

## [Tripliod Grass Carp Fishing Tactics and Tips](#)

DEEP has enlisted the help of volunteer anglers to reduce the grass carp population to aid in restoring submerged aquatic vegetation at Candlewood Lake and Squantz Pond. This represents an exciting angling opportunity to catch a powerful 30lb fish in freshwater. However, the techniques used to catch grass carp are quite different from those used to catch common sportfish like bass and trout. Below are some helpful tips intended to boost your odds of success.



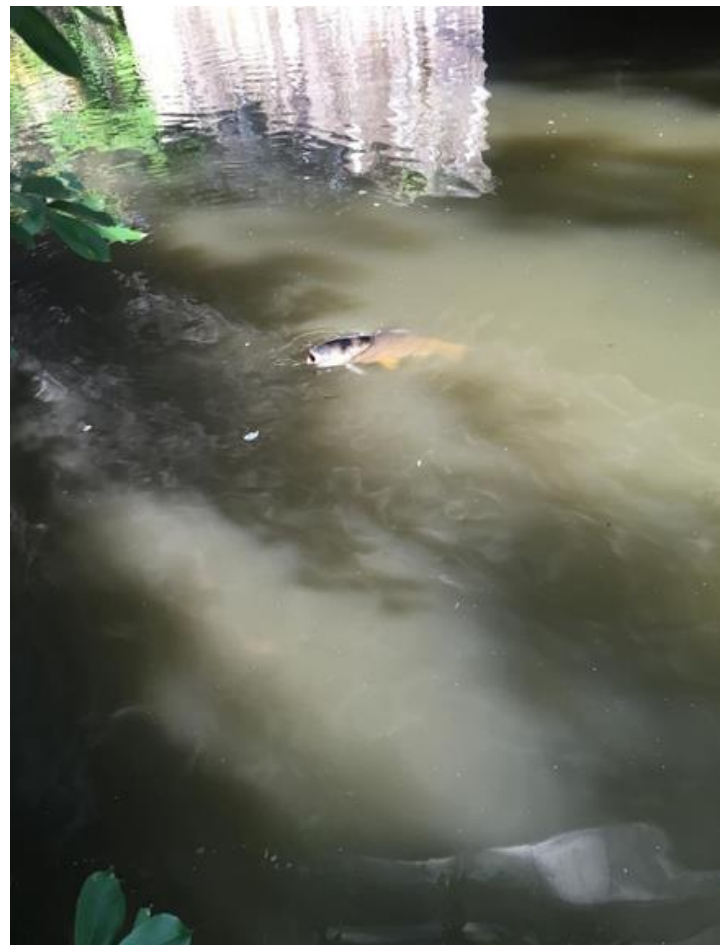
*The volunteer angling program at Candlewood Lake and Squantz Pond offers a new fishing experience for freshwater anglers. Fishing for grass carp does not require expensive equipment or bait. This grass carp fell for a piece of bread floated on the surface. Looping the bag of bread on a beltloop is an easy way to keep your bait handy and dry.*

### [Grass Carp Strategies](#)

**Sight Fishing:** Grass carp are commonly targeted with a sight fishing approach; they spend most of their time in shallow water and regularly sit just below the surface making them visible to observant anglers. From a distance they can be spotted when their fins or mouths breach the surface. A common tactic is to search the fishing area until you spot grass carp, and then get them feeding by chumming with the bait you intend to use. The plan is to toss out some chum and watch for the carp to start feeding on it, and then cast a hooked bait. Baits that float on the surface work well for this and allow the angler to see when a carp has taken the bait.

### [How to Get Involved](#)

To participate in the volunteer angler program and legally harvest grass carp from Candlewood Lake and Squantz Pond, anglers need to sign on to a Scientific Collectors Permit that authorizes this program. Once signed on to the permit, any grass carp captured cannot be released into the lake or other waters and must be immediately euthanized. All catches need to be reported to DEEP using a short online form. Both the permit sign up and catch reporting forms are available on this page: [Tripliod Grass Carp Removal from Candlewood Lake and Squantz Pond \(ct.gov\)](#)



*Grass carp can be spotted feeding and cruising just below the surface. Look for fins or their heads to occasionally breach the surface.*

## Grass Carp Strategies Continued

**Hunting for Berries:** There are a variety of trees and shrubs that produce berries; these include mulberry trees, some varieties of cherry trees, autumn olive, and porcelain berry among others. When these plants hang over the water their berries fall into the lake where they are favorite food for both grass and common carp. Finding a berry tree can be a challenge, but once located the rewards are worth the effort. Grass carp will often sit directly under a tree that is



*Mulberries are a favorite food for both grass and common carp during June and July.*

dropping berries; during these times they can be quite aggressive and rush to eat anything that drops off the tree. To target these fish, the first step is to find a good berry tree, and then pick a few fruits off and throw them in the area beneath the tree. It will be apparent if carp are present. Then thread a berry on to the hook and cast it beneath the tree and be ready for an aggressive take. Berries from the supermarket can also be used in these situations, blue berries and blackberries can work if it is difficult to pick berries off of the tree. Berries can also be imitated with artificial lures; there are a number of berry flies used by fly fisherman. Beads or fliers typically used by flyfisherman to imitate salmon or trout eggs are also excellent berry imitations.

**Common Carp Bottom Fishing Tactics:** Grass carp can also be caught using traditional bait fishing tactics for common carp. This entails pre-baiting (chumming) a fishing area with kernels of corn before your trip, and then baits are fished on the bottom using a sinker. A comprehensive guide to common carp fishing tactics is available at this link: [Carppdf.pdf \(ct.gov\)](#). These tactics can be used to target grass carp. One angler participating in the volunteer grass carp

program has had success fishing popup boilies, a type of special flavored dough ball that floats up off the bottom making it more visible to carp. Boilies flavored with fruity or sour baking extracts have been particularly effective for this angler. Pre-made boilies can be purchased online or at tackle shops that cater to carp anglers. Popup boilies can also be made at home, there are numerous DIY recipes available online.

## Gearing up

**Tackle:** Even though grass carp are a large fish, a comparatively small hook is needed to catch them. They have small mouths and will reject baits that don't look or feel natural. A small but reasonably stout hook (size 4-6) is recommended. For line, 10lb braid connected to a long 8-10lb monofilament leader offers a good compromise of breaking strength and enhanced casting distance. The monofilament leader also helps baits float on the surface. A 7-9ft medium weight rod equipped with a 3000 class (small to medium size) spinning reel will allow anglers to cast light baits but have enough strength to handle a large grass carp. Catching a big grass carp is an exciting challenge for fly fisherman as well. A 9-10 weight fly rod provides the backbone necessary to handle these fish. Fishing berry patterns is probably the best bet for connecting with a carp on the fly.

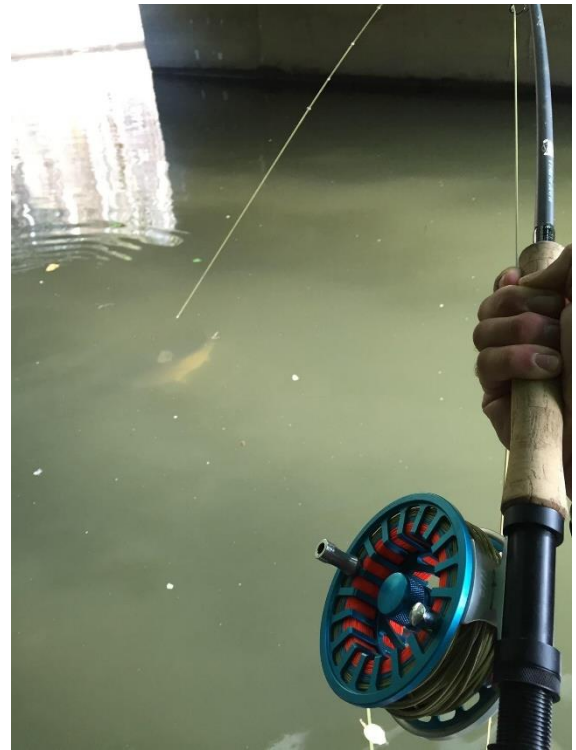


*Black cherries are also relished by carp. This photo provides an example of the size hook that can be used for grass carp as well as how egg beads can be used to imitate berries.*



**Baits:** Good baits for grass carp include white bread, berries, corn (boiled maize), cherry tomatoes, and plant matter such as iceberg lettuce or grass clippings. Some of these baits can be difficult to cast and may require you to get close to the grass carp. When using white bread, it is important to securely attach it to the hook, and to cast gently to prevent it from flying off. Fishing a piece of floating white bread on the surface can be a successful tactic, particularly when grass carp have started feeding on white bread chum. To rig a floating bread bait the first step is tear off a piece of bread (1/4 of a slice is reasonable starting point) and then pinch down and really compact one corner of the piece of bread. This forms a dense area for the hook to be attached. The rest of the bread remains uncompacted and will float on the surface.

**Stealth:** Grass carp are renowned for being a wary fish and are easily spooked. When targeting them it is important to keep stealth in mind. Avoid motor noise or excess splashing and try to maintain some distance from fish when sight fishing. It is also important to avoid spooking the fish when throwing chum or casting a bait. Grass carp are a curious fish and will investigate items floating on the surface to see if they are edible. It is not necessary to cast directly at a fish, but to present a bait in the general area of a fish and allow it time to find and eat the bait.



*Grass carp can be a challenge to hook and land on a fly rod, but they are certainly a worthy target.*



*Grass carp have broad tails and make powerful runs. Anglers trying to land grass carp can be in for a big surprise splash of water when they take off on another run.*

**Fighting the Fish:** When hooked grass carp will make an explosive initial run; grass carp in Candlewood lake can exceed 30lbs and put far more strain on tackle than bass. It is recommended to fish with a relatively light drag to avoid breaking the line or pulling the hook. After the initial run, grass carp will settle down, and though they will feel heavy on the line they can be gradually brought in, but that does not mean the battle is over. When grass carp get close to the boat or shore, you can expect them to make another powerful run and will often soak unsuspecting anglers with water thrown by their broad tails. You can expect to repeat the run and retrieve cycle a couple times before a grass carp is ready to be landed. Grass carp can be challenging to land without a large landing net.