

Asian carp could be rebranded as cuisine

By Steve Tarter
(Peoria) Journal Star

EAST PEORIA, Ill. (AP) — The swarms of Asian carp that infest the Illinois River may not want to hear this, but they're good to eat.

Clint Carter from Carter's Fish Market in Springfield demonstrated that as he prepared a carp taste test recently at Dixon Seafood Shoppe in East Peoria.

After demonstrating how to slice a boneless filet off the whole fish, Carter fried up samples in Dixon's kitchen. "I'm trying to find ways to get people to enjoy this fish," he said.

Taking note of Carter's preparations were Mike White of Whitey's BBQ in East Peoria and Jeff Westbay of the Bass Pro Shop, both planning to take part in the first annual Flying Fish Festival planned on the Illinois River on July 11 and 12.

Along with a bowfishing tournament expected to draw some of the country's top archers to target the high-flying fish, the festival will also offer Asian carp food samples, said John Hamann, rural economic development director for Peoria County.

There shouldn't be any shortage of targets. Researchers at Southern Illinois University have estimated that the Asian carp now make up more than 60 percent of all aquatic life in the Illinois River.

"The fish are definitely here," said Hamann, recalling a fishing expedition in Havana with six men in two boats that netted 50,000 pounds of Asian carp in a single day last fall.

"We're looking for ways to keep this fish in check, and the commercial use of this fish is one of those. We'll also be asking people to rebrand it," said Hamann, aware that, given the fish's reputation for leaping out of the water, the very mention of Asian carp sends people scrambling for cover — not for knife and fork.

The challenge will be getting that fish to market — whether to be consumed here or in China, he said.

"The nearest processing plants are two-and-a-half-hours away. Fishermen are spending more time on the road than they are in the water," said Hamann, noting recent interest in establishing a plant to process fish in the Peoria area.

"We've had four different groups look at setting up a business here — three from China. One major U.S. seafood company working with a Chinese company was



RETHINKING CARP. Fresh Asian carp on ice (left photo) and breaded-and-fried Asian carp (right photo) are seen at the Dixon Seafood Shoppe in East Peoria, Illinois before chef Clint Carter presents ideas on how to prepare the fish to local chefs. The chefs will serve up their own culinary creations in July at the Flying Fish Festival in East Peoria. (AP Photo/Journal Star, Fred Zwicky)

just here ...," he said.

The suggestion has been made that a processing plant that provides jobs would make more sense than an expensive electric fence to keep carp at bay.

"The government is talking about spending \$20 million to \$30 million to keep carp out of the Great Lakes. They ought to peel off \$5 million for a processing plant right here," said Jim Dixon, president of the Dixon seafood operation.

Getting fish out of the Illinois River is nothing new to Dixon, representing the fifth generation of a family business that, in the early 20th century, pulled more than a million pounds of fish from the river each year for U.S.

fish markets.

The fish that Dixon's family sold back then were European carp and buffalo, relatives of the Asian carp, he said.

"Americans like white, flakey fish that's boneless and doesn't taste like fish," said Dixon, pointing out that while a filet of Asian carp qualifies, "you're only using 10 percent of the fish."

"In China and Asia, they're used to the head and the bones when it comes to fish," he said.

"(Asian carp) needs to be shipped whole or we need to find a way to get the meat off the bone, some kind of a steam cooker," said Dixon.



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6	8			1			9
	1		6				
	3		4			5	
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	9						5
	7			1			4
		7			5		4
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2			7			9	6

Difficulty level: Medium #68191

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that the digits 1 through 9 appear one time each in every row, column, and 3x3 box.

Solution to last week's puzzle

Puzzle #51766 (Easy)

All solutions available at <www.sudoku.com>.

5	3	2	7	9	6	4	8	1
1	7	8	5	2	4	3	6	9
6	9	4	8	3	1	5	2	7
7	2	1	6	4	9	8	3	5
8	5	3	1	7	2	9	4	6
9	4	6	3	8	5	1	7	2
3	8	9	2	1	7	6	5	4
2	1	5	4	6	8	7	9	3
4	6	7	9	5	3	2	1	8

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