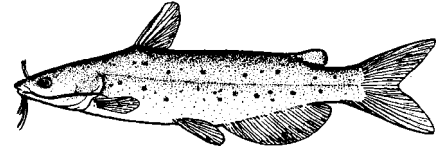


Channel Catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*)

General Information

Introduced initially in the early 1900s, channel catfish were only stocked in handful of locations by the late 70s. They are now stocked in over 90 waterbodies. Because of their strict spawning requirements channel catfish only reproduce in the Delaware & Raritan Rivers and Union Lake.



Native Range

Southern portions of Canadian prairie provinces south to the Gulf States, west to the Rocky Mountains and East to the Appalachian Mountains. (McMahon and Terrell 1982)

Habitat Description

Lake: large, high productivity lakes with extensive littoral areas (> 20 % of surface area) and abundant cover (> 40% of littoral area), low to moderate turbidity. (McMahon and Terrell 1982; Scott and Crossman 1973)

River: clear, deep rivers with sand & gravel bottoms with numerous deep pools, diversity of velocities & pools, strongly seek cover, overwinter in deep water around boulders & debris, do not tolerate salinities > 1.7 ppt. (McMahon and Terrell 1982)

Optimum Habitat Requirements

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Dissolved Oxygen | > 7 mg/l |
| Temperature | 26° - 29° |
| pH | > 5.7 |
| Turbidity | < 100 ppm |
| Current | < 15 cm/sec |

Diet

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Fry | plankton, aquatic insects |
| Juveniles | |
| Adults | insects, detritus, crayfish, fish |
| Comments: opportunistic feeders, extremely varied diet, feed by vision at night, bottom feeders | |

Growth (mm)

| Age | I | II | III | IV | V | VI | VII |
|-----------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Deer Lake | 257* | 333 | 389 | 439 | 485 | 500 | |

Comments: tremendous variability in growth based on habitat. Growth data taken from Stewart (1973). Data is taken from Deer Lake, located in South Jersey. *Fish were hatched at the hatchery and stocked as yearlings.

Reproduction

| | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Time of Year | May - July | Age Males Mature | VI or more |
| Temperature Range | 21° C | Age Females Mature | VIII or more |
| Water Depth | 2 - 4 m | Nest | built by male |
| Substrate | Rubble | Egg Type | |
| Time of Day | | Parental Care | male |
| Critical pH | males | Days to Hatching | 6 - 7 |
| Vegetation | not required | Stable Water level | |

Comments: builds nests in dark, secluded areas in cavities & under rocks, in rivers build nests in shallow flooded areas. (McMahon and Terrell 1982 and Scott and Crossman 1973)