

Lately, not a day has gone by when Asian carp haven't been in the news.

While demanding considerable time on behalf of many parties, this time in the spotlight has proven how committed our citizens are to protecting the Great Lakes from this invader. DNR will continue to work with its partners to find solutions to limit the spread of this and other invasives. DNR, along with our many partners within the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee, is working tirelessly to expand our current efforts and to develop new techniques to control the Asian carp population. You'll hear of our increased research, monitoring and actions to directly remove portions of the population at specific locations. You'll also hear about our efforts to find new markets for these fish as food, fertilizer and other products. This will require sustained action, cooperation, patience and assistance, not only from our federal, state and international partners but from outdoors men and women like you.

Many of our readers already know that fish can be inadvertently transferred between rivers, lakes and streams by bait buckets, live wells or other recreational activities. You can help by ensuring that each time you enjoy our Illinois waterways, you follow these recommendations to protect our waters:

- Remove any visible mud, plants, fish or animals before transporting equipment

Incident Commander and DNR Fisheries Biologist Steve Shults (right) and Director Marc Miller (center) observe U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Col. Vincent V. Quarles signing the concurrence order to shut down the electric barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal for maintenance purposes.



- Eliminate water from equipment before transporting
- Clean and dry anything that came in contact with water (boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, etc.)
- Never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water

These actions not only prevent transport of Asian carp, but also help stop transfer of other exotic species and fish pathogens.

Globally, Asian carp are the fifth largest farm-raised fish and are a great source of Omega 3 oil and protein. While you're out on the water, if you happen to catch an Asian carp, or one jumps in your boat, add it to your creel and take it home. Not long ago I sampled smoked Asian carp from Big River Fish Company, located in Pearl, who annually ship 10 million pounds of Asian carp to China, Japan, Canada and Europe. I can report that Asian carp are

good eating and, for a new and exciting culinary adventure, I recommend trying them as fish cakes or fish almondine.

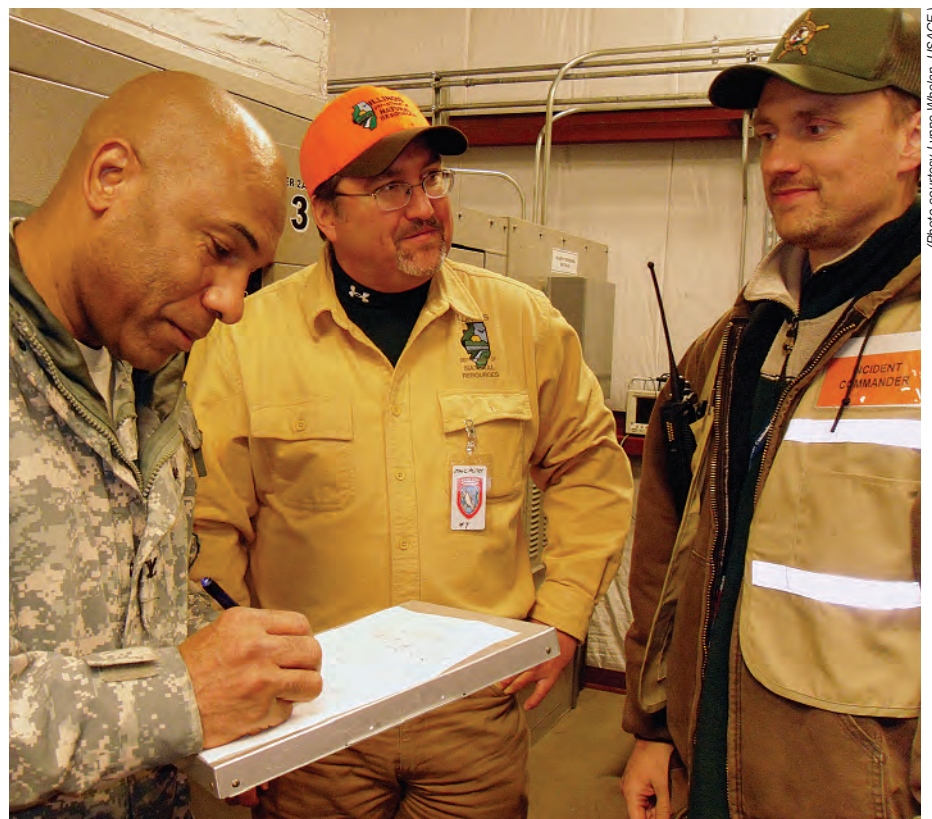
In case fruits and vegetables are more to your liking, Asian carp make a great organic fertilizer for the garden. In addition to marketing carp as food, Schafer Fisheries, a zero-waste facility based in Thomson, sells about a million gallons of Asian carp fertilizer a year. DNR will explore creative ways to assist such activities and encourage further reduction in the carp population.

In future issues, we'll report on our activities and operations in the Chicago Area Waterway System. In the meantime, become informed by visiting www.protectyourwaters.net and www.asiancarp.org/rapidresponse.

Activity updates also will be posted on the DNR Web site.

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Marc Miller".

Yours in conservation,
Marc Miller, Director



(Photo courtesy Lynne Whelan, USACE)