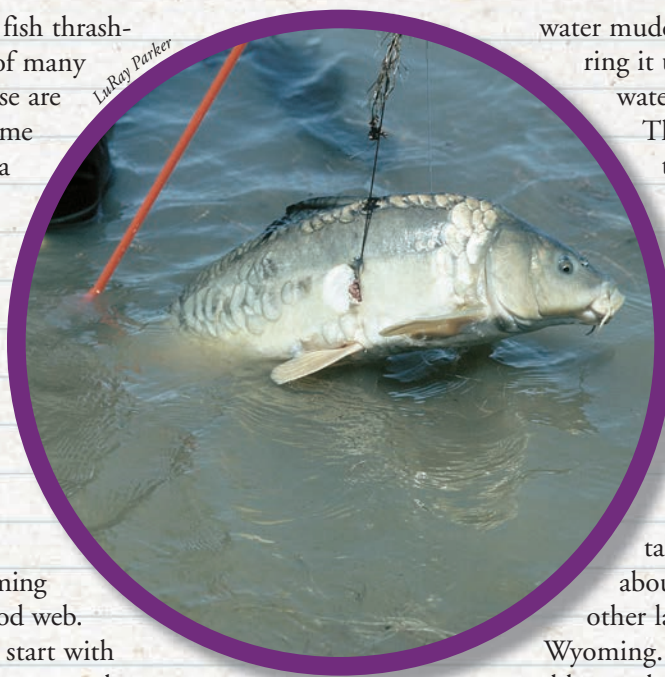


OUR Wildlife Heritage

In early summer, you can see big fish thrashing around in the shallow water of many Wyoming lakes and streams. These are carp and they are mating at this time of year. The carp comes from Asia and Europe. It is a relative of the goldfish but gets much larger. Carp were brought to America in the 1800s and were used for food. People found carp were easy to raise and harvest. Before long, carp were in rivers and lakes. Soon they had spread all over the country. They were first brought to Wyoming more than 100 years ago.

Carp are not good fish for Wyoming because of what they do to our food web. Carp lay lots of eggs. Even if you start with only a few carp, in a few years you can end up with hundreds or even thousands of them. Carp ruin the habitat for other fish in a lake or stream when they feed on the bottom. They make the



Common carp

water muddy by rooting in the mud and stirring it up. Green plants that grow in the water don't grow well where carp live.

This is bad for many fish such as trout. These fish hide under the water plants and hunt for food around them. Muddy water is also bad for ducks and other water birds that need the plants.

Carp have made a muddy mess in several Wyoming waters. It is expensive to get rid of them so that the water can be used by fish and fishermen again.

Carp have taught us an important lesson. We should be careful about bringing wild animals from other lands and turning them loose in Wyoming. They can cause a lot of trouble and hurt other wildlife and habitat.

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Goldfish are relatives of the carp.

LuRay Parker