ANS Task Force

Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force
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Chef Philippe Parola
P.O. Box 84524
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70810

Dear Chef Parola,

Thank you for your interest in Asian carp and your willingness to help the United States (U.S.) deal with this nationally significant invasive species problem. Asian carp are an invasive species in the U.S. and significantly threaten our native aquatic ecosystems as well as commercial fisheries and recreational opportunities that depend upon these resources.

The Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF) has received a great deal of interest from private citizens desiring to combat the threat from invasive species through marketing and commercialized harvest. The ANSTF encourages the development and use of control measures that slow the rate of range expansion from aquatic nusiance species and lessen the impacts to public interests by eradicating or suppressing population numbers. In regard to Asian carp, the ANSTF adheres to the recommended strategies within its Management and Control Plan for Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carp in the United States (Plan) which identifies management activities that minimize impacts to areas where Asian carp have already invaded and prevent their spread into additional habitats (http://www.anstaskforce.gov/Documents/Carps_Management_Plan.pdf). The overarching goal of this Plan is to eradicate Asian carp from invaded areas, which is in contradiction to the sustainable harvest models proposed by many commercial operations. However, both commercial and recreational harvest were evaluated by the ANSTF during plan development and it was determined that harvest enhancement may be an effective tool when incorporated into larger control or eradication programs. Accordingly, Strategy 3.3.2 of the Plan recommends an increased use of commercial harvest as part of an integrated management approach to eliminate Asian carp or suppress population numbers in waters of the United States.

Recent peer reviewed publications on this topic have also recognized that harvest of invasive species is a complex issue that, under the right circumstances, can be a valuable tool. However, incorrectly applied harvest programs could be ineffective or exacerbate the invasion making it more costly to manage. For example, commercialized harvest may encourage intentional release of invasive species into new areas effectively negating long-term control or eradication efforts. Consequently, the co-chairs of the ANSTF recommend that fishery management agencies and their stakeholders continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of harvest activities to ensure that management goals are being realized. Further advice on this issue can be found at: http://www.reabic.net/journals/mbi/2014/3/MBI_2014_Pasko_Goldberg.pdf.

Although the ANSTF is unable to endorse a particular commercial entity or harvest plan, we encourage you to work with State and Federal agencies that are implementing national, regional, or local Asian carp management plans and inquire how your interests could be incorporated into these control programs. We also note that the ANSTF provides national and regional coordination and technical assistance to the issue, yet commercialized harvest of Asian carp is managed and regulated by State fish and wildlife agencies. If you are interested in seeking additional input for your proposal, we encourage you to continue conversations with these organizations. The State agencies can serve as a point of contact, help direct your inquires to other appropriate entities, and help refine a business plan that compliments inter-governmental Asian carp management efforts.

Again, we appreciate the dedication you have shown towards finding innovative solutions to manage this invasion. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact the ANSTF Executive Secretary, Susan Pasko, whose contact information is detailed above.

Sincerely,

David Hoskins, ANSTF Co-Chair
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Jennifer Lukens, ANSTF Acting Co-Chair
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration