

# Fish that eat plants

Grass carp, White amur, Grass minnow, Nile perch (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*)

## What's in a name?

These fish are in the common carp family and are one of the world's largest minnows. Perhaps we should call them Grass Minnows. They are originally from the Amur River in Siberia and China.

## Size

They grow rapidly; sometimes 10 inches in one year. They can reach a weight of 20 pounds (24" long) by their third year.

## Appetite

They eat only plants; lots of plants. As youngsters, they can eat five times their body weight in plants daily! As adults they still can eat 100% of their body weight each day during the warm weather.

## What does triploid mean?

Triploid grass carp (the only ones permitted in Florida) have three sets of chromosomes (instead of the normal two) which render them sterile. Triploids are produced artificially and regulated by the Fish & Wildlife Commission (FWC).

## Would grass carp help my lake?

Plants are a natural part of all lakes. Aquatic vegetation provides habitat for feeding, reproduction and shelter for many species of fish, amphibians, reptiles & birds. Fisheries biologists recognize that healthy, balanced lakes have about 30% of the lake covered with plants.

Certain plants, usually invasive, exotic species such as Hydrilla have no natural enemies in Florida. These plants can make your lake unusable and easily spread to other lakes. It's in everyone's interest to eliminate these plants. Grass carp are an excellent solution to some weed problems.

## How do I get grass carp?

The FWC requires a grass carp permit. If your lake has escape routes, you are required to install a fish barrier before your permit is issued. Consent of all waterfront property owners is also required prior to permitting. If the pond is owned entirely by your homeowner's association, the permit is easy.

## Fussy eaters

Grass carp eat a lot, but they have very distinct tastes. They have to be on the verge of starvation before they will eat plants they don't like. Their feeding preferences change as they mature.

Please call if you want more information about grass carp or plant control. 941 488-1942

For more information about this or other topics related to lake management, please contact Beautiful Ponds at (941) 488-1942. We manage lakes and stormwater ponds.

## **Crass Carp Favorite Food**

### **Frequently eaten**

Brazilian elodea  
Duckweed  
Elodea  
Hydrilla  
Musk-Grass, Chara  
Pondweed  
Slender Spikerush  
Southern Naiad  
Widgeon-grass

### **Sometimes eaten**

Filamentous Algae  
Bladderwort  
Coontail  
Eelgrass  
Fanwort  
Maidencane  
Naiad, Marine  
Nitella  
Salvinia  
Soft rush  
Spikerush  
Torpedo grass  
Water-meal

### **Rarely eaten**

Alligator-Weed  
American Lotus  
Azolla  
Baby-tears  
Bacopa  
Bog-Moss  
Bulrush  
Burhead Sedge  
Cattail  
Common Arrowhead  
Duck-Potato  
Frog's-bit  
Hygrophila  
Knotgrass  
Limnophila

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Para grass  
Parrot's-feather  
Pennywort  
Pickerelweed  
Red Ludwigia  
Rush Fuirena  
Sawgrass  
Sedges  
Smartweed  
Spatterdock  
Water-hyacinth  
Water-lettuce  
Water-lily  
Water-shield

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