

Channel Catfish

Catfish are the easiest fish to catch. They eat just about everything. They are not fussy about line size and just about any size hook will work. However, if you follow the method recommended you will catch more catfish.

First tie a # 2 or a # 4 bait holder hook to 6 - 20 lb. test line. DON'T USE ANY WEIGHT as the weight of the bait is enough. Then cut a 2 in. piece of mackerel and put the hook through the skin. The skin helps keep the bait on the hook. Don't worry about hiding the hook because catfish are used to eating things that have bones sticking out. Cast the bait out. You can also use anchovies, chicken livers and hot dogs. Contrary to popular belief fresh bait is best. Not week old, rotten bait.



BE SURE THAT YOU LEAVE YOUR BAIL OPEN because, when a catfish picks up your bait, he will take off like a freight train. If your bail is closed he will take your rod and reel with him. It happens all the time here at Lake Jennings. Rangers from the other lakes will tell you that they also hear stories from people who describe how their rod was pulled in before they could react and, 99.9% of the time, a catfish was the culprit.

WHEN THE CATFISH RUNS, COUNT TO 25 BEFORE SETTING THE HOOK. If you don't hook'em cast back out to the same spot because he will come back. When you do set the hook yank the rod as hard as you can.

How do you find catfish? In summer you will find them in shallow water, less than 10 ft. deep. Look for submerged or downed trees, cattails, or rocky areas because, during the day, cats like to hide. During the day you need to move your bait often because a catfish won't move very far, but if you run it by his nose he'll eat it. If you are fishing at night they will use their great taste buds (whiskers) to find your bait so you don't have to move it. Winter is a different story. Find the deepest part of the lake with rocky areas. People don't think that you can catch cats in cold water.

BONUS: I have been fishing for over 30 years and my biggest trout was 6-8 and my biggest bass was 12-8 but I have caught a whole bunch of catfish over 20 lbs. Local lakes regularly have catfish in the 40 - 50 lb. range, so your chance for a truly BIG fish is better when you go for the cats.