

Asian carp proposed as menu item

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ST. LOUIS, Nov. 3 (UPI) -- Some Missouri entrepreneurs say they have a solution to the problem of invasive Asian carp in the Midwest: "Can't beat 'em? Eat 'em!"

A Louisiana chef and a group of Grafton, Mo., entrepreneurs want to rename the carp "silverfin" and make it a menu item, to both change its reputation and control its growing numbers, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported Wednesday.

They say the name change would be the first step, noting the Chilean sea bass on the menu at many high-end restaurants wasn't very appealing back when it was called Patagonian toothfish.

"Can't beat 'em? Eat 'em! We have a gold mine here," says Philippe Parola, a French-born chef who has developed processing and preparation methods he hopes will soon turn the fish into a popular American food item.

"Can we make use of this fish? Yes, we can."

Experts say Asian carp now make up 75 percent to 80 percent of the biomass in many Midwest rivers.

Ben Allen, one of the Grafton group working with Parola, said Asian carp account for about 80 percent of commercial fishermen's catch in that area.

"That leaves 20 percent marketable fish," Allen said. "It's killing the industry."

Parola says he plans mass marketing of "silverfin" that are frozen, boneless, ready for microwaving and packaged in three varieties -- pecan crusted, Cajun Treat and lemon butter.

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