

Recent Grass Carp Stocking in Lake Gaston

Recently Dominion Energy, in conjunction with North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, stocked 1,341 sterile grass carp on Pea Hill Creek. The grass carp are part of a multi-faceted approach to controlling invasive hydrilla in LKG that includes biological controls, chemical controls and other management techniques. The LKG Technical Advisory Group (TAG), acting on a request by the Lake Gaston Weed Control Council (LGWCC) in July, approved the carp stocking which occurred on October 22, 2026 at the Pea Hill Creek public boat launch. It's important to note that fish stocking should not be done during times of elevated water temperature to prevent excessive mortality rates.

Infertile grass carp are used to control the vegetation in order to preclude the fish from reproducing and causing damage to the lake ecosystem. The wildlife agencies use a model approach to ensure the population of grass carp does not exceed the number of fish needed to help control the invasive/nuisance vegetation. Without checks on the carp population, areas in the lake can become completely devegetated, resulting in water quality issues and negative impacts to fisheries and wildlife on LKG.

LKG has seen an uptick in hydrilla as indicated by the 2025 shoreline vegetation survey. The 2026 shoreline survey is nearing completion and although the data has not yet been compiled and analysed, it appears there may be an increase in hydrilla acreage this year as well. The carp stocking, a biological control measure to reduce hydrilla, has an additional potential benefit as well - the carp also like to consume southern naiad (bushy pondweed) a native vegetation that has seen an increase in LKG recently!

Once the 2026 aquatic vegetation survey data analysis is complete in early 2027, North Carolina State University, the TAG and Lake Gaston Stakeholders Board will make recommendations to the LGWCC for additional carp stocking in 2027. For additional information on LKG aquatic vegetation management go to the LGWCC website at <https://lgwcc.org/wp/>



Grass carp being offloaded into LKG



Sterile grass carp in net during LKG stocking