

Common Carp

Cyprinus carpio

Fish · Here all year · spawns May-Jul



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A large, heavy, deep-bodied fish with thick lips, four barbels around the mouth and a long dorsal fin. Centuries of domestication have produced several forms: the fully scaled common carp, the mirror carp with a scatter of large irregular scales, and the almost scaleless leather carp. Carp live in the warmer, richer still waters of the region, having been introduced for food and later for angling.

BEHAVIOUR

Carp feed by rooting in soft bottoms, using their barbels to locate invertebrates and sucking up mouthfuls of silt to sift, which clouds the water and can strip a shallow pond of plants where numbers are high. They tolerate low oxygen and warm water well. They are long-lived — individuals of several decades are documented — and are wary and quick to learn to avoid a bait.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Carps and minnows (Cyprinidae)
SIZE	Commonly 40-70 cm · can exceed 20 kg
UK STATUS	Long-established introduction; illegal to move between waters without consent

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