermen use dip nets, spears and snagging methods to take Asian carp — and to keep any that jump into their boats. They won't have any size or possession limits.

Asian carp are commonly found in Louisiana in the Mississippi, Red and Ouachita rivers and Atchafalaya Basin.

"These Asian carp have been in Louisiana waters for close to 20 years and are sustaining their populations," Tilyou said. "This is a problem we have to manage to minimize impacts to our natural resources and the people that enjoy our Louisiana waterways."

The department also wants to create a market for the meat, which a news release described as white and delicious. It will join Chef Philippe Parola on Jan. 12 to unveil a new marketing plan that includes the name change and products to be distributed by Rouses Super Market.

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Have you purchased crawfish yet this season?

- Yes
- No, but I will before Mardi Gras
- No
- I don't eat crawfish

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