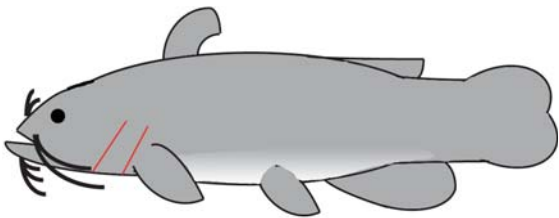


Description	There are at least 15 families of catfish now found in North and South America. All catfish are scaleless except for the armored catfish. Catfish are so named for the “barbels” surrounding their mouths, which resemble whiskers. Barbels provide the fish with several senses and make all family members excellent foragers in even the most turbid water. Family members can generally be identified by fin position, coloring position of barbels.				
Habitat	Catfish are generally found in flowing bodies of water such as rivers and streams. However, they can also be caught in some lakes and ponds. Several species of marine catfish also exist. Catfish are commonly raised in farms in at least 34 states as a food source.				
Types NA – North America SA – South America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armored (SA) • Blue (NA) • Bullhead (Black, Brown, Flat, Green, Spotted, Yellow) (NA) • Channel (NA) • Flathead (NA) • Gafftopsail (NA/SA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headwater • Sea • Stonecat • Tadpole Madtom • Walking • White (NA) • Yaqui (SA) 	Bait (test according to location)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicken liver • Crayfish • Minnows • Frogs • Salamanders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hell-grammites • Leeches • Blood Worms • Freshwater clams • Cheese balls
Lures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canepoles • Trotlines • Bushhooks • Snag-hooks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jugs • Slat-traps • Basket-traps • Trammel 	Tackle: Tackle should be scaled to fish size (light to heavy, see size details).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine baits, or baits and lures. • Try using a quartered fish such as Perch for bait. • Use strong smelling bait 	
Location	Catfish feed throughout the strike zone, but can usually be found on the bottom. (See details in right column.)				
Time	Late night for best results.				
Technique	For lake fishing use a jig and bobber. For river fishing use weight to reach the bottom. General technique is still fishing.				
Cooking	Catfish are generally good eating when they come from a clean water source. Filets can be prepared in a number of ways, including lightly breaded and fried (often in egg and cornflakes) or baked with Cajun seasoning. Catfish meat has a stronger consistency and larger filets can also be grilled.				



Basic Body Shape



Flathead Variation

Tail Variations

Most catfish families have the same basic body shape and fin configuration. However, several have specialized heads, tails and elongated fins for their environment. All have several sets of barbels, but each family has its own barbel configuration.

Channel	
<i>Technique: set lines or floating bait (shallow)</i>	
Features	Spotted with forked tail
Color	Blue or olive to dark blue
Location	Sand, gravel, stone bottoms w/out weeds
Spawn	Spring
Size	Average up to 15 pounds, possibly up to 60
Food	Fish, insects, mollusks

Flathead	
<i>Technique: Handlines, trotlines, jugging</i>	
Features	Flat head, square tail
Color	Brown with dark blotches
Location	Long, deep sluggish pools of large rivers
Spawn	Spring
Size	Up to 100 pounds, 2-3 average
Food	Crayfish, small bait fish

White	
<i>Technique: set lines or floating bait</i>	
Features	Moderately forked tail
Color	Bluish silver to darker blue
Location	Slightly brackish waters
Spawn	Spring
Size	Up to 3 pounds, 10-18"
Food	Fish, insects, mollusks

Blue	
<i>Technique: set lines or jugging.</i>	
Features	Forked tail, eyes on lower part of head
Color	Pale blue
Location	Sand, gravel bottom, swift current
Spawn	Spring
Size	Average up to 50 pounds, possibly up to 100
Food	Fish, crayfish

Armored (NOTE: commonly found in tropic fish tanks)	
<i>Technique: set lines</i>	
Features	Bony scales, high dorsal fin
Color	Dark brown with spots
Location	Creeks, rock pits
Spawn	Spring
Size	Up to 100 pounds
Food	Fish, vegetation, insects, mollusks

Bullheads		
<i>Technique: Generally slow fishing</i>		
Black	Features	Dark or spotted barbels
	Color	Black, dark green, yellowish-green
	Location	Silty water, mud bottom
	Spawn	Spring
	Size	Up to 2 pounds
	Food	Insects, small fishes, mollusks
Brown	Features	Dark chin barbels
	Color	Yellow brown, light chocolate blotches
	Location	Deeper, weedy waters
	Spawn	Spring
	Size	6-16", up to 3 pounds
	Food	Insect larvae, mollusks
Flat	Features	Flat head, slightly forked tail
	Color	Yellowish, black lower dorsal
	Location	Soft or mucky bottom
	Spawn	Spring
	Food	Mollusks
Green	Features	Small mouth, curved snout
	Color	Green, sometimes spotted or blotched
	Location	Moderate to swift current, gravel or rock
	Spawn	February to July
	Size	Up to 1 1/2 pounds
	Food	Vegetation, insects, minnows, snails
Spotted	Features	Spotted body and lighter fin tips
	Color	Black with whitish spots
	Location	Streams and rivers w/ moderate current
	Spawn	Spring
	Food	Mollusks (snails)
Yellow	Features	Light barbels and pectoral spikes
	Color	Yellowish
	Location	Sluggish streams and shallow lake areas
	Spawn	May and June
	Food	Minnows, crawfish, insects

Headwater	
<i>Technique: N/A</i>	
Features	Short, high dorsal fin
Color	Light blue
Location	Northeastern Mexico, Pecos River
Spawn	N/A
Size	N/A
Food	N/A

Gafftopsail	
<i>Technique: bottom fishing with live bait</i>	
Features	High dorsal fin just past head
Color	Steel blue
Location	Brackish water bays and estuaries
Spawn	May
Size	Up to 5-6 pounds
Food	Blue crab

Sea (NOTE: Can sting)	
<i>Technique: bottom fishing with bait</i>	
Features	Convex dorsal, tapers to slender forked tail
Color	Steel blue
Location	Warm, temperate high salinity water
Spawn	June and July
Size	Up to 1 1/2 feet and 3 pounds
Food	Small fish

Stonecat	
<i>Technique: set lines or floating bait</i>	
Features	Humped back below dorsal, square tail
Color	Yellow-olive
Location	Rocky streams and lakes
Spawn	Early summer
Size	Up to 12"
Food	Fish and aquatic plants

Tadpole Madtom	
<i>Technique: found hiding under rocks</i>	
Features	Tadpole shaped body
Color	Brown
Location	Stillwater of streams, marshes, lakes
Spawn	N/A
Size	Up to 4", good bait fish
Food	Crustaceans, insect larvae

Walking	
<i>Technique: Cheese or strong smelling bait</i>	
Features	Narrow body, full body dorsal fin
Color	Blackish
Location	Waters 41° - 48°
Spawn	N/A
Size	N/A
Food	Strong smelling

Yaqui	
<i>Technique: N/A</i>	
Features	High, short dorsal and forked tail
Color	Silver blue
Location	Northern Mexico, southern Arizona
Spawn	N/A
Size	N/A
Food	N/A

General Tips:

- Try shrimp as bait for fewer overall hits but bigger catches.
- When fishing for catfish at anchor, drop a "chum ball" made up of strong smelling baits to attract fish.