



U.S. Army  
Corps of Engineers  
Chicago District

# NEWS RELEASE

**Date:** August 7, 2009

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## **New Monitoring Shows Asian Carp Closer to Barrier**

Chicago - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers says that new monitoring techniques indicate that Asian carp may be closer to the electric barrier site in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal near Romeoville than previously thought.

As part of its expanded Asian carp monitoring program, the Corps recently began working with a University of Notre Dame team led by Dr. David Lodge to attempt to detect the presence of Asian carp through genetic testing of water samples. Under a contract with the Army Corps' Engineering Research and Development Center in Vicksburg, Miss., the university collected approximately 150 water samples from the Dresden Island and Brandon Road pools. Preliminary test results indicate there may be silver carp in the Brandon Road Pool, including at a location just downstream of the Lockport Lock and Dam. Previous monitoring by other techniques never detected Asian carp in the Brandon Road Pool.

"This is new technology and although we don't have all the lab results yet, and we have no confirmed physical sighting of Asian carp as close as Lockport Lock, we are taking this new information very seriously. We have already taken action to gather additional water samples for more DNA testing, increased electrofishing efforts, and are using other traditional monitoring methods to confirm the initial findings of the DNA tests," said Col. Vincent Quarles, commander of the Army Corps Chicago District.

The DNA testing results to date indicate the possible presence of silver carp in the Brandon Road pool of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal immediately below the Lockport pool, including sites between the Lockport Dam (river mile 291) and the confluence with the Des Plaines River near river mile 290.

"While we work to validate these initial results, we will also consider if we need to make changes to current operations of our electrical dispersal barriers that are designed to deter the migration of Asian carp through the canal. We will continue to work closely with the Fish Barrier Advisory Panel, the U.S. Coast Guard and other agencies and stakeholders as we consider such measures," Quarles said.

The Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal is a man-made waterway that provides a direct hydraulic connection between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River Basin. Without intervention, invasive species such as the Asian carp could transfer between the basins, competing with native species for food, living space, and spawning areas with negative impacts to the environment.

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The Army Corps Barrier Project consists of a series of electrical barriers that mitigate risks of invasive species reaching the Great Lakes through the most vulnerable path. This system of electric barriers provides a non-lethal deterrent to aquatic species that does not interfere with water flow and minimizes impact to navigation in the canal.

Boaters are reminded to exercise extreme caution while traveling in the Sanitary and Ship Canal from the Midwest generation power plant to the pipeline arch, an approximately 1400-foot section of the canal from river mile 296.1 to 296.7. The Coast Guard has implemented mandatory enhanced requirements for all vessels operating in the vicinity of the electric barrier. These requirements can be found at <http://www.piersystem.com/go/doctype/443/29566/>.

"The electric fish barrier illustrates the challenges faced in ensuring safety, security and environmental protection while balancing the oftentimes-conflicting needs of multiple public and private interest groups. The Coast Guard is committed to public safety and environmental protection and will continue to work closely and openly with all stakeholders," said Capt. Luann Barndt, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Sector Lake Michigan.

While traveling through the area boaters are advised to remain seated, stay out of the water, keep hands and feet out of the water and closely supervise children and pets or send them below deck. Boaters are also required not to linger or attempt to moor in the restricted area.

Information about the barrier project and instructions for safely transiting the area can be found at [www.lrc.usace.army.mil/safety](http://www.lrc.usace.army.mil/safety).