

Silverfin

[Like](#)

0

[\[1\]](#)  [Print](#) [\[2\]](#)

The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and Chef Philippe Parola, in an effort to produce a demand for two species of Asian carp, the silver and bighead carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix* and *H. nobilis*), are launching the "Silverfin Promotion." Both species of carp are exotic to U.S. waters and are causing major problems where they become established. They have been very prolific in the Mississippi River and all tributaries and distributaries of the river. Both species are filter feeders and directly compete with paddlefish (spoonbill catfish), shad and the very young of all species of recreational and commercial fish. In many northern waterbodies, these species have already replaced native populations of fish. In addition to being an ecological threat, the silver carp is a direct threat to boaters and others that use our waterbodies. These fish, which can weigh 60 pounds, have a habit of jumping out of the water when disturbed by boats. Boaters and skiers have been severely injured by these fish. The fish have also damaged equipment on boats such as windshields, radios, GPS units and depth finders.

These fish are firmly established throughout the Mississippi River Basin and in Louisiana are abundant in the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers. Eradication is not possible, but if a sufficient demand for the fish can be generated, we may be able to control their numbers. Although we have large numbers of silver and bighead carp in Louisiana waters, our river systems are very productive. Department biologists feel there has been a reduction in shad and paddlefish; however we do not feel that other recreational and commercial species have been impacted in most water bodies. If we are successful in establishing a demand for these fish, we may be able to reduce their numbers before they severely impact Louisiana's multi-million dollar commercial and recreational fishing industry.

Activities

1. Determine if silver and bighead carp are suitable for human consumption.

Chef Philippe Parola has tested the quality of both silver and bighead carp and rates them both as high quality. He has conducted small scale taste testing and determined the meat of both fish is very acceptable to consumers. The LDWF has also conducted in-house testing and concluded the fish would appeal to consumers and anglers. There is an obstacle to overcome with regard to selling the meat to consumers, the filets of both species have a series of floating bones that are not easily separated from the flesh.

2. Establish a method of removing bones from the flesh for commercial products. This step is necessary to create a commercial demand for the fish. Almost no consumers will purchase fish and fish products if they contain bones.

Chef Philippe researched current de-boning systems and has currently chosen to use a steaming method.

3. Establish a method of cleaning fish that would be acceptable to recreational fishers.

The US Geological Survey, working with the LSU AgCenter, has produced a video showing two methods of cleaning fish. One method leaves the bones in the flesh, but the bones are left whole and are easily removed after cooking. The second method completely removes all bones. This video will be publicized and made available. This activity includes having at least two department employees trained in the above cleaning methods. These employees will assist recreational anglers learn the cleaning techniques.

4. Increase methods of recreationally taking silver and bighead carp. Because these fish are filter feeders, they are not susceptible to traditional angling methods.

A Notice of Intent was presented to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission in January to allow the use of boats, dip nets, spears and snagging by recreational fishers. If the rule is approved, the new method of take will be legal in about 120 days. Additional considerations may be presented to the legislature in the 2010 legislative session.

5. Develop finished products from the commercially de-boned fish for purchase by consumers.

Chef Philippe has developed products such as fish cakes, fish balls, fish gumbo, and imitation crab meat stuffing.

6. Design and print a brochure for the Silverfin Promotion

LDWF and Chef Philippe will create an informative brochure. The information in this brochure will include the problems these fish present and our promotion encouraging the taking and purchasing of these fish and fish products.

7. Create a Web site to promote the purchasing and catching of silver and bighead carp

LDWF and Chef Philippe, will create a Web site. The information on this site will include the problems these fish present and our promotion encouraging the taking and purchasing of these fish and fish products.

8. Create a promotional CD/DVD providing information on the Silverfin Promotion

LDWF and Chef Philippe, will create an informative CD/DVD. The information on this disk will include the problems these fish present and our promotion encouraging the taking and purchasing of these fish and fish products.

9. Have one-on-one promotions of the fish products to various wholesale and retail outlets.

Chef Philippe will meet with representatives from various outlets and offer them samples of the various fish products. The goal of this activity is to convince outlet representatives to sell the products at their stores and restaurants.


10. Sponsor a large media event publicizing the Silverfin Promotion. The goal of this event is to get the message out to all fishermen and consumers that a new, natural, healthy, Louisiana produced product is now on the market.

On January 12, 2010, LDWF and Chef Philippe will present the fish products to the media, including members of the Outdoor Writers Association, to the LWF Commission, invited retail outlets and other invited guests. They will be informed of the reasons for the promotion and given samples of fish and fish products to eat. Samples will include those being marketed to the retail industry and those available to recreational fishermen cleaning their own catch. Videos showing the fish and cleaning methods will be continuously playing.

11. Present the Silverfin Promotion to the rest of the country. As the silver and bighead carp are not just a Louisiana problem, we feel the outreach effort should include at least one national promotion.

Chef Philippe has already been selected as the Chef that will be attending the National Grocers Association (NGA) Convention in Las Vegas. The association has over 1,500 members and the convention will be attended by approximately 2,000 individuals. At this convention he will provide samples of the commercial products to wholesale and retail outlets. The goal of this effort is to expand the market of silver carp products to other states.

Documents:

 [Nutritional Information](#) [3]

 [Recipes](#) [4]

Related Links:

[USGS Fact Sheet](#) [5]

[USGS Fact Sheet](#) [6]