The Common Carp

The Common Carp is not native to our area. It was introduced in the mid-1800s as a commercial food fish.

Carp can tolerate murky water conditions with low oxygen levels.

Carp forage by pushing their sucker-mouth into the sediments to inhale the material. It is filtered through their gills, extracting the food and releasing the sediment back into the water. The water is left murky with suspended sediment (see picture below).

Carp harm native fish species directly by eating fish eggs and young fish and indirectly by uprooting plants and creating an environment that is inhospitable to native species.

Effects on Water Quality

Water quality is adversely affected by excessive nutrients in the sediments (particularly phosphorus) constantly being re-suspended by foraging carp.

High concentrations of phosphorus contribute to excessive algae growth (pictured below on the East pond).

Phosphorus in the Coves has been recorded at levels 6 times higher than Ontario's acceptable standards

Excessive growth and decay of algae depletes oxygen in the water driving out native species that cannot tolerate low oxygen levels.

Effects on Vegetation

Algal blooms diminish the depth that light can penetrate the water. This limits the available areas with adequate light for plant growth.

The constant disturbance of sediments by carp prevents aquatic vegetation from establishing.

Carp can strip the pond bottom of vegetation and move on to eating the roots of shoreline vegetation. This impairs the growth of vegetation along the shoreline, destabilizes the ground and eventually results in the slumping of the bank into the pond (pictured above).