

June Anderson The Triploid (sterile) Grass Carp has been utilized experimentally and successfully in the United States since the 1960s. The fish is originally found in the Amur River, which is a river found on the eastern side of Russia and China. The Grass Carp can live anywhere from 5-20 years. Their diet consists of aquatic vegetation and macro algae. The Grass Carp can be diploid (non-sterile) and triploid (sterile), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has worked for decades screening, inspecting, and certifying triploid grass carp as a biological agent to combat invasive aquatic vegetation species in U.S. waterways.

Milfoil and hydrilla are often targeted invasive species for removal with grass carp. However, according to Texas Parks & Wildlife, Grass carp are not as effective for bulrush, filamentous algae (pond scum or moss), water primrose, coontail, Eurasian milfoil, or cattails. (https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/water/habitats/private_water/gcarp_intro.phtml#work). According to documentation, the botanical species found on the property is milfoil, water lily, eelgrass, and other. Success of milfoil eradication may be dependent upon the species of milfoil found on site. The fruits and leaves could be a food source for birds and fowl, which may be one way of seed dispersal. Herbicides may also lead to oxygen depletion in the water, possibly creating an uninhabitable ecosystem without further intervention such as following up with aeration of the water body. Herbicides can also throw the pH balance of a pond, creating large algal plumes. Pond dyes can inhibit photosynthesis, killing off everything including beneficial plants. Because of this, it is not recommended to use or act aggressively with herbicides. Mechanical eradication can be arduous and unattainable without a large team frequently removing the species over long periods of time. Because of this, I support the use of Triploid Grass Carp to try and remove invasive aquatic vegetation species from the pond.

In normal cases, recommended stocking rate for Triploid Grass Carp is five per acre if the water body has 50% or less plant coverage, and up to 10 per acre if plant coverage is greater than 50%. But with species like milfoil, Grass Carp can be utilized at a maximum of 15 per acre, but this leaves bodies of water susceptible to elevated or excessive nutrient load, running the risk of algal blooms. If this pond collects fresh water runoff, it may help ease the burden.

It is advised to use barriers as means of control because Grass Carp often migrate toward running water. Horizontal parallel steel-bar design with two feet above the high water mark is recommended most often if escapism is possible. Welded wire or chicken wire is recommended the least because of impeding passage of debris and other wildlife.