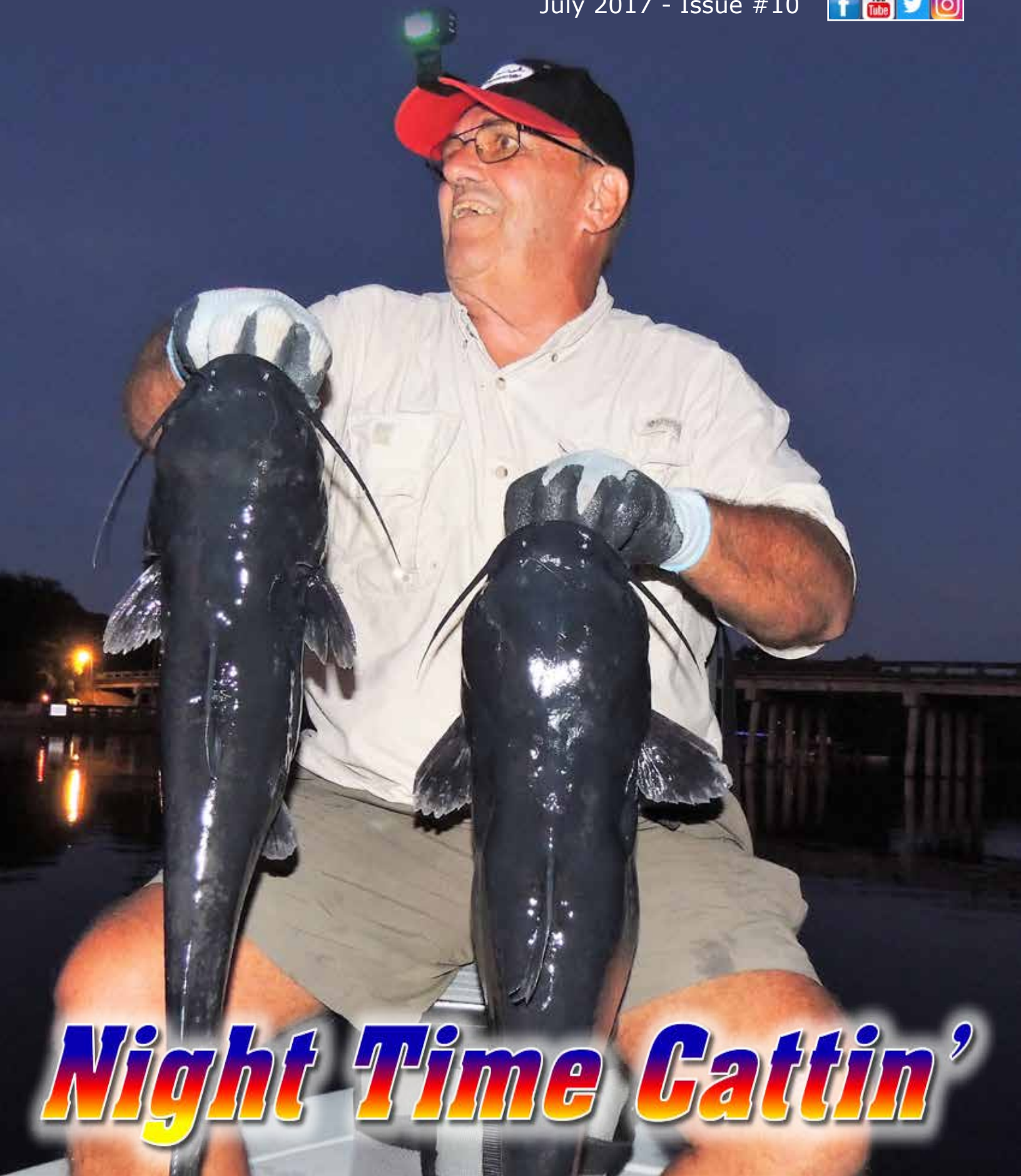


CATFISH NOW!

DIGITAL MAGAZINE

July 2017 - Issue #10



Night Time Cattin'

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by Ron Presley

Florida summers are hot and muggy. One way to beat the heat is to fish at night. As anglers quickly learn, the fish don't mind it either.



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Jonathan Cooksey tournament fishes with his dad Jackie. Team Cooksey is known for their consistency in catching trophy catfish.



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Fishing tailrace areas after dark is unusual, but productive and comfortable. Try it sometime. You will have the whole place to yourself in the cooler night air.



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English anglers seeking the mighty wels catfish understand that they feed mostly at night. That factor alone means that a good deal of pre-planning is required to deal with the challenges of night fishing for a catfish that can go more than 100 pounds



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Welcome to the July edition of CatfishNow (CFN) digital magazine and social media platform. At this time last year CatfishNow was only a dream. I had been engaged in outdoor writing for 7 or 8 years, following a career in academia. I enjoyed the teaching and administration for years, but retirement moved me in another direction.

I spent 10 years as a fishing guide on Florida's east coast and I can truthfully say I never had a bad experience taking other people fishing. Anglers are generally pretty nice folks.

During the latter part of that 10-year period I started writing for fun. It was something I enjoyed and continued after ending the guiding career. As my interest moved from saltwater to freshwater fishing I gravitated more and more towards catfishing. The more I learned and wrote about the subject, the more I realized there were thousands of stories to be told.

At the time, I was writing crappie stories for Tim Huffman at CrappieNow. That publication was co-published by Dan Dannenmueller and the late T.J. Stallings. One day I mentioned to T.J., that they should publish a CatfishNow.

His response was to talk to Dan, because he already had the idea some years ago. In fact, Dan had already secured the website name and had given preliminary thought to a catfish publication.

The rest as they say, is history. CatfishNow is a reality and I now enjoy having many new friends in the catfish community and look forward to making many more. Our industry continues to grow. Recreational anglers are eager to learn; old-timers are interested in sharing; tournament anglers are pushing the boundaries on how-to-catch-them and manufacturers are catching on to the growth potential of the catfishing industry.

I believe that there is nowhere to go but up, and the staff at CatfishNow is pleased to be along for the ride. We even hope to push the industry up the hill a bit.

We would like to hear from you. We encourage you, as readers and as advertisers, to continue your feedback. Tell us what you think of this issue and what you would like to see in future issues.

Our goal is to help grow the sport of catfishing to the benefit of all. We look forward to your comments and will seriously consider them as input for future editions.

I also want to thank our great sponsors that stand behind us and make it possible for CatfishNow to be offered free to our readers. I certainly hope that you will reciprocate by supporting them when you can.

We are extremely pleased to bring you this month's collection of catfish related content and we hope you will share it with your friends, relatives and other catfish enthusiasts.

Fish with passion,
Ron Presley, Editor

Front Cover:
Floridian Wade Leffel with
two nice St. Johns River
channel cats.
Ron Presley Photo

Fishing the Graveyard Shift
by Ron Presley

SURFACE

BELOW THE

Night Bite Catfish on the St. Johns River



You don't have to fish for catfish at night, but it sure is cooler in the hot Florida summer. The St. Johns River, known for its outstanding bass and crappie fishing, is also a great place to put some channel catfish on the dinner table.

If you fish by boat there are plenty of easy access parks to begin your adventure. If you fish from shore it is a short walk to the river's edge from many

Fishing at night is cooler and there are fewer boats on the water. Your reward can be a nice St. Johns River channel cat.

St. Johns River parks. Shoreline fishing can be very productive for catfish. Boats are not necessary to catch a great stringer of catfish on the St. Johns.

One of my favorite launches is Ed



Stone Park where the St. Johns River intersects with Hwy 40, near Deland. The West Volusia County park includes a nice seawall for shoreline fishing, picnic tables, restrooms, grills, and a four-lane boat ramp on the north side of the highway.

There is a convenient drive thru under the bridge that takes you to the south side where you will find the highly recommended Shady Oak Restaurant and the Shady Oak Bait Shack.

Channel catfish are the main target for Central Florida anglers, and the St. Johns River produces some big ones. In any fishing hole, success depends on many variables. Just like the old adage in business, the most important element in your success is likely to be location, location, location.

If you choose the right location to fish, chances are you will take home some

A Thermacell Outdoor Mosquito Repeller Lantern will produce light and also get rid of mosquitoes and bugs. Whisker Stix LED lights help anglers quickly see the bites at night.

fish for dinner. Finding the right location is partly trial and error as well as your history on the water. Just being out there on the water will identify your favorite spots, but trial and error will identify some new ones. If you don't hook up in an hour, or less if it doesn't feel right, you should consider moving to a new location unless you expect a change in fishing conditions.

What to Look For

Two important elements of river catfishing are current and structure.



Catfish are a little different than crappie, where a brush pile in calm water will hold crappie it might not hold catfish. In the case of catfish, you still want structure, but you also want current and Mother Nature usually supplies that well in the St. Johns River.

Look for an area with sunken logs, rocks, or other debris. Catfish like to lay down behind the structure and ambush their dinner as it comes by in the current. Bridge pilings and tight bends in the river are also good current breaks and likely catfish haunts.

“...the most important element in your success is likely to be location, location, location.”

Tackle and Rigging

Catfish tackle is simple and inexpensive. This makes it easy for anyone to enjoy the sport. Not counting a rod and reel the basic tackle includes swivels, sinkers, leader material and hooks.

Most catfish anglers like to put out multiple poles. The more baits in the water the more chances to catch a fish. The only limitation is the local fishery laws that regulate the number of poles that can be used at any given time. In Florida, there is no limit to the number of poles you can set out for catfish.

A 7-foot rod with a good backbone, either spinning or casting, is an excellent choice for catfishing in the river. A reel spooled with 20-pound braid is ideal to handle anything you might catch.

The go-to terminal tackle is a simple Carolina rig. Start with a 1/4 to 1/2-ounce egg sinker. Trial and error will help choose the proper size for the current. Slide the sinker up the mainline, followed by a small plastic bead. Attach a swivel to hold the sinker and bead in place. Next, add a length of 20-pound test monofilament leader and then a 2/0 or 3/0 Daiichi Circle

Hook.

Plan to get hung up occasionally when fishing on the bottom and be prepared with plenty of replacement swivels, sinkers and hooks. You will catch more catfish in the hangy areas so a few lost sinkers are worth it.

To see the bite better in the dark, fasten a Whisker Stix LED light to each rod near the tip. A fish bite becomes perfectly obvious in the darkness of night as these lights reveal the bite. These small lights have all kinds of fishing related applications. Be creative and use them where you think they would help. The battery is in a water-resistant battery boot and work well in inclement weather and even when submerged.

Throw the baited rig out on the bottom and wait for the bite. Just remember, with circle hooks you don't want to set the hook like you would on bass. It is better to just reel down on the fish until the rod loads up and then give a smooth steady lifting motion to set the circle hook. One of the best ways to fish this rig is to bait up, place the rod in a rod holder, watch the Whisker Stix LED and let the circle hook do its job.

Baits of Choice

Natural baits are always best if you can get some, but channel cats will be scavenging around for anything they can find. Strong smelling baits work well. One of the most popular is plain old chicken liver. Livers put out a good scent trail that gets the catfish active. As the scent trail moves downstream in the current the fish will come out of their ambush spots to investigate. Set up above some woody structure and allow the scent to tempt the fish out of the structure.

Old timers and local catfish anglers like plain old earthworms, and they work just fine. Fresh or frozen peeled shrimp is also readily available and easy to use. Keith “Catfish” Sutton, in his book, *Hardcore Catfishing*, has documented an unbelievable array of tasty treats that



tempt hungry catfish. They range from grasshoppers and frogs to mussels and cicadas (locust). Even stranger things like cut up soap bars and hot dogs marinated in strawberry Kool-Aid have been known to work.

Of course, there are also the homemade concoctions that creative anglers mix up on their own. Growing up in Kansas I was introduced to dough bait that my father-in-law made up. It included sweet anise and a secret ingredient that even today my wife will not let me reveal.

Don't forget the prepared baits like Leakin' Livers from Rippin Lips. It comes in chicken liver flavor and several others. The soft pellets are easy to use and they release a constant flow of scent for up to an hour. That scent may be just the ticket to keeping the area active with feeding catfish.

Don't be surprised if you experience a good bite and then it stops. Catfish are known to stray away from a feeding spot only to return a little while later. They do come back after being disturbed, so use a good dose of patience before leaving a productive spot, and if you have time,

Everything is a little tougher at night, including netting the fish. Good lighting makes it easier.

come back later.

In Central Florida the St. Johns River channel cats are a very dark colored fish. Many people confuse them with blue catfish that are found further north. They don't get as big as the blue cats, but they will give you a battle on light tackle. The Florida state record channel catfish weighed 44.5 pounds. Needless to say, you better have the right equipment, tie good knots, and be ready for a big catfish at all times. As a final precaution, be sure to pack the mosquito repellent and plenty of refreshments for your trip to the river.

My night trips include a Thermacell Outdoor Mosquito Repeller Lantern and the hand-held portable Thermacell. The lantern serves the dual purpose of repelling mosquitos and providing light for fishing at night. I also use the portable Thermacell MR-450X. Florida mosquitos can be fierce, and these Thermacell



products allow anglers to stay on the river after dark without the nuisance of mosquitos and other bugs.

I also have Vicious LED lights to add the convenience of light on the deck. I chose the green color for a soft ambient glow that does not blind my vision. The Vicious LEDs produce 720 lumens for plenty of light to tie hooks and rigs without needing additional lighting.

The right location, the right tackle, the right bait and the right amount of patience will put plenty of St. Johns River catfish on the dinner table. Personally, I prefer to take only what I want for a fish fry, CPR'ing the rest for others to catch in the future. Enjoy the cooler temperatures, have the river to yourself, and always be ready for a big one when fishing at night.



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Chicken Liver Tip

Chicken livers can be difficult to keep on the hook. One solution is to use a medical netting product to fabricate a pouch that will keep the liver contained and in the strike zone. The medical tubing comes in lengths that can be cut to accommodate the size of bait you want.

First, tie an overhand knot about 3 inches from the end of the tubing and cut with scissors behind the knot. Turn the tube inside out to place the knot on the inside. Use the fingers of one hand to open the tubing and stuff the liver (or other bait) inside the tubing with your other hand. Close the open end of the tubing while pushing the bait to the bottom.

Next, use scissors to make a small cut from the end towards the bait ball. That cut will give you two strands of mesh that you can tie together with a couple of overhand knots, leaving a perfectly enclosed bait ready for use.

Catfish Basics #019

Cut Your Bait for Action
Jason "Big Cat" Mathenia

Sometimes you go out there and the head is all they want, other times it's a chunk. I haven't completely figured it out, but I'm sure there is something going on there.

One thing I do know is that you can cut your bait a certain way and make it do different things. Even though it is cut bait, you can actually change the action of your presentation.

One scenario where I find the need to experiment is when the water is dropping. That condition is always a big factor in fishing. This is when you have to do something different, think a little outside the box.

I am telling you that presentation means a lot. Is it fluttering, spinning, or flapping? Experiment with different cuts when the bite is slow. Change the way you cut the bait and you might just change your luck.



CATFISH "SPEAK"

His head's to close to his tail:

An expression used to describe a pecking type bite by a small fish.

Larry Muse, Warrior Cat Rods



CatfishSpeak - The Language of Catfishing

Like any other sport, catfishing has a verbiage of its own. From catfish slang to useful phrases, catfish anglers communicate in a special language. CatfishNow plans to keep you up to date with this angler blending of the English language and catfish jargon that we will call CatfishSpeak. Send us your favorite.





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Nighttime is the Right Time

As summer heats up, fish when the lights go out.

by Capt. Glenn Flowers

Nighttime is the right time, and for good reason, Flatheads can and will be caught at all times during all season in all states. From the north to the south flatheads can be caught 24 hours a day on both cut and live baits especially during pre-spawn seasons. That being said, anytime a poll is taken whether people would rather fish or day time for flatheads more often than not they say they would rather fish for flatheads at night.

For many of us catfishermen we prefer night over day for many reasons. Just to list a few are comfort, secrecy of our locations, lack of other boats, and favorable temperatures during summer months. While the comforts of night fishing may be appealing to us as the angler, the fish seek the cover of darkness for other reasons.

The Transition

Flatheads prefer to hunt under the safety of darkness over all other species of fish in North America. Their remarkable ability to fade in with the backdrop, like a chameleon, gives them a major advantage when pursuing prey, especially after sunset.

During the day, flatheads can be found hiding or quietly lurking in deep holes awaiting sunset. Fishing for flatheads during the day for some is considered easy, since flatheads tend to be predictable. They will lay behind a log, in a pile of snags, or inside a root ball. They are lying in ambush patiently waiting for darkness. Flatheads, will not hesitate to inhale a bait that comes within strike range during daylight hours, yet baits must be placed precisely within the flathead's strike range. Rarely will the fish come to you.

“Once the sun sets on the horizon the flathead’s behavior is like clockwork...”

Flatheads won't normally be found far from structure during the height of the day. Exceptions to this rule include high water, stormy conditions, low barometer pressures and overcast skies. Flatheads can be found further out in open water during these conditions.

To find flatheads consistently you need to become a nocturnal predator. Anglers should learn to use the cover of darkness to shield them from their own shadow. Take note in the photos you see posted online and in magazines of when flatheads are caught. You will quickly see that the vast majority of flats are seen in photos late at night. No matter what forum, page or group you go to, for every one day time angler there are 10 who hunt flatheads at night.”

Once the sun sets on the horizon the flathead's behavior is like clockwork, they begin to emerge from their lairs. The deeper the sun sets the further they venture from their holes and snags making large circular movement's in and out of their territories awaiting full set.

Have you ever seen the movie I am Legend 2007? In the movie, there is a particular scene where the zombie dogs are trying to reach Robert Neville (Will Smith) as he hangs from a snare

Add comfort to your adventures by fishing during the night when the temperature is cooler. The result can be a nice flathead like this.



the zombies set. As the sun sets the zombie dogs are set free to do their horrors. This, in comparison, is how you





should envision flatheads. Once the sun has completely set, the flatheads will move out. They often travel several miles in a given night to feed. With so many predator fish out and about, the river will come alive with action. Millions of flatheads will be seeking dinner in the shallows up the creeks and in the depths of the rivers. Flatheads will be on the move after dark, making them easier targets.

No food source will be safe as their aggression levels skyrocket, fueled by the thrill of the kill. Unlike blue cats, flatheads need far less food to sustain their heavy bodies. Flatheads generally consume live fish high in protein, which means flatheads won't need to hunt for long.

Blue cats have been shown to forage like carp, often recorded feeding and traveling for the duration of the entire night and day. This is not the same for flatheads. Think of flatheads as more reptilian-like. Almost like a giant anaconda consuming a capybara. Once the flathead consumes the large meal, like a big bass, sunfish or catfish, the flathead, rather than continue hunting,

Deep edges close to the bank make great locations for traveling flatheads once the sun sets.

will turn around and head home to digest its meal.

Studies have shown that flatheads are only active one out of every 24 hour period. This tells us they require little hunting time to get the job done. One big meal and they are done for several hours. There is a huge lesson in these findings: Make sure your baits are set out on the dinner table at dinner time. For flatheads that is sunset.

The Twilight Bite

I don't care what you are doing or where you are, you had better have baits on the bottom once that sun hits the horizon. This is the time when flatheads will be most active. One by one flatheads will start consuming prey, filling up and heading home. It's like rush hour traffic. Often, just as the sun sets, multiple rods will be hit, then shortly after the spot goes dead. That's because these fish, have now either filled up or left that zone, it's

time to move on.

There is also a good bite at dawn. Flatheads will be actively heading back to their lairs to rest as the sun begins to rise. The few fish that did not get their fill from the night before will be ready for a quick snack before rest time. Have baits ready and set at the head of deep holes as these spots will be key locations for flatheads heading back to resting areas.

Set Ups

Like with any good angler, my set-ups have evolved to what I consider to be almost perfect today. On any given adventure with other anglers or just me solo fishing, I'll be running 7-foot 6-inch medium heavy St. Crox Mojo Cat Rods equipped with Team Catfish Gold Ring Casting Reels. I use heavy braided lines with a lighter leader than my main line. I do this for one main reason, weight return. I want my hook leader to break first, saving me tons of cash each year on buying new weights.

My mainline consists of 80-pound Tug-O-War line by Team Catfish. I add a 4- to 5-ounce no roll sinker tied to a 2/0 swivel. Below that will be a 60- to 80-pound mono hook leader. This leader will break loose more often than not allowing me to get my terminal tackle back.

Generally, I match my hook size to my baits, but always run live bait hooks. The Mighty Wide's by Team Catfish seem to be just the right tool for the job. For big baits I use 9/0 to 10/0 hooks. For smaller baits, I may drop down to 7/0 and sometimes even a 6/0.

I use a small glow stick for visibility, but also a glow wrap in case I sling my glow stick off. Team Catfish makes glow wraps that have lasted me for years. Hit the wraps with the light ever few hours and you are good to go.

Think like A Predator


If you are fishing big flatheads the tactic should be big baits and long waits.



Use big baits for big flats. Large bluegills and sunfish are your prime choice for hunting flatheads at night.

However, if you are looking for one hell of a good night your goal should be fast action flatheads. I call this "Running and Gunning." Keep moving, don't sit in one spot for longer than an hour. Bring lots of baits with short waits and you are sure to have a spectacular trip more often than not.

Using the darkness of night to increase your own comfort level during hot summer temperatures will most likely also increase your catch. The setting sun is a signal to flatheads that it is time to eat. Nighttime is the right time for summer flatheads.

 - Capt. Glenn Flowers

Catfish Profiles

in Passion: Jonathan Cooksey

by Ron Presley

Use each fishing trip to develop your skills

Jonathan Cooksey's memories of fishing go back to his childhood and his uncle's farm raised catfish pond. "It was a real treat when I got to fish there," offered Cooksey. "You never had a bad day!"

Jonathan credits his dad, Jackie Cooksey, for his fishing passion. "I remember as a child that dad always would let me go with him, any time I wanted. He would do everything in his power to make sure that I had fun. Even to this day I think dad enjoys seeing me reel in a fish more than himself."

The 31-year-old Corinth, MS resident joins a host of well-known anglers that call Corinth home. It is almost like there is something in the water. Catfish anglers

"I try to use any technique that keeps me on the move."

like Phil King, Larry Muse, David Shipman, Brooke Wilbank, Jonathan's dad Jackie Cooksey, and more reside in Corinth.

"Corinth is definitely home to many catfish anglers," offered Jonathan. "We live in a good location close to a lot of good fisheries. I can be at Pickwick Dam catching bait in 15 to 20 minutes. We are fortunate to live in this proximity to everything. I think this helps build interest and you can have success without traveling too far. I'm not sure why so many catfishermen live here, but it's my home and I'm proud to be here. I recall voting a while back and running into Phil King at the polls. You know you live in the right place when this happens!"

Like so many of his Corinth brethren, Cooksey mostly fishes the big fish waters of the Tennessee River (Pickwick/Wilson/Wheeler Lakes) and the Mississippi River. "The addiction is real," admits Cooksey. "I'm always working on tackle, looking at maps, or working on new ideas when I'm not fishing."

"I've loved to fish as long as I can remember," continued Cooksey. "In fact, I don't just love to fish, I have had a strong desire for it. I really started fishing on a regular basis in high school. But, for the past few years, tournament fishing has focused my passion solely on catfish."

Jonathan's addiction to catfishing in particular started with his first catfish tournament in 2012. He has now been tournament fishing for six years. "My dad has always set a good example for me, from day one until now. When I started tournament fishing, he showed me the right way to go about it. There are many people in catfishing whom I respect, but my dad is number one in my book."

Tournament fishing requires a variety of fishing skills. "My favorite techniques are suspend-drifting, dragging and bumping," said Jonathan. "I employ each of these techniques at different times of the year and in different situations. I try to use any technique that keeps me on the move. I believe this helps me present my baits to as many of fish as possible during a given day. I really enjoy bumping baits in current. There is just something cool about having the rod in your hand when a big catfish takes your bait."

Having the right skills and tools have allowed Team Cooksey to enjoy many successful tournaments. One particularly memorable one was Cabela's King Kat



tournament on Wheeler in March of 2016, because it was Jonathan's best day ever.

"We had five fish that weighed 189.06 pounds that day," recalled Jonathan. "Our bag included my personal best of 86.78 pounds. We ended up with the win and big fish, but even if we had finished last, it would still have been my best day on the water."

"That day was just one of those magical days that happen only when the stars align," continued Jonathan. "As soon as the tournament began we started catching fish and caught them steady until around 11:00 am. After 11:00 the fish shut down and I don't remember getting another bite on that spot. While they were biting, it was the best that I've ever seen. I remember culling multiple fish in the 30- to 50-pound range, and thinking to myself, I can't believe this. I'd hate to

Jonathan started fishing seriously in high school, but for the last few years he has focused on tournament fishing.

even guess how many fish we caught that day, but the number and the quality was by far the best day that I've ever had."

Jonathan contrasted his best day with his worst, which was also on Wheeler. "Fishing can be feast or famine sometimes and that is just the way it is," said Jonathan. "We fished the 2016 Winter Blues on Wheeler without a bite. Nevertheless, I consider a day that we don't even catch a fish a good day, because I learned what not to do. I try to use every trip to at least learn something new and build experience."

When Jonathan looks to the future





he reminisces about the past. “I would like to be remembered by my fellow anglers as a strong competitor with a strong passion for the sport. When I see someone new to the sport, I see myself just a few short years ago. I had a lot of help in my journey and I’m forever grateful. I believe one way I can give back is to help new anglers and make them feel welcome. I hope to continue fishing for a long time and will continue tournaments if the fun is still there. It is definitely exciting to do well in a tournament, but it’s even more exciting to see someone catch their personal best or a kid hooked up with a trophy fish.”

Jonathan fully recognizes the importance of conservation to the sport of catfishing if those personal bests and

Jonathan’s personal best of 86.78 pounds came at a Cabela’s King Kat tournament on Wheeler in March of 2016.

trophy cats for kids are to exist. “We have a special resource entrusted to us. Luckily, I live in an area where the fish are protected pretty well, but a lot of anglers are not so fortunate. Threats to the number of trophy catfish come from many directions with the level of severity varying by region. I do see positive things happening, like more people practicing Catch-Photo-Release (CPR) on fish over 10 pounds. This change of behavior was achieved through education related to the importance of releasing trophy fish.”

Personally, I would love to see catfish get the status of game fish in all states," continued Jonathan. "Increasingly more people are starting to target trophy fish and I think that will be a good thing for our sport on the conservation side. I believe the more catfishermen we have, the stronger voice we'll have. I think numbers, unity, and education will help us get better regulations passed that offer more protection for the fish that we all love to chase."

"I love fishing because there is always something new," concluded Johnathan. "It is a constant challenge to find and catch fish. I'm also a hunter and

I think of trophy catfishing like hunting for a big buck. You have to find the fish and then develop a game plan to catch them. I love fishing because there are no certainties and there is so much left to learn about the fish we chase and catch."

"I plan to continue fishing for as long as the good Lord will allow me. I have a five-year-old son and an 11-month-old daughter. I've already introduced my son to fishing and will introduce my daughter in the next couple of years. Hopefully my plan will insure that Team Cooksey will live on."



Jonathan is shown here in Memphis with his dad, Jackie, at the Mississippi River Monsters tournament in 2016. Jonathan urges catfish anglers to give tournament fishing a try.

Competitive Catfishing

I talk to people all the time that would like to fish competitive catfish tournaments, but won't enter due to the fact they don't think they can compete. There is tons of information online on sites like Catfish Edge, YouTube, and various others. With this amount of information available, I believe the learning curve is better than it has ever been. I would like to encourage anyone thinking about fishing a catfish tournament to enter. If I can have some success, anyone can.

Some of my greatest learning experiences have been for so called "bad tournaments". There are very few sports where you can compete against the top level of anglers, and luckily competitive catfishing is one of them. Get involved and I'll bet you'll be surprised by how much

you learn in a short period of time. Most of the big names in cat fishing are eager to help, I know because they've helped me along my journey.

I realize that tournament fishing is not for everyone, but how would you know if you never give it a chance. This is a good time to begin cat fishing and help to grow our sport for the better. I have made some very good friends from meeting them at tournaments. It is amazing how you can relate to someone when you share the same interests.

I would like to thank my current sponsors Whisker Seeker Tackle, Whisker Wear Apparel and Barnes Marine for everything they've done for me. These are three great companies and I'm proud to represent them.



CATFISH CONSERVATION

Trophy Catfish for the Future

by Ron Presley

Pay Lakes - The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Pay lakes are a large bone of contention among catfish anglers. It's no secret that many anglers do not like pay lakes for a variety of reasons. The biggest reason is the practice that takes wild catfish from public waters and places them in pay lakes where anglers pay to fish for them.

On the other side of the coin, there is a contingency of anglers, shorebound, disabled, youth anglers and others, that depend on pay lakes for their fishing enjoyment. Many of them take their catch home to the dinner table. In the beginning pay lakes were stocked with farm-raised fish and no conflict existed. In a perfect world, there should be room for all, without conflict, but we don't live in a perfect world.

Today's pay lakes are more likely to be stocked with wild fish, harvested from public waters. Many anglers do not believe that wild, trophy catfish should be caught, by any means, only to end up in a pay lake, and the likely demise they face. Those same sportsmen would not want to prevent disabled, youth, or other anglers from enjoying the sport of catfishing and the therapeutic and recreational benefits that it provides. In some cases, pay lakes may be the only alternative that some anglers have.

Ron Brooks, Fisheries Division
Director for the Kentucky Department of

Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) dates the problem back some years ago. "The pay lake issues have become contentious because of the trophy aspect that was created about a decade or so ago. As more pay lakes began to get into trophy lake offerings, more commercial fishermen were compelled to target trophy catfish because of the price the pay lakes were paying per pound."

"The tournament anglers are especially incensed because it is their belief that commercial fishing is significantly decaying the trophy catfish numbers; especially in the Ohio River. They also disagree with the notion that trophy catfish are allowed to be taken from public waters for private monetary gain. Lastly, the trophy anglers have cited concern over the treatment of the trophy catfish after they are stocked into the pay lakes."

Add in the belief of many sportsmen and women, that removing the trophy cats from the wild are taking opportunities from anglers in the future, and you pretty much identify the issue.

The modern scenario surrounding

The rub comes, when trophy fish are taken from public waters...



These fish were destined for a short life expectancy at a pay lake.

pay lakes reminds me of the old spaghetti western, The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. In the movie, Eastwood was the "Good," searching for a cache of gold (in my scenario, trophy catfish). His rival was

Lee Van Cleef, the "Bad," a bounty hunter (representing those looking to profit from the wild fish) and Eli Wallach was a Mexican bandit, the "Ugly" (stealing trophy catfish from our youth in the



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future).

My scenario may be a bit of a stretch, but the Good, the Bad and the Ugly are the words that come to mind as I researched the relationship between trophy catfish and pay lakes.

The Good

Pay lakes that operate with farm raised catfish can and do play a positive role in the life of many anglers. They can provide accessibility to the boatless, youth, disabled and other anglers seeking the convenience and recreation offered by a pay lake.

Sometimes it is a single parent mom wanting to take a child fishing and the only way she knows to do it is at a pay lake. Sometimes it is a disabled person with no other option than to visit a local pay lake to enjoy a day's fishing. There are positive benefits to come from pay lakes that operate with farm raised fish.

More examples can be cited that document the positive impacts that can come from pay lake operations. The rub comes, when trophy fish are taken from public waters, placed in private pay lakes, and made available at a fee to paying customers.

The Bad

It has been documented on social media and other places that the removal of trophy fish from public waters normally results in a dead trophy fish. It is sad, but not unusual, that the economic laws of supply and demand can have such a negative impact on a public resource.

One concerned angler outlined the supply and demand sides of the issue when he said, "Commercial fish hatcheries cannot produce the size fish that our public lakes and rivers produce, it's just not possible. They can provide plenty of 'eater size' fish, but people are willing to pay more to have a chance at catching a large fish. Sadly, the economic reality of supply and demand, is creating a problem that results in dead trophy catfish."

"Money drives people to do what they might not otherwise do," continued the angler. "The commercial fisherman sees selling fish as a 'cheap' way to make money, because there is no cost involved in producing the product. 'As long as it is legal,' are the words they live by, and what they use to justify their actions. Women could not vote during the early stages of our country. Was that right? No, but it was legal."

Individuals and organizations collect and distribute information that sheds light on the problem. One such site on Facebook operates to educate the public on the fate of wild catfish that are harvested for use in pay lake operations.

The page's philosophy seems to be one of patience and reason. They state that they "...support pay lakes that strictly stock farm raised catfish..." and that they are, "...not here to shame anyone. Our mission is to 'expose' the overharvest of RIVER catfish for trophy pay lake stockings."

This site and other individual posting verify that most pay lake trophy catfish have a high mortality rate. Perusing social media will uncover photos and videos that demonstrate the fate of trophy catfish that end up in pay lake situations. The photos of wheelbarrows and dumpsters full of dead catfish point directly to the issue. The death of trophy catfish, because of their transfer to pay lakes, are not an acceptable outcome to sportsmen and women.

Many wonder how successful a pay lake angler really is, if the trophy catfish he holds up for a photo looks skinny, sick and full of sores? The likelihood that the fish will die, and not be available for anyone else to catch in the future, is high.

The Ugly

The "UGLY" in our scenario is the theft of these trophy catfish from future generations. It is a saddening thought to sportsmen that their kids and grandkids might not have the opportunity to catch

trophy catfish.

Catfish are slow growing and they have to live a long time to reach trophy size.

As long as trophy catfish are taken from public waters only to meet their death in a pay lake or on someone's dinner table, there are fewer available in the future.

Because those trophy fish are the brood stock for more big fish, the death of just one must be multiplied numerous times to account for the offspring they would have produced. According to sciencing.com, "Mature catfish can lay 4000 to 100,000 eggs. The larger the female, the more eggs she lays."

How many times have you heard the "old timers" say, "It's just not like it used to be." Their kids and grandkids can still catch trophy catfish in some places, but what about ours? They should not be robbed of a future that includes the opportunity to fish for trophy cats.

Solutions

Supply and demand works well in private markets that lack the side effects often present when the resource is public, as is the case of catfish. When nobody "owns" the resource, markets don't work so well. In the case of trophy catfish there would be no problem if fish hatcheries could produce trophy catfish to sell to pay lake operators, but they can't.

Because catfish are a public resource, private market forces will not solve the problem. Most observers agree that government will have to be part of the solution, but like most government action it can take some time.

Education will play a large role in this issue, and that takes time too. Legislators and resource managers must be convinced of the seriousness of the issue and asked by their constituents to solve it with regulations and enforcement that will protect the wild catfish from the fate awaiting them in pay lakes. Government intervention is a common

solution when markets fail to deliver an appropriate outcome.

This problem can have a happy ending as states adopt strict regulations that protect and limit the number of trophy catfish that can be harvested. It just needs to happen sooner rather than later, so that our kids and our grandkids have the opportunity to enjoy the thrill of catching trophy catfish too.



- Ron Presley

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Hot Catfish after Dark

by John E. Phillips

Strategies for Catching Nighttime Catfish

Everyone knows that tailraces make great places to catch catfish in the daylight hours during the summer months. However, rarely will you see a hook-and-line fisherman angling the tailrace for catfish when the turbines don't run, the water has turned as slick as glass, and all the fishermen have gone home sunburned, tired and dehydrated.

As one avid nighttime angler told me, "I like to fish at night for cats because I have the entire tailrace to myself. The weather is cooler, the fish bite more, and when you find a good school of cats, you don't have to worry about other anglers crowding into where you're fishing."

If you like to catch catfish, but you hate to fight the crowd, the heat and the swift water, then why not fish for cats when the weather becomes cooler, and most of the anglers have left the lake?

Find Summertime Catfish at Night

Catfish generally move in schools and you are likely to find them where you discover large schools of baitfish. Big schools of bait, like shad, generally will hold in the same places at night that they do in the daytime. If you locate a school of shad during daylight hours in a tailrace, you can return to that same spot at night and search for the school. Then more than likely, you'll find catfish.

Because the tailrace produces turbulent water during daylight hours, especially during the spring and

summer months for power generation, charting the bottom with a depth finder can prove difficult. However, at night when the hydroelectric plants stop generating current, the tailrace area will become calm and still, making surveying the bottom very easy. Search for holes in the bottom and boulders sticking up off the bottom, and use your depth finder and GPS to mark these spots. Catfish historically will hold in places like these.

Also, to find catfish in a tailrace, look for jug fishermen in the states that permit catfishing with jugs. Jug fishermen will put most of their jugs out in the spots where anglers have caught catfish during the week. If you know where the jug fishermen fish by day, go to those places, and fish them at night.

Fish the Dams for Summer Catfish

Many dam authorities shut off the turbines around 8:00 or 9:00 pm at tailraces. Not as much current will run at night anyway as it does during daylight hours when the demand for electricity is high. When no turbines are running, fish right in front of the turbines. Catfish love to feed on baitfish at night near the underwater concrete walls at the mouths of turbines.

"...the tailrace area will become calm and still..."



Shad gut or cut shad are productive baits for cats after dark.

Lock the Catfish Up

After dark, many anglers catch catfish around the locks of dams. Locks have good lighting to enable you to bait-up and land the fish. Locks also offer long concrete walls leading





into the lock where baitfish and catfish hold.

Motor up to the lock wall, and run right beside the wall with a depth finder to spot a school of baitfish. Then kill your motor, and start fishing. Many anglers have found that fishing the ladders going from the wing walls up to the top of a dam is productive for catching catfish. Baitfish often will congregate around these ladders, and the ladders provide places to tie your boat.

Search for Other Structure around Dams

Most dams have wing walls in front of their floodgates. The dam construction generally has a hydroelectric plant on one side of the dam, the lock on the other side of the

Often after a rain, the weather will be cool at night, but the catfishing can heat up.

dam and the floodgates in the middle of the dam. These floodgates often have wing walls coming from the base of the dam out into the water.

Generally a wing wall has a deep hole right in front of it. You'll see these walls going down into the water and may think that's the end of the concrete. However, if you look closely, you'll see that the concrete above the water continues to extend below the water to a dark spot that shows right at the end of the concrete. At the ends of these underwater wing walls, you'll almost always locate a hole that's been created due to the tremendous amount of current at the end of the

wing wall when the floodgates are open, and water comes over the dam and digs out that hole. Also, when water isn't coming over the dam, but current is being generated from the hydroelectric plant, a reverse current is created that hits the ends of the wing wall and helps to dig out the hole even more.

A mile or two below the dam the rock piles and/or mussel beds also can yield catfish at night. When the weather is really hot, and the mussels start dying off and open up to release



With spinning tackle and light line, catching eating-size catfish below a dam can produce a fun evening of fishing.



Depending on how much sport you want, you can fish fly rods for cats by using the same baits and hooks as with spinning tackle. But plan to fight the catfish much longer when using fly rods to catch them at night.

the carcasses of the dead mussels, great catfishing at night can be found.

Rig Light and Check Your Line Often When Fishing For Catfish

Although most anglers fish for cats with 15- to 20-pound test line, night anglers often prefer to use abrasion-resistant 10-pound-test line. You'll need to check your line every time you catch a catfish to see how much



HOT CATFISH AFTER DARK

damage the fish has done to the line - not only at the point where the hook is tied but also for about 3 or 4 feet up the line. The sharp, bony spines on a catfish's dorsal and pectoral fins can nick and cut your line. So, if you're serious about catching catfish, make sure you have fresh line going to the hook each time you catch a cat. If you don't, you'll lose more fish. Many successful catfish anglers also use a bait tank to keep shad lively for a day or two.

About 10 to 12 inches up the line, pinch on a 1/2-ounce split shot and then tie a #2 Eagle Claw Pattern



Catfish love concrete, especially around dam walls and wing walls and beside hydroelectric plants.



Summer showers may occur at night when you're fishing for catfish, and having a rain suit handy will keep you dry.

84 hook onto the end of the line and fish with live threadfin shad minnows. This size hook allows you to hook the threadfin shad through the nose without killing it, and the bait will stay alive on the bottom with this size hook at night.

If you're tired of fighting the heat to catch a few catfish, wait until the sun goes down, and the stars come out, for cooler, more productive catfishing. Try these after-dark tailrace tactics to add more fun to your catfishing and more catfish fillets to your skillet.



- John E. Phillips

Catfish Basics #020

Use Your Instincts

Jason Aycock



Ask any angler and they will tell you that some spots just look and feel fishier than others, it relates to fishermen's instinct. Instinct is the main thing that Hunter Jones and I use on the river when we don't see fish on the sonar. If we feel confident in a spot, we will fish it.

Do not be afraid to try a new area, new spot or new technique. There is no such thing as a stupid spot to fish or a stupid way to fish. When a fisherman starts thinking that way they are not learning.

Time on the water develops that intuitive knowledge that compliments the electronics to help us know where to fish and where not to.

If you use your instincts, in combination with your skills, you will probably improve your catching.

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CATFISH



by Ron Presley

If you teach your kids to fish and hunt, you won't have to hunt your kids.

Nature has a way of communicating peace, comfort and knowledge if you take the time to listen. Most kids are naturally attracted to the outdoors and they have much to learn from it. Some even say that kids can learn more from Mother Nature than they can from books, if they get the opportunity.

It was Henry David Thoreau that said, "I believe that there is a subtle magnetism in Nature, which, if we unconsciously yield to it, will direct us aright." Given the digital world we live in today, pointing kids in the direction of the outdoors, and letting them experience it, is a task worth pursuing.

Cabela's King Kat Tournament Trail rodeos date back to 1992 when Darrell Van Vactor started the rodeo while working for Johnson Fishing in the Crappiethon promotions (Crappiethon was a crappie tournament trail that predates the Crappie USA trail). It was a project of passion and required a good amount of "selling" to bring others to the fold.

"My bosses at that time failed to see the importance of doing it," recalled Van Vactor. "Nevertheless, they allowed me to solicit products from some of our national sponsors to give out to the



youth who attended the rodeos. The next year one of the other Crappiethon directors added the kids programs to his events and they just grew after that."

"We actually held one kids event on Grand Lake of the Cherokees in OK where we had over 1200 youth bused out to the event by the school system. That was a long day!!!! Now, you can't even get the school principals to announce the event on the bulletin boards or any other way, they are so afraid of privacy

"... the future of fishing lies in the hands of our youth ..."

laws and the like."

"Having come from a background in law enforcement I felt like we could make a difference if we could get kids out of the house and into the outdoors," continued Van Vactor. "We wanted to do something to encourage them in Nature. Many youth are living in single parent homes and don't have someone to help them learn the basics of fishing, yet most young people have the urge to go fishing."

The rodeos not only give youth a chance to experience the outdoors, it





2017

Remaining Schedule

8/11-12/2017 Ft. Madison, IA	
8/19/2017 Quincy, IL	
8/25-26/2017 Paducah, KY	
Northern Championship	
September 22&23, 2017 - Gallatin, TN	
Southern Championship	
October 6&7, 2017 - Camden, SC	

Come join us for three remaining regular scheduled events.

The last three chances to qualify for one or both of the 2017 Cabela's King Kat Championships.

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gives the organizers a chance to teach them about fishing. "With our rodeos, we have a chance to teach youngsters the basics," continued Van Vector. "Even if it is just how to tie a knot or set a bobber it might make the difference later in life when they decide to continue the sport or not."

"I had a saying I used in the old Law enforcement days," offered Van Vector. "If you teach your kids to fish and hunt, you won't have to hunt your kids. That saying holds true more than one would think."

A Recent Event

The various tournament trails established their kids rodeos to give our youth that chance to experience the outdoors in the communities where their tournaments are held. The rodeos are free to all kids up to age 12. "They just have to bring a rod and reel plus bait," explained King Kat tournament director, Jeremy Coe.

The King Kat trail recently held a rodeo at the Bob Evans Farm Pond near Rio Grande, OH. The accompanying photos are from that event. "This is



where Bob Evans started," reported Coe. "We had a beautiful valley to enjoy and the perfect place to have a kids fishing rodeo. There were about 50 kids that came out to fish, and many fish were caught."

"I must say I was a little jealous. It's bluegill and redear season at home on KY Lake and those kids were catching larger and more fish than I've been able to catch. It was a great turnout and great fishing. I can't think of a better place for the kids to experience what Mother Nature has to offer."

"The purpose of these rodeos are to get the kids outdoors and get them interested in fishing," said Coe. "When they sign up we give them a goody bag for coming. We give prizes to the kids who catch the most fish in two different age groups, from 0-7 and 8-12 years of age."

Scholarships

What Van Vector started those many years ago continues today in both the Crappie and Catfish trails he administers, with an added bonus. In 1997, they added a scholarship



component to the rodeos.

All the kids that fish in the rodeos, as well as the kids, that are under 16, who fish in their tournaments, have their name placed in a drawing for a scholarship. Six \$1,000 scholarships are drawn at the end of the year. "We even had one young lady come out to Bob Evans this weekend who had won one of those scholarships in previous years," offered Coe.

"To date we have awarded over \$342,000.00 in college scholarships to youth that fish our rodeos or fish in our Crappie USA and King Kat tournaments," reported Van Vactor.

"We believe the future of fishing lies in the hands of our youth," concluded Van Vactor. "We are proud to promote youth events in every way we can."



River Rumors

Thrill of the Night

by Dave Mutton

Catfishing UK style



Headgear torches are invaluable for handling big wels catfish like this.

Firstly, hello from the other side of 'The Pond'. In the interview, I did with CatfishNow back in January, I talked about catfishing in mainland Europe, mainly Spain. This time I want to focus on fishing closer to home, well my home anyway, England.

Catfishing in England essentially means fishing at night. Our catfish, the wels catfish, is primarily a nocturnal feeder, although it will feed in coloured water throughout the day. Fishing throughout night means specialist equipment must be used as it is impractical to spend the entire night staring at a float using a torch!

Electronic bite alarms are used to indicate bites, they operate by giving an audible and visual signal when line is pulled through them. Reels incorporating baitrunner systems are often used to enable the line to be pulled off the spool without any danger of the rod being pulled in.

There are two main ways of presenting the bait, either fished on the bottom using a straightforward ledger approach (fishing a bait on the bottom) or a bait presented on the surface by means of some sort of float. Bottom fished baits are numerous including liver, squid, fish pellets, sausage, boilies and dead fish. Surface fished baits are usually live fish, worms or leeches.

A simple bottom fished ledger set up includes a ledger weight attached to a ceramic run rig, to provide minimal resistance, a rubber bead, a swivel and a hooklink with the hook attached.

Baits such as liver and squid are usually fished directly on the hook, whereas baits such as pellet and boilie are usually fished on a 'hair' that is attached to the shank of the hook, thus leaving the hook free of bait.

When fishing throughout the night it is vital that the bait remains intact. Using worms can be problematical due to other fish pecking away at the bait, so use of worms is usually restricted to times when



When using a hair rig the bait is not attached directly to the hook.

the angler is awake, unless he is prepared to wake frequently to change baits.

Pellets can also be problematical due to their short lifespan in water. Generally, in water temps of 15 Celsius (59 Fahrenheit) 22mm diameter pellets will have a breakdown time of around five hours. Therefore, as per worms, they can be difficult to use overnight, particularly as they lose a lot of their oils and attractants fairly quickly.

Recently there has been an alternative bait to pellet developed called a hybrid. The hybrid has a cooked outer skin like a boilie, but the centre is softer and more paste like, giving a good leak off of attractants.

I have been lucky enough to be involved as a consultant in the





development of the hybrid baits and the results so far have been outstanding. They have been successfully used in the UK, France and Spain.

These baits now form the mainstay of my catfishing where I tend to fish a hybrid on the hook, fished over a bed of pellet and broken hybrids. I will use around two pounds of free bait per spot. Usually at night I will be using three rods

“Fishing at night brings a whole set of challenges...”

fished in different likely looking spots.

Constructing a hair rig to hold the hybrid baits is very simple. First tie a simple overhand loop at the end of the

Catfishing in England essentially means fishing at night.

hooklink to form a small loop at the end. The hybrid, pellet, or other bait, is then threaded on the hooklink using a baiting needle and held in place by pushing a small stop through the loop. Anglers can use a plastic bait stop, but a small piece of matchstick or toothpick would serve equally well.

A hook is then threaded on to the hooklink and slid down until it is positioned above the bait. The hooklink is then whipped around the shank of the hook a dozen or so times starting at the eye and working down the shank. This process traps the hair and the bait in place. The loose end is then threaded back up through the back of the hook eye,

exiting through the front of the eye. This loose end is then tied to the swivel and attached to the mainline.

If you need to replace the bait after a time you simply thread a fresh bait on to the hair and stop in place using the hair stop. (Search YouTube for a video on hair rigs to clarify this baiting method.) When I am fishing a surface bait I would usually use a live bait on a free running rig with the bait simply hooked through the nose. A long piece of light mono line is tied to the eye of the hook and attached to this is a foam ball of 2-inch diameter. The length of this line can vary between 12 inches and 36 inches.

Once the rig is cast out, line is pulled off the spool until the foam ball is on the surface. The rod is placed in the alarm with the bait runner on. I usually push a chemical snap light in to the foam popper so that in the dark I can see the movement given to the popper by the bait. The light gives me a good visual clue that the rig isn't tangled in any way and that the bait is still alive and working.

By using bottom baits and surface baits you generally have all bases covered. Sometimes the catfish want to actively hunt and chase live baits other times their preference is to sit on the bottom, leisurely munching on free offerings and hopefully picking up the baited hook.

Fishing at night brings a whole set of challenges that you don't face in the daylight hours. Because of reduced visibility it is essential to be organised. Know how and where you are going to land and release the fish in advance. Have things like landing net, scales and weigh scale to hand. Make sure that you have a camera with self-take capability and a tripod. Better still, always fish with a partner at night, especially as the simplest of things are more complicated with reduced visibility.

A good, quality head torch is invaluable. If possible opt for one with dual white and red lights as using a red



Night fishing for wels catfish requires a little forethought. Always have a plan for landing the beasts before hooking up with it.

light does not affect your night vision whereas a white light does.

Some people are very nervous about fishing at night. They either have a lack of confidence in playing and landing large fish at night or they are just not comfortable in the dark of night. For some, the prospect of being out in the open air at night with all the sounds of nature going on does not appeal to them. If this is the case then don't do it. At the end of the day fishing is a hobby and so the most important thing is that you enjoy it and have some fun.

Dave Mutton is an avid wels catfish angler and proprietor of Specimen Fishing UK, a tackle shop in Coventry, England.



UK to USA fishing vocabulary

Boilie – boiled paste fishing baits

Ceramic run rig – sinker slide

Fish pellets – a manufactured bait

Free bait – chum

Hair rig – a device to hold bait free of the hook

Head torch - flashlight

Hooklink – leader line

Ledger weight - sinker

A float rig is used when the angler wants to present the bait on the surface.



Bottom fishing for wels catfish is normally done with a bottom ledger rig as shown here.



Catfish NOW How To Side Trolling
with Brian Barton



Editor's note: Zed and Josh Moore are small town boys who grew up fishing on the Wabash River. Their hometown is Mt. Carmel, IL and their home catfishing water is the Ohio River. They got addicted to catfishing through summer vacations to area lakes and rivers before catching the fever for tournament fishing through associations with other anglers.

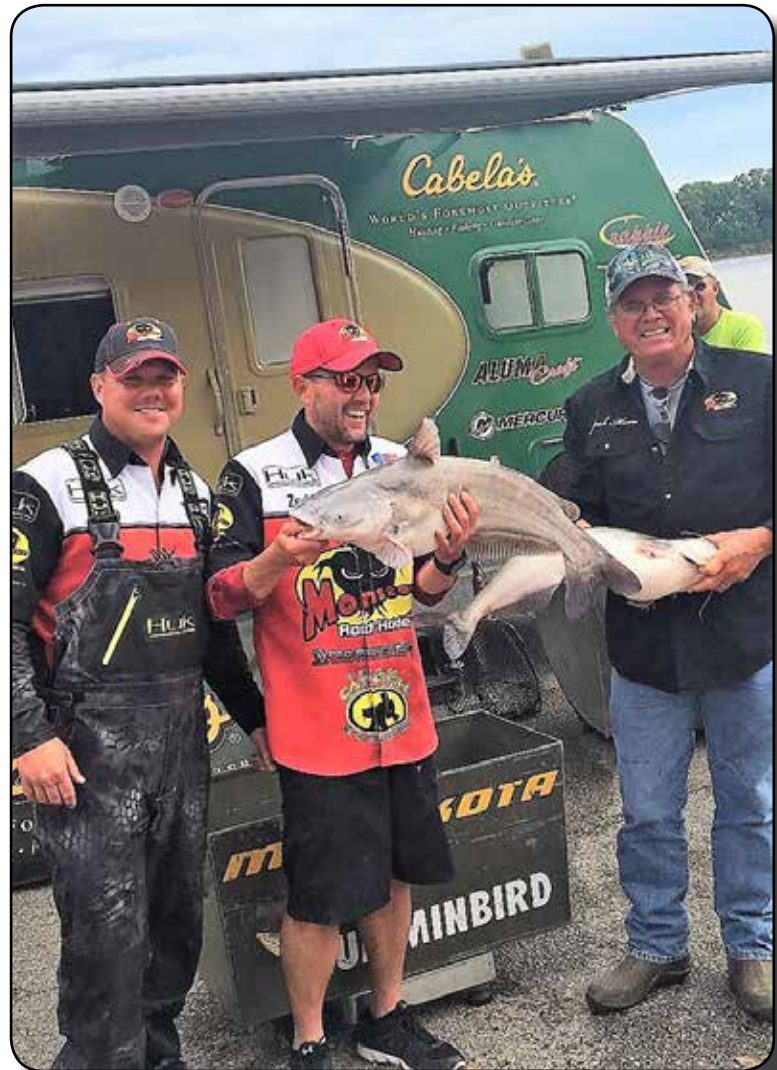
It was not love at first sight

Our first non-farm pond experience with catfishing was with my Dad (Les Moore) and Lenn Jamerson below Kentucky Dam. This was before circle hooks, electronics, and modern trolling motors. We simply drifted using a sculling paddle. The biggest fish we caught back then was 14 pounds, but we saw several 30-pound plus caught by other boats during our trips.

River fishing seemed very challenging and we didn't really have the knowledge or the equipment to truly pursue giant river catfish. Josh and I were already spending the winters chasing ducks together hardcore on our rivers when we came across Steve Douglas and his YouTube videos catching giants on the Ohio River. We decided we could figure out how to do it, but it was not love at first sight. It was a huge river without a lot structure and we failed big time! In fact, at one point I told Josh I did not think I could be his catfishing partner if this was going to be a serious quest.

Like any fisherman we quickly made up some good excuses for our failure and somehow, I talked Josh into entering a Metropolis, IL Cabela's King Kat event. We were hopeful, but prepared for a full meal of humble pie. Steve Douglas, Jeff Dodd, The Masingales, Phil King, Carl Morris Jr., Dale Kerns, Aaron Wheatley, Wayne King, and pretty much every good river fisherman from our area were there.

Although not totally surprised, we had hoped for at least one fish but I think those guys enjoyed our rookie



Zed and Josh's favorite third man on the team is their day Les.

enthusiasm when we reported zero, zilch and nada (zero bites and nada fish). Our research had pretty much guaranteed that we would find the August fish in deep, deep holes, so



we spent the whole tournament in deep water. It was Tommy Walsh who asked this game changing question to us at the weigh in.

Walsh asked, "Did you get any bites in that 65-foot hole? We tried deep water too but didn't get any bites so we moved to shallow water and we started catching them!"

The longer we stood humbly at the weigh-in, talking to all of the guys, the more we learned and the catfishing tournament hook was set. We were hooked!

We have taken many people along with us on fun fishing days, many of whom did not know the opportunity we have in our backyard to catch a wild, free swimming giant blue catfish on a rod and reel. Taking people fishing also gives us a chance to teach them the importance of handling these fish properly and getting them back in the water.

It is so important that new anglers understand how long it took a 50-pound

Team Moore enjoys the camaraderie of tournament fishing. They are shown here with Bill Dance and Jeff "Big Daddy" Dodd in Memphis at the Mississippi River Monsters tournament.

catfish to get that big and the most important point is that there are only a few bodies of water capable of growing a 50-pound catfish. We are all responsible to protect our fishery.

Our favorite extra tournament partner is our dad, Les, he is our biggest fan and we are always grateful to get a day outdoors with dad. We have also taken our niece, Madi Merritt, to three Monsters on the Ohio tournaments. Those trips made life long memories for her and us.

Our most memorable moment is the 2016 Mississippi River Monsters tournament. It was held out of the Bass Pro Shops at the Pyramid in Memphis.





Fishing the Mighty Mississippi for a few days was a blast, we can't wait to go back. We had a good time down there and really enjoyed the Mississippi River style of fishing. We got lucky and finished 3rd place and are already getting our plan together for September.


As anglers, we must protect our fish and we must take a stand together to stop the unsustainable removal of these fish. Truly, our sport has been built on the pursuit of free swimming, wild, big river catfish. Our sport will not survive without them.

Catfishing our rivers is such a blast. Catching a big wild catfish is an intense, sometime extreme rush and that's why we fish!

Zed identified he and his brothers most memorable moment as the 2016 Mississippi River Monsters tournament in Memphis where they finished third with 116.7 pounds.

Why We Catfish Guest Editorial

This column is provided for reader submitted editorials on Why We Catfish. If you have a short story related to why you catfish, you may submit it for consideration and publication in a future issue of CatfishNow. Send submissions of 500 words or less and one or two photos to Ron Presley at presleyr@bellsouth.net.

 - Zed Moore

BIG CAT QUEST	FaceBook	KEN FREEMAN
BIG SIOUX CAT ANGLERS	FaceBook	DICK HINRICHSEN
CABELA'SKING KAT TOURNAMENT TRAIL	FaceBook	JEREMY COE
CAROLINA ANGLERS TEAM TRAIL C.A.T.T	FaceBook	BRETT COLLINS
CATFISH CHASERS TOURNAMENT SERIES	FaceBook	DAVID STUDABAKER
CATFISH CONFERENCE	FaceBook	STEVE DOUGLAS
CATFISH COUNTRY	FaceBook	SCOTT WILSON
CATFISH MAFIA	FaceBook	GLEN ORR
CATFISH NATION OUTDOORS	FaceBook	KEN HAGEN
CATHUNTERS ASSOC. OF THE SOUTH C.A.T.S.	FaceBook	GLENN FLOWERS
CENTRAL MISSOURI CATS	FaceBook	MATT SANDERS
CENTRAL TEXAS CATFISH TRAIL	FaceBook	JERRY DILLARD
CHATAHOOCHEE HILLJACK CATFISHING	FaceBook	HUNTER LIVINGSTON
EXTREME CATFISHING	FaceBook	CHAD WAUGH
FISHIN BLUES	FaceBook	TIM ORR
FLATHEAD BLUES ON CHANNEL 2	Website	AMANDA JOHNSON
GETNHOOKED	FaceBook	MICHAEL PRICE
HOLD'EM HOOK CATFISH TRAIL	FaceBook	STEVE DOBBS
ICATS	FaceBook	JOHNNY COLEMAN/BOBBY MILLER
INDIANA CATFISH	FaceBook	CHRIS WALLACE
J.K.V. CATFISHING TOURNAMENT TRAIL	FaceBook	JOSH VANOVER
KANAWHA RIVER CATFISH CLUB	FaceBook	NEAL CRAIG /JUSTIN VAUGHT
KANSAS CITY CATFISH	FaceBook	BARD KILPATRICK
MADISON CATFISH ANGLERS	FaceBook	DARRYL MILLER
MISSISSIPPI CATFISH TRAIL	FaceBook	HUGH THOMPSON
MISSISSIPPI RIVER MONSTERS	FaceBook	GEORGE YOUNG
MONSTERS ON THE OHIO	FaceBook	AARON WHEATLEY
OHIO VALLEY CATFISHING	FaceBook	MARK BARILLA
OHIO VALLEY RIVER CATS	FaceBook	FRANK
OLD DOMINION CATFISH CLUB	FaceBook	BRUCE CONNER
RED RIVER VALLEY CATFISH LEAGUE	FaceBook	BRAD DURICK
SCHEELS BOUNDRY BATTLE CATFISH TOURNAMENT	FaceBook	BRAD DURICK
SOUTHEAST NEBRASKA MO RIVER CATFISH CLUB	FaceBook	LORI
SOUTHEASTERN CATFISH CLUB	FaceBook	BRIAN SNIPES JOSHUA COGGINS
SOUTHWEST OHIO CATFISH CLUB	FaceBook	VANCE NADOSKY (513)379-2655
TRI STATE KATS	FaceBook	KELVIN HORN
TRI-COUNTY CATFISH ASSOCIATION	FaceBook	TOMMY WALSH
TUG "N" JUGS	FaceBook	MICHAEL PRICE
TWISTED CAT OUTDOORS	FaceBook	ALEX NAGY
WEST TEXAS CATFISH TRAIL	FaceBook	CHUCK MCCOY
WEST TN CATFISH ANGLERS	FaceBook	JUSTIN RUSSELL
WHISKY CITY CATFISH CLUB	FaceBook	RAY HERALD

Tournament Results

RED RIVER VALLEY

HOOVER RESERVIOR

JUNE 7th

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 1. Brandon Lunski/Nick Lunski | 27 |
| 2. Zach Srnsky/Henry Gutierrez | 22.8 |

CHATTAHOOCHIE HILLJACKS

WEST POINT LAKE

JUNE 10th

- | | |
|--------------------|-------|
| 1. Swamp Cats | 43.2 |
| 2. Team Killer B's | 37.15 |
| 3. Team Livingston | 36.15 |
| 4. Rig-em Up | 27.9 |
| 5. Hillbilly MOJO | 6.15 |

BIG FISH

- | | |
|---------------|-------|
| 1. Swamp Cats | 13.25 |
|---------------|-------|

ICATS

DES MOINES RIVER

JUNE 10th

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Adam Swalla/Sam Powell | 37.12 |
| 2. Johnny Coleman/Dan Elmers | 35.02 |
| 3. Keith Copenhaver/Chris Sharp | 25.11 |
| 4. Bobby Miller/Dick Henrichsen/Garrett Crouch | 24.8 |
| 5. Chris Williams/Cj McKinney/Cody Hennings | 23.01 |

BIG FISH

- | | |
|---------------------------|----|
| 1. Adam Swalla/Sam Powell | 18 |
|---------------------------|----|

INDIANA CATFISH ASSOCIATION

WORHTINGTON LAKE

JUNE 10th

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------|
| 1. Terry Holding/Mary Jane Wood | 54.5 |
| 2. Kevin/Justin | 35.1 |
| 3. Casey Tutorow/Andrew Han | 32.7 |
| 4. Josh Worth/Todd Gentry | 30 |
| 5. Gary/Wally/Logan | 26.5 |

BIG FISH

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------|
| 1. Terry Holding/Mary Jane Wood | 35.2 |
|---------------------------------|------|

SOUTHWEST OHIO CATFISH CLUB

NEVILLE LAKE

JUNE 10th

- | | |
|---|------|
| 1. Adam Dehner/Clyde Caldwell | 68.1 |
| 2. Grant Wilson/Len Phillips/Bean Wymer | 65.4 |

3. Willie Smith/Stacie Smith	46.4
4. Tim Mulvhill/RJ Giles/Vince Nadosky	45.3
5. Matt Bechdolt/Vic Shepherd	43.4

BIG FISH

1. Grant Wilson/Len Phillips/Bean Wymer	25.7
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JUNE 10th

1. Jamie Vanderhelm/Krista Vanderhelm	42.46
2. Kelvin Horn/Missy	33.3
3. Dave Henry/Tina Henry	21.56
4. Ryan McFarland/Taylor Crippen	19.36

BIG FISH

1. Jamie Vanderhelm/Krista Vanderhelm	38.02
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TRI-STATE CATS

S HAMILTON BLVD BOAT RAMP

WEST TN CATFISH ANGLERS

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

JUNE 10th

1. Russ Devore/Tony Hunt	100.92
2. Ronnie Strickland/Charles Sexton	68.37
3. Justin Russell/Jeff Renee Kirkpatrick	56.18
4. Joe Hardy/Barry Wilson	50.94
5. Dennis Mclemore	46.47

BIG FISH

1. Russ Devore/Tony Hunt	76.68
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RED RIVER VALLEY

JUNE 14th

1. Bylin/Kallock	17.2
2. Nelson/Nelson	13
3. Lee/Stempinski	11.6

GET - N - HOOKED

KAW LAKE

JUNE 17th

1. Catch And Release	55.48
2. Carey/Carey	52.48
3. Melendy/Goss	43.76

BIG FISH

1. Melendy/Goss	18.46
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WHISKEY CITY CATFISH CLUB

SCHMIDT RAMP

JUNE 17th



Tournament Results

1. Browning	84
2. Cress/Rains	63.9
3. Collins/Sizemore	62
4. McClure/Cleary	47.2
5. Blauvelt/Howard	45.8

BIG FISH

1. Browning	30.6
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TWISTED CAT OUTDOORS

CANTON

JUNE 18th

1. Jeremy Ransom/Melissa Ransom	62.47
2. Bowe Brockman/Tricia Cleveland	44.24
3. Kyle Johnson/Tim Gunther/Emma Gunther	37.58
4. Brad Shoemate/Roberta Shoemate	36.16
5. Ron King/Craig Simlar/Amy Simlar	27.57

BIG FISH

1. Bowe Brockman/Tricia Cleveland	44.24
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CABELA'S KING KAT

DELAWARE RIVER

JUNE 24th

1. Joe Warren/Wesley Kille	99.54
2. Anthony Fisher/Jay Trexler	54.3
3. Jason Miller/Karen Watson	48.36
4. Lee Dickerson/Keith Rippon	36.16
5. Bill Damask/Billy Trainor	35.62

BIG FISH

1. Joe Warren/Wesley Kille	25.02
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CATFISH COUNTRY

SCHMIDT FIELD

JUNE 24th

1. Larry Phillips/Rocky Phillips	32.55
2. Mike Hurst/Jimmy Wainscot	27.25

BIG FISH

1. Scott Wilson/Ray Butler	17.6
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CATFISH CHASERS

PERRY LAKE

JUNE 24th

1. Rick Walker	76.4
2. Mayer/Steidel	58.45
3. McCarter/Romero	30.65
4. Britt/Walters	24.05

5. Darrah/Allen 23.95

BIG FISH

1. Rick Walker 33.9

HOLD'EM HOOK

JOE WHEELER

JUNE 24th

1. Shane Holz 66.8

2. Kenneth Williams 66.7

3. Jake Herman 60.9

4. Michael Clark 54

5. Bryan Tardo 46.7

BIG FISH

1. Kenneth Williams 48.3

ICATS

SAYLORVILLE

JUNE 24th

1. Colby Foster/Ryan Gambrall/Tyson McDonald 41.2

2. Nick Jensen/Nate Jensen/Gary Jensen 40.6

3. Ryan Norris/Drew Witt/Cody Mann 40

4. Mike Vavra/Katter Fish 36.2

5. AJ Giannetto/Derek Speicher 33.6

BIG FISH

1. Nick Jensen/Nate Jensen/Gary Jensen 13.4

INDIANA CATFISH ASSOCIATION

NEW ALBANY

JUNE 24th

1. Chuck/James 92.6

2. Andy/Jeremiah 77

3. Andrew/Casey 68.2

4. Terry/Mary Jane 48.3

5. Justin/Kevin 47.5

BIG FISH

1. Chuck/James 37.8

TRI-COUNTY CATFISH ASSOCIATION

KUTCHIES

JUNE 24th

1. Tyler Sapp/Phil Johnson 45.05

2. Mark Farrow/Jerry Cline 40.05

3. Ron King/Buddy Weisenburger 39.6

4. Bob Julson/Scott Wadsworth 39.15



Tournament Results

5. Shawn Kelly/Kym Kelly/Tonia Kelly 37.25

BIG FISH

1. Shawn Kelly/Kym Kelly/Tonia Kelly 10.45

JUNE 24th - 25th

1. Dennison/Richards 79.56
2. Folkers/Richards 69.35
3. Bennett/Rudeski 67.25
4. Heckert/Tompkins 52.85
5. Jones/Jones 52.5

BIG CAT QUEST

ROCK FALLS

SCHEELS BOUNDRY BATTLE

RED RIVER

JUNE 24th - 25th

1. Zach Srnsky/Trevor Rodd 61.7
2. Mike Taylor/Jake Hendrickson 56.88
3. Andrew Vigan/Bill Murray 53.35
4. Ray Lee/Eric Thompson 52.84
5. John Stempinski/Liz Stempinski 49.41

RED RIVER VALLY CATFISH LEAGUE

NORTH LANDING

JUNE 28th

1. Geitzen/Horntvedt 28.4
2. Srnsky/Gutierrez 25.8
3. Gregoire/Brenier 23.8

BIG SIOUX CAT ANGLERS

BIG SIOUX

JULY 1st

1. Adopto Campos/Rigoberto Campos 53.01
2. Jason Pangburn/Jerrod Henrich 40.08
3. Tron Glaser/Maverick White 38.14
4. Chris Baynes 34.09
5. Stacey Rabey/Justyne Rabey 31.02

BIG FISH

1. Adopto Campos/Rigoberto Campos 48.11

CENTRAL MISSOURI CATS

MISSOURI RIVER

JULY 1st

1. Tony Debouf/Curtis Debouf 56.6
2. Ben Sassman/Russell Michaels 54
3. Michael Suttner/Cody Thompson 44.5

- | | |
|---|------|
| 4. Jesse Linscott/Duane Linscott/Clint Roby | 30.4 |
| 5. Brad Young/Phillip Nordmeyer | 22.8 |

BIG FISH

- | | |
|------------------------------|------|
| 1. Tony Debouf/Curtis Debouf | 56.6 |
|------------------------------|------|

SOUTHWEST OHIO CATFISH

EAST FORT LAKE

JULY 1st

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| 1. Willie Smith/Stacie Smith | 28.2 |
| 2. Vince Nadosky/Nick Heistan | 16.1 |
| 3. Tom Kaucher/Richard Roy | 13.8 |
| 4. Dan Rothe/Billy Black | 9.5 |
| 5. Matt Bechdolt/Vic Shepherd | 9.3 |

BIG FISH

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| 1. Vince Nadosky/Nick Heistan | 10.7 |
|-------------------------------|------|

TUGNJUGS

LAKE EUFAULA

JULY 7th - 9th

- | | |
|---------------------|-------|
| 1. Katandle | 37.04 |
| 2. Vertergreasers | 36.06 |
| 3. Koolkats | 33.26 |
| 4. Whisker Warriors | 30.48 |
| 5. Bell/Beaver | 19.36 |

BIG FISH

- | | |
|-------------------|-------|
| 1. Vertergreasers | 13.32 |
|-------------------|-------|

CATFISH COUNTRY

CHILO

JULY 7th - 8th

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Randy Colvin/Tod Talon | 32 |
| 2. Eddie Wilson/Adam Cunningham | 22.55 |

BIG FISH

- | | |
|----------------|-------|
| 1. Alex Biddle | 11.65 |
|----------------|-------|

FLATHEAD BLUES

HOOVER RESERVOIR

JULY 8th

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| 1. Terry Neely/Jerry Justice | 47.7 |
| 2. Jake Rice/Skip Rice | 41.2 |
| 3. Craig Shirley/Chris Finney | 39.4 |
| 4. Joe Hatfield/Marc Elwell | 33 |
| 5. David Funk/Ron Hughes | 32.4 |

BIG FISH

- | | |
|------------------------------|------|
| 1. Terry Neely/Jerry Justice | 18.2 |
|------------------------------|------|



Tournament Results

JKV CATFISHING

DOGTOWN RAMP/EVANSVILLE

JULY 8th

1. Dale Kerns/Greg Edwards	102.11
2. Mark Norhterner/Andrew Sandage	66.12
3. Steven Hise/Andy Williams/Jeremiah Keen	66.1
4. Jon Land/Dan Fields	56.13
5. Wayne King/Conner King	51.15

BIG FISH

1. Dale Kerns/Greg Edwards	35.1
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OHIO VALLEY CATFISHING

NEWBERG LANDING

JULY 8th

1. Eric Tustin/Louie Helwig	29
2. Donald Houpp/Logan Morrison	21.2
3. Cliff McElroy/Rich Morrison	5.21

BIG FISH

1. Eric Tustin/Louie Helwig	20.2
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ICATS

DES MOINS RIVER

JULY 7th - 8th

1. Johnny Coleman/Dan Eimers	78.8
2. Ken Miller/Troy Hansen	72.2
3. Bobby Miller/Garrett Crouch	67.6
4. Nick Ripley/Jim Bierbaum	58.6
5. Aaron Tripp/Hadley Libbey/Williams	52.2

BIG FISH

1. Johnny Coleman/Dan Eimers	23.8
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CATFISH CALENDAR

JULY	19th	RED RIVER VALLEY CATFISH LEAGUE	NORTH LANDING	CLUB
JULY	22nd	BIG CAT QUEST	COOSA RIVER BASIN	NIGHT
JULY	22nd	CATFISH NATION OUTDOORS	WILLIAMSPORT	CLUB
JULY	22nd	GETNHOOKED	SOONER LAKE	CLUB/NIGHT
JULY	22nd	HOLD'EM HOOK	INGALLS HARBOR	CLUB
JULY	22nd	SOUTHWEST OHIO CATFISH	BRUSH CREEK	OPEN
JULY	22nd	TRI STATE KATS	S HAMILTON BLVD BOAT RAMP	CLUB
JULY	22nd	TWISTED CAT OUTDOORS	DAVENPORT	CLUB
JULY	23rd	ICATS	MISSISSIPPI RIVER POOL 11	CLUB
JULY	26th	RED RIVER VALLEY CATFISH LEAGUE	LAFAYE PARK	CLUB
JULY	29th	CATFISH CHASERS	MILFORD/STATE PARK	CLUB
JULY	29th	CATFISH COUNTRY	TANNERS CREEK	CLUB

(Fishermen, check with club/association for exact dates, changes, cancellations and rules.)

JULY	29th	CENTRAL MISSOURI CATS	WAVERLY WEEKLY QUALIFIER	
JULY	29th	FLATHEAD BLUES	HOOVER RESERVOIR	CLUB
JULY	30th	BIG SIOUX CAT ANGLERS	SPRINGFIELD	DAY
AUG	2nd	RED RIVER VALLEY CATFISH LEAGUE	NORTH LANDING	CLUB
AUG	5th	CATFISH NATION OUTDOORS	DAM	CLUB
AUG	5th	INDIANA CATFISH ASSOCIATION	LAKE SHAFER	CLUB
AUG	5th	TRI-COUNTY CATFISH ASSOCIATION	CHILLICOTHE	CLUB
AUG	5th	TRI STATE KATS	S HAMILTON BLVD BOAT RAMP	CLUB
AUG	5th	TWISTED CAT OUTDOORS	BRUNSWICK	CLUB
AUG	9th	RED RIVER VALLEY CATFISH LEAGUE	LAFAYE PARK	CLUB
AUG	11th - 12th	CABELA'S KING KAT	MISSISSIPPI RIVER(LAKE COOPER)	SUPER
AUG	11th - 13th	TUGNJUGS	LAKE OKLAHOMA/ROCKY POINT	CLUB
AUG	12th	CATFISH CHASERS	COFFEE CO LAKE/WOLF CREEK	CLUB
AUG	12th	CATFISH COUNTRY	TANNERS CREEK	CLUB
AUG	12th	CATFISH MAFIA	GOLDSBORO	CLUB
AUG	12th	INDIANA CATFISH ASSOCIATION	KING OF THE OHIO/LEAVENWORTH	OPEN
AUG	12th	KANAWHA RIVER	POINT PLESANT	CLUB
AUG	12th	WICKED WHISKER	NE CITY	CLUB/NIGHT
AUG	12th	WILLIAMS CREEK CRAPPIE CLUB	LAKE FORK	CLUB
AUG	12th	RED RIVER VALLEY CATFISH LEAGUE	NORTH LANDING	YEAR END
AUG	12th	WHISKEY CITY	RISING SUN	CLUB/NIGHT
AUG	12th- 13th	GETNHOOKED	FORT GIBSON/ROCKY POINT	CLUB/NIGHT
AUG	19th	CABELA'S KING KAT	MISSISSIPPI RIVER	CLUB
AUG	19th	CATFISH NATION OUTDOORS	FORT WASHINGTON	CLUB
AUG	19th	MADISON CATFISH ANGLERS	RISING SUN	CLUB
AUG	19th	OHIO VALLEY CATFISHING	NEWBURG LANDING	SUMMER SLAM
AUG	19th	SOUTHWEST OHIO CATFISH	TANNERS CREEK	OPEN
AUG	19th	TRI STATE KATS	S HAMILTON BLVD BOAT RAMP	CLUB
AUG	20th	ICATS	MISSOURI RIVER	CLUB
AUG	25th - 26th	CABELA'S KING KAT	OHIO RIVER	SUPER
AUG	26th	BIG SIOUX CAT ANGLERS	SNYDER BEND	CLUB
AUG	26th	CATFISH COUNTRY	TANNERS CREEK	CLUB
AUG	26th	CATFISH MAFIA	LAKE ALDRED	SHOOTOUT/BIG MONEY
AUG	26rd	CENTRAL MISSOURI CATS	HERMANN RIVERFRONT	CLUB/NIGHT
AUG	26th	HOLD'EM HOOK	DITTO LANDING	CLUB
AUG	26th	KANAWHA RIVER	NITRO	CLUB
AUG	26th	OLD DOMINION	HOPEWELL MARINA	CLUB
AUG	26th	FLATHEAD BLUES	HOOVER RESERVOIR	CLUB
AUG	26th	WEST TN CATFISH ANGLERS	ED JONES	FUNDRAISER
AUG	26th	JKV CATFISHING	SHAWNEE TOWN	CLUB
AUG	26th - 27th	CATFISH CHASERS	CALAMUS	CLASSIC

***Good night, till' next
month***

