

★ **Overrun: Dispatches from the Asian Carp Crisis**

Andrew Reeves

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Environmental journalist Andrew Reeves labels *Overrun* “an environmental travelogue.” In it, he follows the Asian carp along its invasive path through North America. In some respects, the book reads like a modern-day horror tale, in which a species introduced by well-meaning people now threatens the Great Lakes.

With a journalist's critical eye and storytelling ability, Reeves traces the rise of the Asian carp in the lakes from its very beginning. Controversy surrounded the use of the carp, pitting private supporters against public agencies who began to restrict the fish. The debate stretched over decades. Reeves reports that carp offered what appeared to be an environmentally friendly alternative to herbicides. The turning point came when the carp “first escaped state and private fish hatcheries to swim freely in America’s open waters.”

The book moves seamlessly from location to location, demonstrating the relentless resilience of the Asian carp. The suspense grows as it becomes clear that the carp were doing more damage than good. Reeves’s chilling reportage enhances the narrative. He writes, for example, that “carp breed like bunnies, and can double their biomass in less than three years. Populations will quickly rebound even after substantial numbers are culled.”

Many anecdotes about fishermen’s interactions with the carp, which are “spectacularly rough,” enrich the story. Potential solutions to the carp crisis, such as marketing them for human consumption, are fascinating—but as Reeves observes, they promise to be less than effective.

Overrun is more than an engaging story about nuisance fish. This eye-opening book demonstrates the interrelationship of species, the climate, and the environment. As one biologist tells Reeves, “Asian carp are just an example of the environment telling us that we have done something dramatically wrong to our ecosystems.”

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (January/February 2019)

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