

Indiana Catfishing, Indiana catfishing

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Catfishing 101 - By Scott Wiseman

HOW TO CATCH CATFISH AND WHAT SPECIFICALLY YOU NEED TO DO

Catfishing In Indiana/A Beginners Guide - By
Scott Wiseman

As the warmer weather approaches, our thoughts start turning to night fishing and the quest for our whiskered friends. Catfishing is not rocket science. With a few helpful hints and the right conditions, you should easily be able to put some fish in the livewell and more importantly on the table.

Types of catfish in Indiana

Indiana has mainly 4 types of catfish. They are flathead, blue, channel and bullhead catfish. Bullheads are found mostly in smaller creeks and streams where the bigger catfish are not a threat. Here in detail are the other 3 catfish found in Indiana:

Flathead Catfish – This catfish has a flat head, smooth, scaleless skin, whisker-like barbels around the mouth, and long, sharp spines on the dorsal fin and one on each side of the pectoral fin. Flathead catfish reach a length of 3 to 4 feet and their weight can exceed 100 pounds. Flathead catfish prey almost exclusively on live bait including baitfish and crawdads and make their homes in undercut banks and log jams close to deep water, but feed in shallow waters at night. Typically, flatheads will move less than 200 yards from their “home” to feed at night. Most rivers and larger lakes in Indiana hold flathead catfish. Best baits to use are: live bluegill, live shad, or any other type of baitfish fished on bottom.

Blue Catfish – Blue catfish have a forked tail, and are sometimes very similar to channel catfish. The number of rays in the anal fin is typically 30-35, and coloration is usually slate blue on the back, shading to white on the belly. Blue catfish are generally found in larger rivers with good current. In Indiana the best bets for blue catfish are the lower stretches of the White River and the Ohio River. Best baits to use are cut shad, cut skipjack or any other cut baitfish fished in deep holes in the main currents. Blue catfish can be caught year round unlike the other species of catfish.

Channel

Catfish –Channel catfish closely resemble blue catfish. Both have deeply forked tails. However, channels have a rounded anal fin with 24-29 rays and scattered black spots along their back and sides. They have a small, narrow

head. The back is blue-gray with light blue to silvery-gray sides and a white belly. Larger channels lose the black spots and also take on a blue-black coloration on the back which shades to white on the belly. They are found in most rivers, creeks, and lakes in Indiana. Sizes are typically around 2-10 lbs. Baits for channels vary widely but some of the better baits include: Shad guts, stink baits, shrimp and nightcrawlers.

Where to go?

Almost all waters in Indiana hold some type of catfish. Whether it be the small creeks or the larger reservoirs, Indiana has an abundant population of catfish. Here I will share some of my favorite places.

The White River – The West Fork of the White River that runs through central Indiana is arguably one of the best venues to fish for catfish. Whether you are chasing channels, blues, or flatheads. Downtown Indianapolis (off of White River Parkway) offers easy bank fishing with little current and the chance at a trophy. Catches of 20 fish in a night are not uncommon with some flatheads going upwards of 30 pounds. Some other spots with easy access include: Town Run Trail Park (96th street between Keystone and Allisonville Road), the Waverly Public Access Site (west of SR37 on Hwy 144), Henderson Ford Public Access Site (north of Martinsville on SR37), and the Indy Parks Access located off of White River Parkway and 30th Street on the northwest side of Indianapolis. Further downstream (south), some good access points include Williams Dam south of Bedford (close to where the current state record flathead of 79 pounds came from). Hindostan Falls, and the Spencer Access Point. Look for blowdowns, log jams, wing dams, and any other submerged structure away from the main channel of the river.

Steve Berry of Indianapolis with a nice 25lb flathead caught near downtown Indianapolis.

Cataract Lake (Cagles Mill Reservoir) – Located west of Indianapolis off of Hwy. 243 near Cloverdale. Cataract is a flood control lake fed by Mill Creek and that being said, the levels on this lake can fluctuate greatly. It is the opinion of many catfish anglers that the next state record may very well come from these waters. In 2005, an angler took what appeared to be the next state record from this water, only to find out the scales that the fish was weighed on were not accurate. (Note – the fish still went 70+ lbs.) Look for deeper holes close to shallow flats with plenty of structure.

Lake Monroe – Bloomington – Located south of Indianapolis, Lake Monroe is quickly becoming one of the premiere catfish spots in the state. While it has always been known for its fine channel catfishing, large flathead catfish in excess of 50 lbs are now being taken regularly by both bank and boat anglers. Look for flats with structure close to the main channel for best results.

The Ohio River – A recent DNR publication on fishing the Ohio River states that 67% of all fish on the Ohio River are caught near a spillway. This being said, there are 3 main spillways to concentrate on in Indiana: McAlpine Dam (near Louisville), Markland Dam (near Vevay), and Cannelton Dam (south of Tell City). All 3 offer exceptional chances at big fish, with blue catfish being the main trophy to chase after. Look for deep holes, humps, and ledges near

current breaks.

Robert Cullen with a nice 25lb blue cat taken from the Ohio River near Markland Dam.

Baits

Ask 10 different catfish anglers what their favorite bait is and you will probably get 10 different answers. Baits are usually specific to the type of catfish that you want to catch, but as a general rule, nightcrawlers and bloody baits will catch all catfish.

Flathead Catfish – Live baits. More specifically live bluegill, goldfish and shad work best. Occasionally, flatheads will hit on cut bait, but usually only when it is drifted in the current and appears to be alive.

Blue Catfish – Big chunks of cut bait. Cut shad, cut bluegill, or any type of cut baitfish work best. Blue catfish will also bite on live bait as well.

Channel Catfish – Live baits such as worms, crickets, minnows, and catalpa worms will work best. In cloudy or cold water, the bloodier/smellier baits work best. Some people even report that Ivory soap will catch channel cats.

Equipment

When fishing for catfish, your equipment means everything. This being said, I never set out on a catfishing trip being anything less than 100% prepared. Since most catfishing is done on the bottom, be prepared to lose some tackle. I always make sure I have plenty of sinkers, swivels, hooks, and line with me when I go. Here is a quick breakdown of equipment that I would recommend:

Rod – Use a Med-Hvy to Heavy 7-8' rod. You will need the backbone.

Reel – I use either baitcasters or spinning reels. They can handle the heavy line. My favorites are the Okuma Avenger spinning reels and Abu Garcia baitcasters with the bait clickers.

Line – All of my catfish poles are strung with PowerPro 65# test line, but I know a lot of fishermen who use only 20#-30# test. My theory is that expect to catch a trophy every time out, and I don't want to lose it.

Hook – Either Octopus or Gamakatsu hooks in the 5/0 – 8/0 size will do.

Sinker - Weight will depend on the current you are fishing, but I use no-roll sinkers almost exclusively.

How to Rig - See illustration below:

Whether fishing your local creek or chasing trophy blue cats on the Ohio, catfishing in Indiana can be a rewarding and challenging experience. Please

practice CPR (Catch, photo, release) on all trophy fish.

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golfing, Indiana sporting goods stores, lets go fishing, take a kid fishing, kite flying, Indiana city parks, Indiana county parks, Indiana deer hunting, visit Indiana, crankbaits, spinnerbaits, top water fishing, fishing tools, call, turkey calling, delete, enter, copy, paste, yellow book, bass pro, spring, winter, summer, fall, autum, north, east, south, west, drive, bassin, anchors, Indiana government, Indiana Muskie Guides, Vince Weirick Muskie Guide Service, Erie Quest Charters, Daves Basement Baits, J & R Guide Service, Catfish Nation, Sugar Creek Guide Service, Big Marks Bait & Tackle_Monroe reservoir, Lake Monroe, Hoosier Fish & Game, Indiana catfishing, Indiana carp, Indiana carp fishing, Indiana Fishing, Indiana Fishing Discussion Forums, Indiana pay lakes, Indianapolis pay lakes, Indiana walleye fishing, Indiana catfishing, Indiana gun clubs, Indiana Deer & Turkey check stations, Indiana state forests, free Indiana lake maps ABC, Indiana Info Homepage, Register, Log-in, Indiana Fishing Discussion Boards, Indiana Pay Lakes, Indiana Deer & Turkey Check stations, Indiana DNR, Sponsors, Toys for Tots, Indiana Farmers Markets, Indiana DNR, Indiana Fishing reports, TIP Turn in a Poacher, Indiana Speed Traps, Indiana State Forest, Indiana State Fish & Wildlife Areas, Contact our Indiana State DNR, Indiana Marina's, Indiana Racing, Indiana State Parks, Hoosier Lotto, Indiana State Fairgrounds, Free Indiana Lake Maps ABC, Free Indiana lake maps DEF, Free Indiana lake maps GHI, Free Indiana lake maps JKL, Free Indiana Lake Maps MNO, Free Indiana Lake Maps PQR,

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