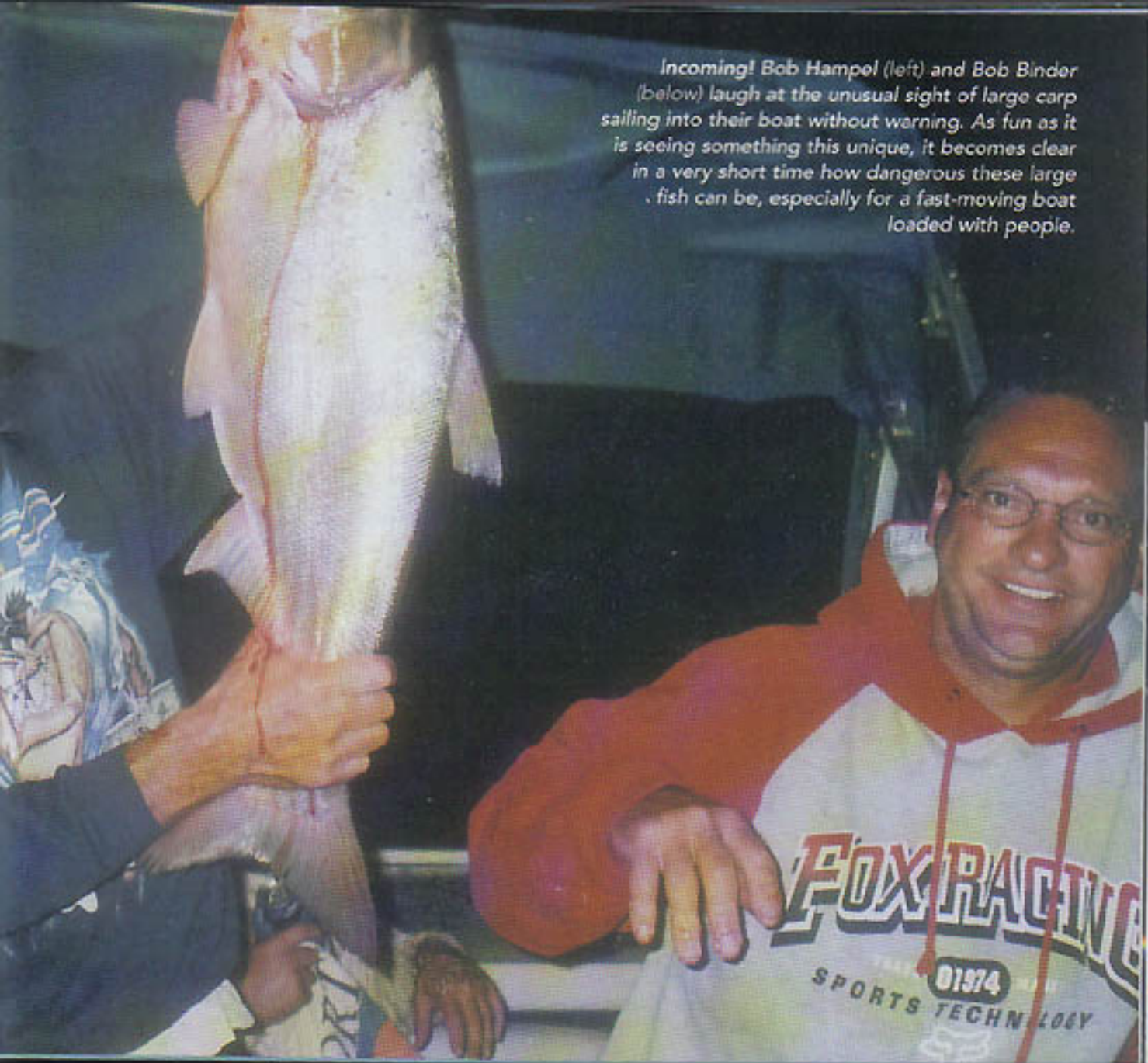


*Incoming! Bob Hampel (left) and Bob Binder (below) laugh at the unusual sight of large carp sailing into their boat without warning. As fun as it is seeing something this unique, it becomes clear in a very short time how dangerous these large fish can be, especially for a fast-moving boat loaded with people.*



1831 and were distributed around the upper Mississippi River. The common carp is actually related to the goldfish, can be up to five feet long and weigh up to 80 pounds. It has been recorded that they can live as long as 65 years.

The grass carp, also known as white amur, came from eastern Asia in 1963 to control submersed aquatic vegetation in aquaculture ponds in Alabama and Arkansas, but weren't found in the Mississippi River until around 1971 in the Illinois area. The grass carp is actually part of the minnow family, but can grow to be about four feet long and can weigh about 40-50 pounds. They have been

known to eat almost 100 pounds of vegetation per day!

The common and the grass carp have been destroying habitat and reducing water quality for the native fish by eating or uprooting vegetation. They were both introduced to the Mississippi River by government agencies.

The bighead carp came to the United States in 1973 from China, to improve the water in some of the aquaculture ponds for Arkansas farmers. They were first found in the Mississippi River in 1983. The bighead can weigh up to 88 pounds and grow to about four feet in length. They are large filter-feeders and are endanger-

ing the larval fish, paddlefish, bigmouth buffalo and the freshwater mollusks or clams.

The silver fish came to the United States in 1973 from Asia. They were bought by an Arkansas farmer to control phytoplankton and also as a food source. They also escaped into the Mississippi River in the early 80's. The silver fish can eat about two or three times their weight in plankton per day. They are also in competition with the larval fish, paddlefish, bigmouth buffalo and the freshwater mollusks. They can grow to about three feet in length and weigh up to about 60 pounds. The silver fish are also known to be the ones that are a problem to