



## Aquatic Vegetation Management in Texas: A Guidance Document

### Appendix F. Evaluation of Triploid Grass Carp Permit Applications for Public Water

The use of biological controls, such as grass carp, is often viewed as a very popular option to control nuisance aquatic vegetation since they are usually cheaper than herbicides or mechanical harvesting. Unfortunately, the introduction of exotic species, even to help control existing problems, has often led to other problems. Therefore, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department issues permits for triploid (sterile) grass carp use only, so that unchecked reproduction and overpopulation should not occur. Each application for a permit to stock triploid grass carp in public water will be reviewed and evaluated following the procedure developed by Inland Fisheries Division to ensure compliance with Section §57.126 of the Parks and Wildlife Proclamations. More information about the use of Triploid Grass Carp for aquatic vegetation control can be obtained by calling (512) 389-4444 or visiting [https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/water/habitats/private\\_water/gcarp\\_intro.phtml](https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/water/habitats/private_water/gcarp_intro.phtml).

#### Procedure:

- Step 1.** Persons or entities that wish to use triploid grass carp in Texas' public waters must submit a completed "[Application to Stock Triploid Grass Carp](#)" to the Inland Fisheries Division.
  
- Step 2.** The District Biologist responsible for managing the public water body in question reviews a copy of the permit application. The biologist is responsible for making a recommendation of whether or not to grant the permit based on the following criteria:
  - a. Is there is a valid vegetation problem? In general, triploid grass carp stockings in public water will be considered only if nuisance vegetation is beginning to detrimentally affect resident fish communities, and/or is a significant impediment to recreational access (including boating, fishing, swimming, hunting, etc.). Floating exotic vegetation species are usually not controlled very well by grass carp. Typically, vegetation is considered a problem only when it covers more than 20-40% of a water body. However, lesser amounts may be deemed a "problem" if infestations have spread to a large proportion of key access or use areas, and the potential for further spread is high. With exotic plant species it is often prudent to be proactive in order to avoid more serious problems in the future, which may require more drastic action. If there is no vegetation problem, the biologist may recommend against permit issuance.
  - b. Will the fish escape if stocked? Grass carp will not be effective if they are allowed to move away from targeted use areas. If the probability of escape is high, the biologist will recommend against permit issuance. If escape potential is high, but the construction of a containment structure is deemed feasible, the biologist may recommend issuance conditionally (i.e., only after the containment structure is in place).
  - c. Will the stocking detrimentally affect threatened or endangered species populations in the area? Unless the probability of negatively impacting T+E species is very low, the biologist will recommend against permit issuance.
  - d. Will the stocking detrimentally affect coastal wetland or estuarine areas? Public waters south and east of the freshwater/coastal water boundary line are defined as coastal waters. If stocked in this area the risk of grass carp moving into wetlands or estuaries is considered high. Biologists usually recommend against permit issuance and permits are rarely issued in the area.

- e. Will the stocking, and its consequences, conflict with TPWD management objectives, or environmental policy? If so, the biologist may recommend against permit issuance.

Additionally, biologists may contact and obtain input from nearby field personnel in other resource divisions where appropriate. Much time can be saved if comments from the Wildlife and Coastal Fisheries Divisions (where applicable) are received early in the process, and come from field personnel who are familiar with local circumstances.

District Biologists will include an evaluation of economic and recreational considerations, as well as a Checklist for Triploid Grass Carp Stocking in Public Water (completed in cooperation with headquarters staff), on the attached forms in the recommendation report.

- Step 3.** In order to provide a forum for public input, when the Department receives a request to use grass carp for the first time in a public water body greater than 75 acres in size, a public meeting or hearing will be arranged by the parties requesting stocking and held by the Department near the water body involved. For public water bodies less than 75 acres in size a public meeting or hearing may be arranged by the requesting party and held by the Department if the District Biologist thinks it is necessary. Supplemental stockings do not require a public hearing, but may still be held by the Department if it is deemed necessary.
- Step 4.** The biologist's report, a copy of the permit application, a copy of permitting criteria, a report from public hearings or meetings held, and any other pertinent information are then routed through designated staff in Inland Fisheries.
- Step 5.** Inland Fisheries staff will collate comments, and if appropriate meet with representatives of other affected resource divisions and draft a recommendation for approval or disapproval of the permit. If appropriate, special conditions (including mitigation for loss of desirable aquatic plant species) may be negotiated with applicants and set as terms of permit issuance in order to ensure minimal escape potential, and compliance with Section §57.126 of the Parks and Wildlife Proclamations.
- Step 6.** Upon review and approval of the final recommendation and supporting materials by the Director of Inland Fisheries (or a designated staff member), applicants will be notified of the status of their applications. The Director of Inland Fisheries (or a designated staff member) may approve or deny permits, or forward them to the Executive Director for review before a final decision is made.
- Step 7.** Permitted triploid grass carp may only be stocked if a Treatment Proposal for the stocking has been approved by TPWD. Regardless of the number permitted, only the number indicated in the approved Treatment Proposal may be stocked.

# Biologists Report

## Triploid Grass Carp Public Water

Lake Name: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Size (Acres): \_\_\_\_\_

Problem Plant(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Area Covered: \_\_\_\_\_

Percent of Shoreline Developed:

**Recommendation:** Stock \_\_\_\_\_ (Number) Deny Permit  
(Check)

Biological Considerations:

Economic/Recreational Considerations:

# Checklist for Triploid Grass Carp Stocking in Public Water

**Water Body Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Applicant has **completed** and **submitted** to the Department a **triploid grass carp permit application**.
  - Date Accomplished \_\_\_\_\_
  - Comments \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Applicant has **remitted** to the Department all **pertinent fees**.
  - Date Accomplished \_\_\_\_\_ Fee \_\_\_\_\_
  - Number of Fish in initial stocking \_\_\_\_\_
  - Comments \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. **All information provided** in the triploid grass carp permit application **is true and correct**.
  - Date of inspection or inquiries \_\_\_\_\_
  - Person conducting inspection or inquiries \_\_\_\_\_
  - Comments \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Applicant has **not been finally convicted**, within the last year, for violation of the Parks and Wildlife Code, 66.007, 66.015, or these rules.
  - Date of criminal background check \_\_\_\_\_
  - Person requesting background check \_\_\_\_\_
  - Comments \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Issuance of a triploid grass carp permit is **consistent with department fisheries or wildlife management activities**.
  - Date of discussions and considerations \_\_\_\_\_
  - Persons involved \_\_\_\_\_
  - Comments \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Issuance of a triploid grass carp permit is **consistent with the Parks & Wildlife Commission's environmental policy**.
  - Date of discussions and considerations \_\_\_\_\_
  - Persons involved \_\_\_\_\_
  - Comments \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. Issuance of a triploid grass carp permit and subsequent stocking **does not conflict with specific management objectives of the department**.
  - Date of discussions and considerations \_\_\_\_\_
  - Persons involved \_\_\_\_\_
  - Comments \_\_\_\_\_

8. Issuance of a triploid grass carp permit and subsequent **stocking will not detrimentally affect threatened or endangered species** populations or their habitat.
- Date of discussions and considerations \_\_\_\_\_
  - Persons involved \_\_\_\_\_
  - Comments \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
9. Issuance of a triploid grass carp permit and subsequent stocking **will not detrimentally affect coastal wetland** and estuarine ecosystems.
- Date of discussions and considerations \_\_\_\_\_
  - Persons involved \_\_\_\_\_
  - Comments \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
10. Determination of the number of triploid grass carp authorized for possession under a triploid grass carp permit will include the **consideration of the surface area of the pond or lake** named in the permit application and, as appropriate, the **percentage of the surface area infested** by aquatic vegetation.
- Date of discussions and considerations \_\_\_\_\_
  - Persons involved \_\_\_\_\_
  - Comments \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
11. A hearing or meeting was conducted to provide the TPWD with public input relative to the proposed triploid grass carp stocking.
- Date of meeting or hearing \_\_\_\_\_
  - Persons involved \_\_\_\_\_
  - Comments \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
12. Biologists Report submitted to Austin headquarters staff.
- Date of report \_\_\_\_\_
  - Comments \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_