

# World Koi Carp Classic 2010

## Questions and Answers

### The Event

#### *What is it?*

The World Koi Carp Classic is a fun bowfishing event run by the New Zealand Bowhunters Society Inc.

#### *Where and when is it?*

Solid Energy Puketirini Park Huntly, accessed via Weavers Crossing Road (off Rotowaro Road), New Zealand. The 2010 event is on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November.

#### *Why is it called the World Koi Carp Classic?*

It is open to bowhunters from all over the world

#### *What is the purpose of the event?*

While the event is primarily a bowfishing event it is also used as a forum to highlight the dangers these pest fish pose to our biosecurity. With this in mind the Department of Conservation have become a major backer and Solid Energy have signed a contract to assist with funding and the infrastructure required to run the event over the next few years. The event also aims to attract people to Huntly and its unique Lake Puketirini Park and Huntly Rotary play a large part in running the event.

#### *What does the event comprise?*

Most bowhunters take the opportunity to camp together over the weekend and arrive at the venue on Friday night. The bowfishing competition starts at first light on Saturday and Sunday and competitors can hunt throughout the Waikato river system either on foot or from boats. A prizegiving is held on Sunday afternoon.

Huntly Rotary are closely involved with the event both providing catering and also running the weighing of fish, and organising distribution of the dead koi. The University of Waikato usually has research students at the event, measuring koi and taking samples for various research projects. DoC and Solid Energy have a presence as key sponsors and DoC takes the opportunity to publicise the harm koi carp do to the waterways and highlight other environmental problems such as Didymo.

#### *Are the public welcome?*

Members of the public are very welcome at the event and usually join with the bowhunters to attend the prizegiving ceremony. The koi are distributed to local fishermen throughout the weekend for use as berley or bait. The public also get a chance to talk to the Department of Conservation and Waikato University about the fish and research taking place.

#### *When is the best time to go and have a look?*

In the afternoons, when the shooters begin to come back in to weigh their fish - Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> November from around 5pm to 7pm and Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November from around 2pm to 4pm. Prizegiving is held at approximately 5pm on Sunday.

#### *What are the entry conditions?*

Bowfishers must belong to the New Zealand Bowhunters Society and pay an entry fee. Only bowfishing is allowed. Entrants must sign a safety disclaimer that acknowledges they have the skills to shoot the event. Shooters can enter as teams

or individuals and they must be back at Weavers Park each day to register for the weigh in by 7pm on Saturday and 4pm on Sunday.

*How many entries do you have/normally get?*

Usually around 80.

*Are there prizes?*

Medals sponsored by Solid Energy are presented for the heaviest carp, and the highest team total weight of carp. There are also trophies and wooden plaques presented for the largest koi shot by a Junior (16 and under) the most koi shot, the smallest koi, the heaviest white koi carp and the heaviest "other" fish. At the end of the prizegiving there is a balloted prize giveaway for all entrants present, using prizes donated from local and national sponsors.

*Who shoots – are there overseas entries, age limits and do women shoot?*

Anyone aged 12 years and over who is a member of the New Zealand Bowhunters Society can shoot. Several women shoot each year.

*Where do bowfishers go shooting?*

There are small numbers in isolated patches around much of the North Island but they are most concentrated in the lower Waikato River or any water that connects to the system such as the shallow peat lakes (eg Waahi, Whangape, Waikare).

*How many does one person expect to get and is there a limit?*

Most shooters expect to get a lot, but in reality it is dependant on skill and conditions. Historically the most koi shot by one person over the weekend is 331. That person was Kevin Low, in 2006. There is no limit to the number of koi each person is allowed to shoot.

*How may do you expect to get over the whole weekend?*

In the first shoot ever bowfishers shot 14 koi in total. The highest total number was in 2004 when 3278 koi were shot. This was due to both high entry numbers and perfect conditions. These 3278 fish weighed 8.6 tonnes.

*How long has the event been going and how many fish have been shot?*

The first event was held in 1990 and 2010 will be our 21<sup>st</sup> year. There have been over 20,000 koi taken (weighing more than 50 tonnes) over the entire history of the carp classic to date.

*Can you shoot other fish as well?*

Yes, any freshwater fish that complies with NZBS game rules (and Fish and Game legislation) can be shot. Typical other species shot are grass carp, wild goldfish and mullet.

*What do you do with the fish?*

The event is advertised so that fishermen who like to use the koi for bait or berley can come and collect it over the weekend. A donation to Rotary is given in exchange for the bait. If there are fish left over they are taken away and buried.

*Can I enter the competition on the day?*

Pre-entry by post is encouraged and preferred. Details are available on [www.nzbowhunters.co.nz](http://www.nzbowhunters.co.nz)

## **Koi Carp**

### *What are koi carp?*

Koi carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) are a member of the Cyprinidae family, along with tench, rudd and goldfish. Koi are not native to New Zealand, having originated in Europe, where for hundreds of years they have been important in aquaculture, also in the Middle East and Asia. They are distinguished by two pairs of barbels, one pair at each corner of the mouth. New Zealand's koi are derived from the highly bred Japanese koi variety, typified by varied and irregular blotching in a variety of colours –orange, gold, black, red, and pearly white.

### *How and when did they get here?*

Ornamental Japanese koi carp were brought to New Zealand and became quite widely distributed amongst aquarists and pondkeepers and the wild koi now present are either escapes or deliberate releases from these pond stocks. Wild stocks were first noted in the Waikato in 1983 and the first bowshot carp were taken early in 1987.

### *What effect do they have on the environment?*

Koi feed on organic materials in the bottom sediment, sucking material up from the bottom and expelling it out again while filtering out small animals and plants. This uproots plants and creates turbidity in the water. Turbidity affects the ability of bottom-rooted plants to grow in low light levels and also inhibits fish species sighting their normal food sources.

### *What is their official status*

Koi carp are classified as an Unwanted Organism under the Biosecurity Act – this means a fine of up to \$100,000 or up to 5 years imprisonment for people caught releasing, spreading, selling or breeding them.

Koi are also a Noxious Species under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations – this means a \$5000 fine can be given to people who possess, control, rear, raise, hatch or consign koi carp, without authority from the Department of Conservation.

### *What is the geographical extent of koi?*

They are present in the lower Waikato, Auckland and at one location in Nelson. They are not in Lake Taupo..

### *Can you eat them?*

Permits are required from DoC to catch and sell carp and most licences are for the purpose of use as fish bait. Koi is a very oily fish with a strong smell and is not favoured for eating. Some recipes suggest soaking in fresh water to improve the flavour.

### *How heavy do they get and how big would that fish be?*

The heaviest carp shot by a member of NZBS (Bob Gow) is 12.75 kg. That fish was 70cm long and had a girth of 76cm.

### *How old would the biggest fish be?*

Around 8 years (males) to 12 years (females)

### *Why are they spreading so fast?*

Koi carp are aggressive colonists of new habitats and reach maturity quickly. A koi of about 6kg may have 1.5million eggs. The fish are said to spread from one water area to another by the transport of their adhesive eggs on weed and boats or possibly attached to the feet of wildfowl. They are also very tolerant of habitat variations and

low oxygen levels, water turbidity, pollutants and other conditions that other more delicate fish will not tolerate.

*Is anyone doing anything to stop them?*

The presence of koi in the lower Waikato and its lakes cannot be reversed but New Zealand must adopt strategies to limit and manage their effects and stop their spread. Research is currently directed at better understanding their habits and current efforts are on raising awareness about the damage they do and educating people about how to stop them spreading.

*If there are so many carp in our waterways, how is shooting a few thousand at this event each year going to help?*

There are several ways this event will help:

- It allows access to fish for the University of Waikato and DoC to measure and undertake other research
- It provides a venue for information about the abundance and pest aspects of the carp to be on display to the public
- Tagged fish are often shot and returned by bowhunters and this provides valuable information about fish behaviour.

## **Bowfishing**

*What are ideal carp shooting conditions?*

No wind, sunny day, warm water with some fresh flooding up into pasture areas.

*What equipment do you need?*

You will need a bow, an arrow with a special fish head, and a bowfishing reel with line that attaches to the head of your arrow. Polarised glasses are recommended and footwear suitable for wading in mud. A spade to bury your fish is also important.

*How much does it cost?*

Bow – \$100 upwards

Reel - \$30 to \$250

Arrow and head – \$25 to \$50

*Where can I get equipment from?*

If you join NZBS a list of suppliers is available in the newsletter.

*Do you need a licence?*

No, but if you are bowfishing on DoC land you are permitted to use your bow to shoot carp by way of your NZBS membership and an annual permit issued by DoC. You should get landowners permission if you are accessing waterways through private land.

*Why do you do it?*

It is exciting to spot stalk and shoot the fish. Also, bowfishing takes you into our often forgotten wonderful wetland environment.

## **Information**

*Where do I get information about the NZBS?*

Write to: NZBS Administrator Catherine Park PO Box 363 Katikati

Phone: 07 5494332

Website: [www.nzbowhunters.co.nz](http://www.nzbowhunters.co.nz)

*How do I join the New Zealand Bowhunters Society?*

As above – Application forms can be downloaded from the website or sourced from the secretary. An annual membership subscription currently costs \$60.00.

*Where can I get information about Koi carp?*

DoC website – [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)

Environment Waikato website – [www.ew.govt.nz](http://www.ew.govt.nz)

NZ Freshwater Fishes, RM McDowell 1990