

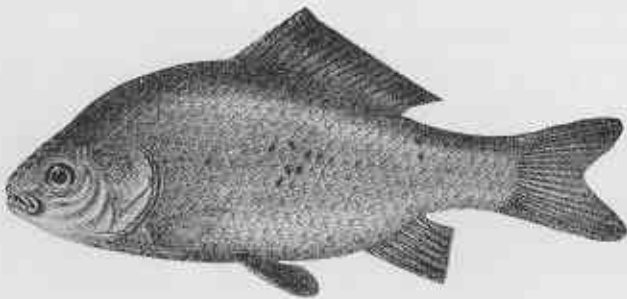
# A NEW MENACE

The Department would like to hear from anyone who has made a positive identification of European Carp in Western Australian waters.

Great care is needed to distinguish the European or Common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) and its domesticated reddish-coloured strain called "hi-goï" carp, from the Crucian carp (*Carassius carassius*) and the closely related reddish-coloured goldfish (*Carassius auratus*). Figures 1 and 2 show two of the fish, and Figure 3 shows the main features which distinguish the European Carp from the Goldfish—these are the mouth which protrudes and is surrounded by fleshy lips, and the two pairs of barbels on the upper lip.

European Carp are notorious for degrading the aquatic environment. In feeding near the bottom they roil (make very dirty) the water through their normal feeding habit, and make it unfavourable for plant growth, other fish, fish food organisms and for stock and domestic use. They destroy aquatic vegetation, compete with other species for bottom food, interfere with the spawning of other species and frequently crowd out other fish.

European Carp have caused insurmountable problems in Victoria where irresponsible action by one short-sighted individual led to their introduction and rapid spread through many waterways; they have now reached South Australia, much to the consternation of that State's Fisheries Authority.



Goldfish (*Carassius auratus*)

Are they now in Western Australia? In October, 1970, 120 Japanese hi-goï carp were released by the Main Roads Department into a lake at the Narrows Interchange in Perth. The object was to control the weeds and establish a balanced lake system. The hi-goï is a selected strain of the European Carp; it is merely a colour variation of the same genus and species. At this Department's request, the Main Roads Department drained the lake, reducing it to a number of small pools, into which fish poison was introduced. No hi-goï were found. It is thought that cormorants feeding on the lake may have eradicated the fish. Fortunately, it hardly seems likely that they found their way into the Swan River because the only outlet would be during storm water conditions which have not occurred since the fish were introduced.

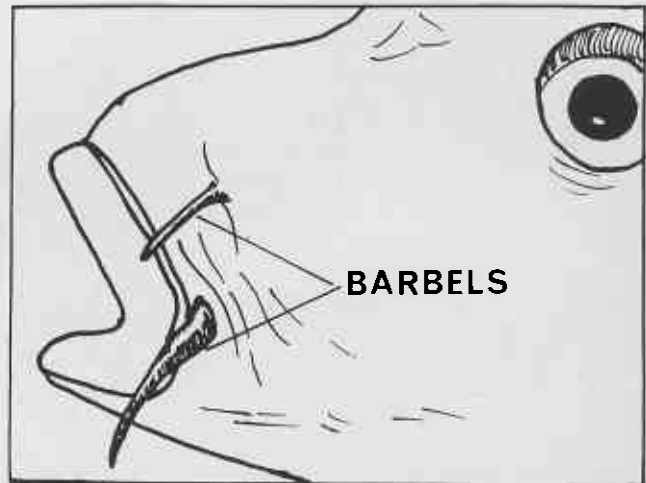


Common Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*)

Although carp are on the Commonwealth schedule of prohibited imports, hi-goï are still bred for sale from existing stocks and sold for use. It is clear that existing legislation needs to be tightened up, for there is evidence that hi-goï carp continue to be imported in consignments of goldfish.

It is not known for certain if the hi-goï carp has the same undesirable qualities as the European carp—but since they are the same species it does seem very likely; and in any event they would probably revert to the natural strain following successive breeding in natural lakes. This is really beside the point; enough stable doors have already been shut after horses have bolted and the slogan must surely be "better safe than sorry".

The Department is currently interested in obtaining more information about the status and distribution of carp in Western Australia, and if any carp are found, the situation will require very careful review. Honorary Fauna Wardens, Honorary Fisheries Inspectors and members of the public are asked to assist by notifying any positive identification of this noxious fish. Information, and the specimen if possible, should be sent to Dr N. Morrissy, Western Australian Marine Research Laboratory, Elvire Street, Waterman, (Tel. 47 1366), or handed to a local warden or inspector.



Close-up of mouth of Common Carp showing barbels and fleshy lips