

Koi carp

Cyprinus carpio

Notify Council

If you have seen or suspect the presence of Koi carp you must report the sighting to Environment Southland immediately.

What does it look like?

Koi carp are an ornamental strain of common carp. Their colour is variable, often a blotchy pattern, which can include black, red, orange, gold and white. They have two pairs of barbels around the mouth.

Koi carp grow up to around 700mm long. They are bottom-feeding omnivores and are planktivorous as juveniles. Adults mainly eat macroinvertebrates, but also some plant material, fish eggs and fish larvae. Koi carp live for approximately 8-12 years in New Zealand.

Still or slow moving freshwater bodies, especially shallow, warm water. The species also prefers well-vegetated areas for spawning. Although they may spend a lot of time in one area, some individuals undertake long distance movements (greater than 20km in some cases), particularly during spawning season. Koi carp are tolerant of moderately low oxygen levels in water bodies.

Why is it a problem?

When feeding, koi carp suck up and expel material from the bottom like a vacuum, filtering out edible material, which in the process disturbs the substrate (bottom) of a lake or river. Because of their fast breeding and large size, this usually results in constant 'muddying' of the water, with no chance for this mud to settle. As a result, the light levels are reduced, which negatively impacts plant life and other native fish and invertebrates. This also makes for unpleasant swimming at recreational freshwater water sites.

Koi carp are also capable of hybridising with goldfish, there is the potential for gene flow to make them more invasive if the offspring were viable.



Control methods

Please contact MPI or Environment Southland if you think you have seen this pest.

Related links

NIWA - *Cyprinus carpio* <https://niwa.co.nz/freshwater/nz-freshwater-fish-database/niwa-atlas-nz-freshwater-fishes/koiamur-carp-common-carp>

Management programme

Unwanted organism
Organisms of interest

Request info

<https://eservices.es.govt.nz/online-services/new/BiosecurityRFS/step/1?Subject=AnimalPests&Species=578>

Report this Pest/Weed

<https://eservices.es.govt.nz/online-services/new/BiosecurityIncident/step/1?Subject=AnimalPests&Species=578>