

Who released koi in downtown Yonkers?



[Ernie Garcia, elgarcia@lohud.com](mailto:elgarcia@lohud.com) 4:44 p.m. ET Aug. 17, 2016 | Updated 7:02 a.m. ET Aug. 18, 2016

The koi can often be seen in the western-most of the three pools in the park, which is near Buena Vista Avenue.

YONKERS — Koi have added a splash of color to the exposed Saw Mill River park downtown while becoming an attraction.

Nobody knows who put the orange and white koi, a type of domesticated carp originally bred in Asia for ornamental ponds, in Van der Donck Park at Larkin Plaza. They certainly didn't swim in from the Hudson River, which connects to the Saw Mill River underneath the downtown Metro-North train station.



(Photo: Ricky Flores/The Journal News)

"I think someone just cleaned out their koi pond," said Bob Walters, the director of the Science Barge on the Yonkers waterfront. "The odds of them swimming in from the Hudson is zero."

The first pair of koi appeared about three years ago and a second pair appeared last summer. Groundwork Hudson Valley, which cares for the park, said so far the koi aren't a threat to the habitat so long as the ponds don't become dumping grounds for more koi.

The koi can often be seen in the western-most of the three pools in the park, which is near Buena Vista Avenue. On Wednesday, two of the koi had swum up a water ladder into the park's middle pool.

The koi aren't the only big fish in the ponds in the "daylighted" Saw Mill River between Dock and Nepperhan streets. There are at least a dozen dark Asian carp that Walters said likely swam in from the Hudson River.



(Photo: Ricky Flores/The Journal News)

Some of the dark carp are at least a foot long and bigger than the koi. They're now trapped in the park because they've grown so big that they can't fit through the bars that prevent trash in the Saw Mill River from floating into the Hudson River.

Anne Megaro, a parks keeper at Van der Donck Park, said that even if the dark carp could return to the Hudson River, they might not want to.

"It's dangerous out there and safe in here, and 20 people a day feed them," said Megaro, who first noticed the large fish about two years ago.

The koi aren't the only former pets that have taken residence in Van der Donck Park's pools. On Wednesday a slider turtle was floating in the park's middle pool.

Megaro said slider turtles can live up to 60 years and some owners, like teachers who buy them for a classroom, might be inclined to abandon them in the wild.



(Photo: Ricky Flores/The Journal News)

Janice Garcia has lived near Van der Donck Park since 2013.

"I moved in and the first thing I did was walk over here and this was part of the attraction of living here, this beautiful creek," Garcia said. "I noticed them immediately."

Walters said people have embraced the carp and koi and at times, even defended them.

"A guy was trying to catch them with a hook and line and they were yelling at him 'Those are our fish,'" he said.



(Photo: Ricky Flores/The Journal News)