



CHANNEL CATFISH

Identification

- Elongated body shape with a broad flat head.
- Smooth and scaleless.
- Their mouths are surrounded by eight barbels (whisker-like appendages); 4 on the underside of their mouth, 2 at the corners of the mouth, and 2 more at the top of the mouth.
- *Deeply-forked tail* (bullheads have square tails)

Habitat

- Prefer cooler, deeper water with sand, gravel, or rubble bottoms.
- Prefer lakes and moderate to large rivers; Often found in areas of rivers with high current.
- Associated with cover including aquatic vegetation, holes and around rocks and logs.

Spawning Patterns

- Late spring to summer when water temperatures are between 24-30°C.
- Prefer to spawn in rivers and in secluded areas like undercut banks, log jams, or rocks.
- Females ranging in weight from 1 to 4 lbs can produce approximately 4,000 eggs. Eggs take 5-10 days to hatch, after which, they remain on the bottom for another 2-5 days before swimming to the surface to start feeding.

Diet

- Aquatic insects, crayfish, fish, and algae.
- Feed at night and during the day.

Age and Size

- Maximum age is likely around 24 years; Usually 9-18 inches long.
- Ontario record weight is 33.36 lb.

Fishing Tips

- Best success is from evening to early night.
- Fish on the bottom in areas with some water current and cover such as sunken logs, undercuts, and rock piles.
- Try using balls of worms, stink baits, or large minnows (dead); use heavy weights to keep bait on or near the bottom.
- Use circle hooks to avoid injuring the fish. Bobbers help but wait for the fish to take the bait prior to setting the hook.
- Heavy action rods, baitcasting reels, and strong line are recommended.