

Common Carp

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Species Description

Scientific name: *Cyprinus carpio*

AKA: Bred forms; Mirror carp, Leather carp, Koi carp, Linear carp

Native to: Eastern Europe and Asia

Habitat: Rivers, streams, lakes and ponds; tolerates wide range of freshwater conditions, prefers slow or stagnant water with muddy bottom and thick vegetation.

Many forms of carp have been bred and as a result they are highly variable in appearance. Common carp have brown-green back and upper sides, silvery to golden-brown flanks and a white belly. It is usually 25 – 75 cm (can grow up to 100cm) in length and weights up to 30kg. It has a thick to round body and large protruding lips with 2 long and 2 short barbels originating from the upper jaw. The dorsal fin is concave with a long base and strongly serrated spine at the front.

C. carpio is an omnivorous bottom-feeder, it is most active at dusk and dawn and forms small shoals in spring. As a water temperature of over 18°C is required for reproduction, spawning occurs in June – July, however this temperature is rarely recorded in Northern Ireland. If conditions are suitable for spawning, energetic splashing can be observed around dusk in water body margins.

In waters where common carp does become established they alter the habitat by consuming plants and invertebrates and also by increasing turbidity.

Some other forms of carp which have been selectively bred include; Mirror carp, which has irregular rows of large mirror-like scales. Leather (or naked) carp, almost devoid of scales. Line carp, which has a single lateral line row of scales. Koi carp (ornamental carp) which are highly coloured. There are also many variants within each of these forms.

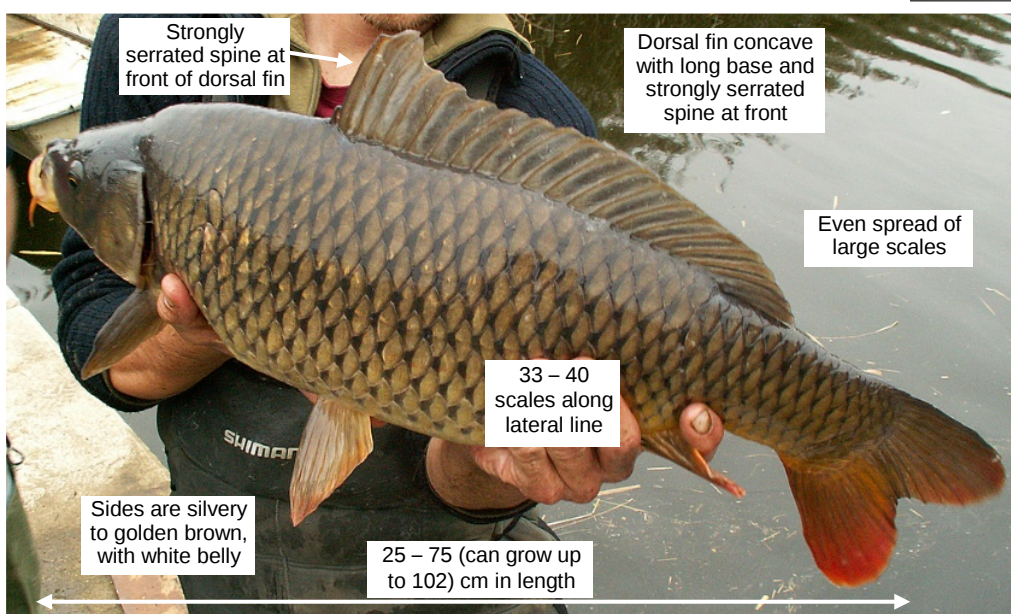


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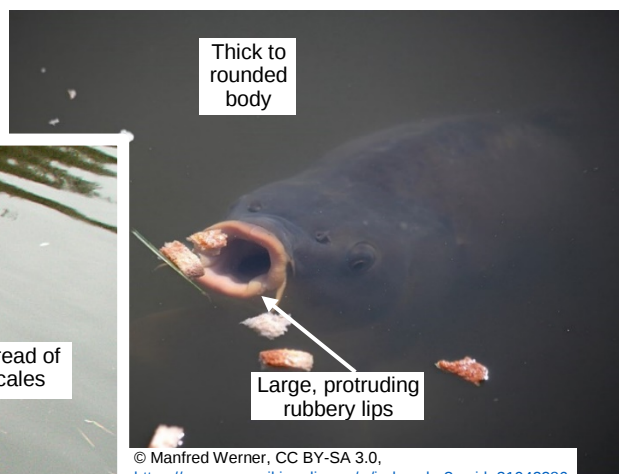


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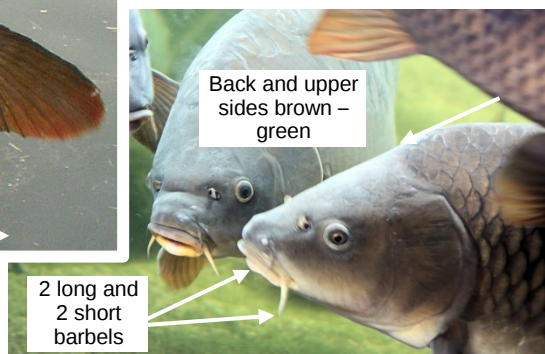
Key ID Features



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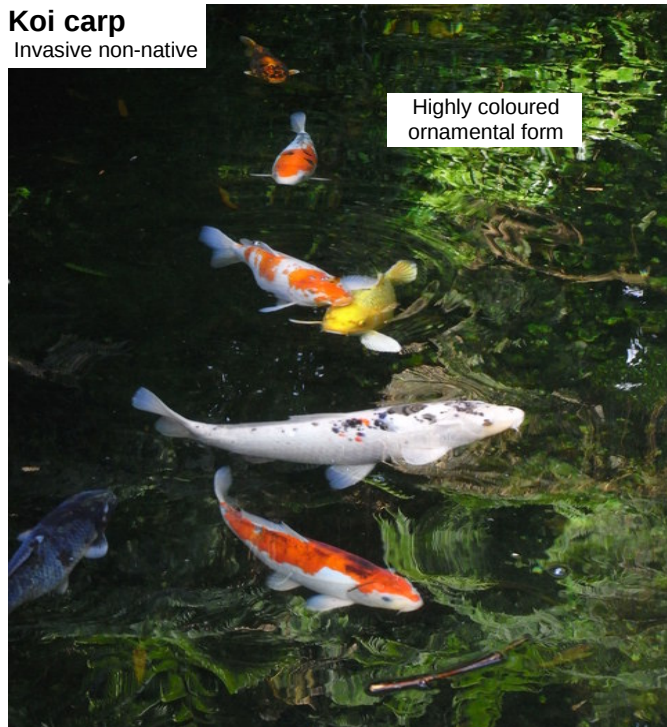
Report any sightings via; CEDaR Online Recording - <https://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI>,
iRecord app or Invasive Species Ireland website - <http://invasivespeciesireland.com/report-sighting>

Different forms of *Cyprinus carpio*

Various forms of common carp have been selectively bred. Common breeds include;

Koi carp

Invasive non-native



Highly coloured
ornamental form

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Mirror carp

Invasive non-native



From fully scaled to
lightly covered in uneven
oversized scales

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Leather carp

Invasive non-native



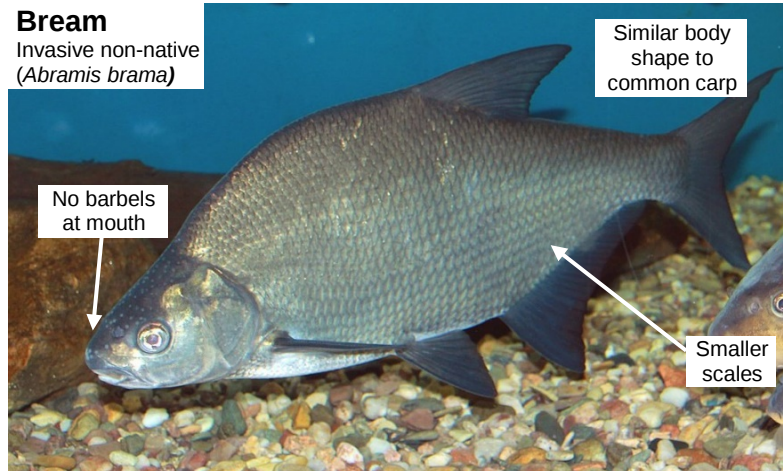
Without or
with very
few scales

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Similar Species

Bream

Invasive non-native
(*Abramis brama*)

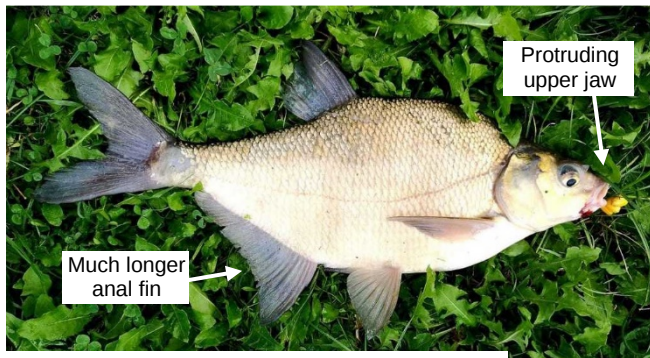


No barbels
at mouth

Similar body
shape to
common carp

Smaller
scales

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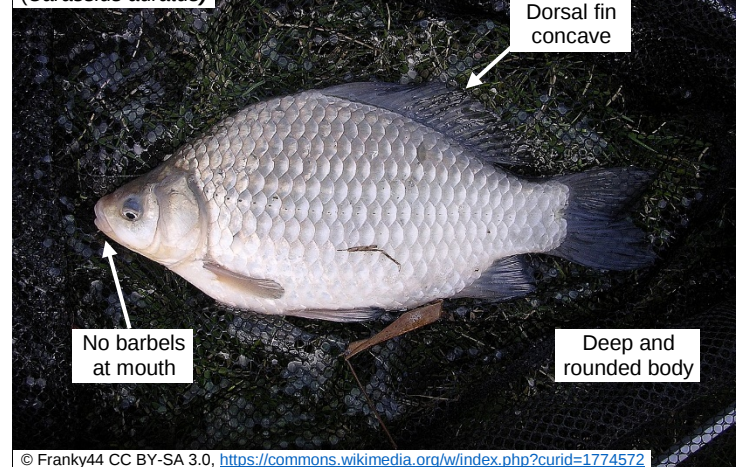
Protruding
upper jaw

Much longer
anal fin

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Goldfish

Invasive non-native
(*Carassius auratus*)



Dorsal fin
concave

No barbels
at mouth

Deep and
rounded body

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References and further reading:

CADI *Cyprinus carpio* (common carp) data sheet -
<https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/17522>
Booy O., Wade M. and Roy H. 2015. Field Guide to Invasive
Plants and Animals in Britain. Bloomsbury. London.