
CARP DIE-OFF IN CENTRAL ONTARIO

July 2008

- The Ministry of Natural Resources is working with local health units, municipalities, conservation authorities and other partners to monitor the recent carp die-off in central Ontario lakes.
- This year, dead or dying carp have been reported in more than 10 different waterbodies in the Peterborough, Lake Simcoe and north Simcoe County areas.
- A variety of factors have stressed carp populations, including spawning, rapidly fluctuating water temperatures and disease.
- The ministry continues to send fish for testing. To date, testing results indicate the presence of Koi herpesvirus, which does **NOT** affect human health, as well as a number of naturally-occurring freshwater bacteria, including *Aeromonas*, *Enterococcus*, *Acinetobacter* and *Shewanella*.
- Local health units advise that the bacteria pose very little risk to healthy people, and that surface waters always contain bacteria which could infect those with open wounds or suppressed immune systems. They remind the public to not consume, inhale, or let wounds be contaminated by surface water.
- The invasive fish virus known as Koi herpesvirus is an infectious disease of carp, koi and goldfish that has been introduced to Ontario waters likely through the global hobby fish trade. To help prevent the spread of this disease, **do not flush sick or dead goldfish or koi down the toilet**. Dead and sick goldfish or koi should be buried or disposed of in the garbage.
- Columnaris (caused by the bacteria *Flavobacterium*) was the main cause of the 2007 Kawartha Lakes carp die-off. To date, Columnaris has not been found in this year's samples.
- If you find dead fish along your shoreline, local Health Units advise:
 - do not handle dead fish with bare hands; wear gloves and use shovels or rakes to move the fish
 - dispose of the gloves and bags in the garbage
 - wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling the carcasses
 - wash and disinfect with mild bleach the shovel or any other tool that came into contact with the animal
 - dead fish may be buried at least two feet deep, or double-bagged for disposal in landfills; residents are urged to check with their municipality to see what arrangements have been made for collection or transport of the dead fish to waste disposal sites.
- Pets should be prevented from eating dead fish that wash up on the shore.
- To report a fish die-off, call the following 24-hour toll-free number: 1-866-929-0994.
- Find current information or more about [fish health \(ontario.ca/fishhealth\)](http://ontario.ca/fishhealth).