

Carp Project Summary Spring 2014

4 years ago the lake association began a project to try to limit the number of carp in Circle Lake and improve the overall water quality. Carp are detrimental to our lake in several ways as they destroy vital lake vegetation that helps clean the water and provide cover for game fish. They also greatly increase the biomass of the lake which increases algae levels. Our project has an aggressive four prong approach:

- Reestablish a rough fish barrier at Wolf Creek to help prevent carp from entering the lake from the Cannon River.
- Limit spawning locations for carp around Circle Lake.
- Increase numbers of game fish that feed on carp eggs.
- Remove adult carp from Circle Lake through seining.

In 2013, our team made great progress on each of these initiatives. Reestablishing a fish barrier at Wolf Creek has been an ongoing task with many incremental steps. However, in 2013 we received DNR and Rice County permission to fabricate and install a permanent fish barrier on Wolf Creek. An image of the new fish barrier is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1 - Wolf Creek Fish Barrier

Game fish, such as Bluegill, limit carp population by feeding on their eggs in the spring. Maintaining a healthy carp predator fish population is essential to reducing the number of carp in Circle Lake. In 2013 the lake association stocked approximately 5,000 Bluegill ranging from 2" to 6" in length. Figure 2 was taken on one of the two days the Bluegill were stocked into Circle Lake.



Figure 2 - Bluegill Stocked Into Circle Lake

Carp seining has proven to be an effective way of removing adult carp from the lake. In the past winters, thousands of pounds of carp have been removed. This effort is even more important now that we have a permanent fish barrier on Wolf Creek to help prevent adult carp from entering the lake. The lake association was able to work with the DNR and a commercial fisherman again in 2013 and 2014 to complete seining operations. Figure 3 is an image of the seining operation conducted in January 2014 and Figure 4 includes statistic from the past four years. The data shows that our efforts are helping, but there are still plenty of rough fish remaining in the lake. The lake association will continue to work with the DNR to ensure rough fish are removed from the lake next winter.



Figure 3 - Rough Fish Removal from Circle Lake

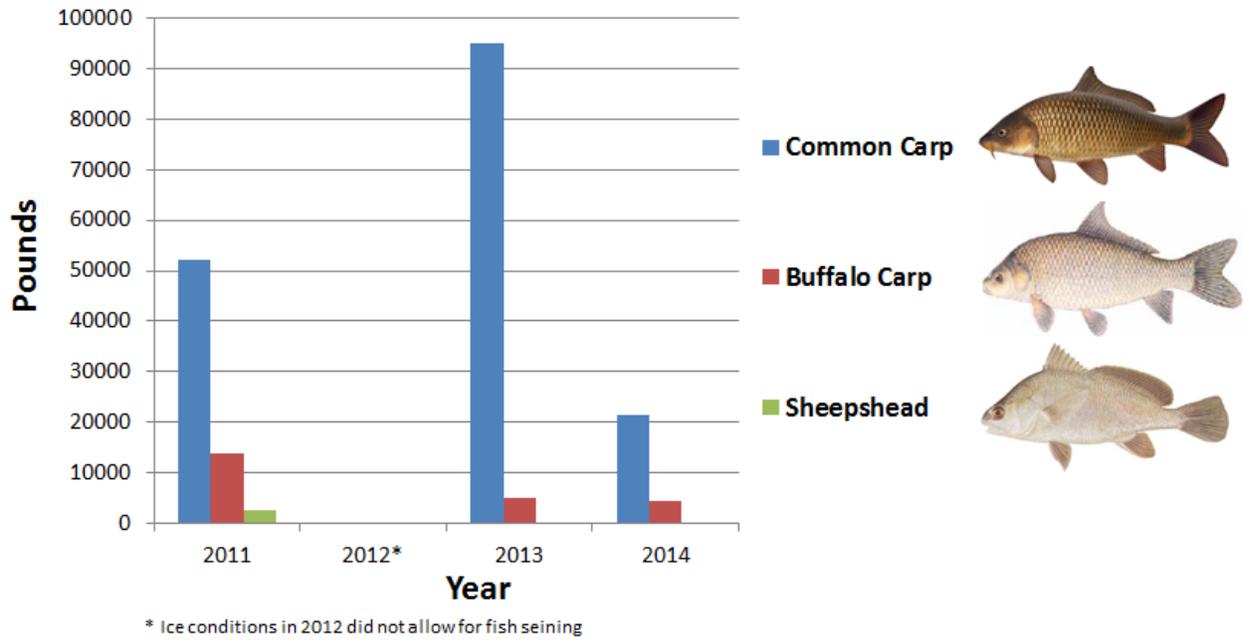


Figure 4 - Circle Lake Rough Fish Removal Statistics