

CRUCIAN CARP (*Carassius Carassius*, Linnaeus, 1758)

Black Sea and Adriatic Basin

Native species

The crucian carp grows 20 to 35 cm, with a maximum length of 55 cm. It has a deep, laterally compressed body with an arched back. The dorsal fin is long, convex and high with a serrated third spine. The head is small with a small, terminal mouth. The back is typically dark greenish-brown, the sides are lighter and yellowish and the belly is reddish-white. The pectoral, pelvic and anal fins are reddish, while the other fins are yellowish with grey edges. At the base of the caudal fin, there is usually a dark spot.

The crucian carp is extremely hardy and can survive under very poor environmental conditions, even in swampy waters with minimal oxygen levels. It usually stays near the bottom of lakes and ponds and is rare in flowing waters.

It reaches sexual maturity at 3 to 4 years. Spawning takes place from May to July. During spawning, fish gather in shallow, vegetated areas and often poke their snouts above the water surface. The female lays 100,000 to 300,000 adhesive eggs on aquatic vegetation, typically in three batches.

The crucian carp feeds on earthworms and aquatic insect larvae, which it digs for in the mud. It also eats algae and plankton.

It lives throughout almost all of Europe, except for the northern parts of Scandinavia, parts of England, Ireland, France and Italy, including the Adriatic basin. It also inhabits the south-eastern Iberian Peninsula and eastward it extends into Asia.

It prefers standing waters, while it is rarer in flowing rivers. It is more common in riverbends, backwaters and ponds. In Slovenia, it occurs in the Mura, Drava, lower Sava, Krka and Kolpa rivers.

The crucian carp is not currently endangered, but it could be threatened by land drainage. It is protected by fishing size limits, closed seasons and catch restrictions. Effective protection can be achieved only through the establishment of reserves.

Crucian carp – *Carassius carassius* (Linnaeus, 1758)

River basins in Slovenia: Adriatic, Danube

Spawning season: May to July

Number of eggs: 100,000 to 300,000

Sexual maturity: 3 to 4 years

Size: 20 to 35 cm (max. 55 cm)

Red List of Slovenia: –

Species status: Native (Danube), Introduced (Adriatic)

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