

Catfish News



by
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Catfish Chat at 'The Big One'

The show at Farnborough last week was very busy and I hope any of you that visited had a good time. I chatted to many people about catfishing though it was a bit manic!

It is interesting to consider how catfishing has evolved over the years, ten years ago I would normally spend all my time answering questions about where people can find catfish, which happens very little these days particularly in our area. There are a wealth of fisheries available with catfish; though I have to say these are almost all commercial fisheries who have had the foresight to invest in stock and approach fishery stocking with an objective view in most cases. These fisheries are reaping the rewards of having attractive catfish fishing and in many cases catfish have successfully spawned and new generations of fish to help establish a good stock and which can provide an additional potential revenue stream in fish sales if required. I find this in sad and stark contrast to the continued "head in the sand" attitude of some many general fishing clubs who cant seem to think commercially and objectively and attracting anglers. They seem to think that catfish will "eat all their fish". This means the amount of lower priced catfishing available if lamentably low. More to follow!

Catfish soon on the move – get prepared!!

Although we are sat here enduring week after week of cold snowy, sleety and rain chilly weather it is actually not going to belong before catfish start to move. Therefore NOW is the time to get prepared if you want to capitalise on some early catfish action!

FI readers are lucky to be located in one of the warmest areas of the UK where catfish become active earlier than further to the north. In fact chatting to a couple of fishery owners at "The Big One" show last weekend I heard of a couple of recent catfish captures immediately after ice melt on some Kent lakes!

There will always be the odd winter capture but to catch more consistently monitor for warmer weather.

For the early sessions in cool conditions the three most important pieces of advice I could give are:

- Monitor water temperatures – look for an absolute temperature of at least 9.5 degrees or above; though lower temperatures could still be ok if the temperature has risen significantly. Once it is at 9.5 degrees the catfish will be feeding regularly, though will be feeding probably every 2-3 days then resting to digest food.
- Pick the right water; I would look for shallower fisheries where the water warms up more quickly in response to a warm spell of weather. Also fisheries that have a high fish population (of all species) where anglers bait is likely to be a large percentage of the fishes diet.
- Use soft baits; catfish seem to show a marked preference in cool water for soft, easily digested baits. My recommendations would be luncheon meat, sausage meat pastes, worms or freshwater deadbaits. Livebaits can work, If livebaiting I would recommend fishing them close to the bottom and in deeper water where catfish are likely to be lying.

Spring catfishing can be very rewarding; I have had more multiple captures of catfish during the spring than later in the year, as they do seem to feed well when they do come out on the feed. Also I have caught more catfish during the day in cooler water conditions than in the summer so you always have a chance!

Catfish Conservation Group News

The 25th Anniversary issue of the CCG's annual magazine Whiskers has just been published. It is the only magazine dedicated to catfish (it is bound to become collectable as with the previous special edition). It's a top quality colour magazine full of articles about catfishing. Whiskers magazine comes free with membership or can be bought on its own for £4.50 from the CCG web shop.

More information is also on the Catfish Conservation Group website www.catfishconservationgroup.com. The CCG annual meeting is on 20th March at Hilton Hotel, Kents Hill, Milton Keynes (all are welcome) and this year CCG Founder and carp legend Kevin Maddocks is doing a talk, plus lots more catty stuff to be seen.

Did you know ?

Wels catfish are virtually blind, their tiny eyes are believed to do little more than sense light and dark and are a tiny factor in food location. They have a highly developed sense of smell (about twice as sensitive as carp) and are also believed to sense electrical signals when hunting and of course use their famous "whiskers" as their main method of feeling. The two long whiskers point straight forward when they hunt and they have a huge sucking power to take in food as soon as it is within range.



Catfish-Pro Product in Focus: Unhooking Mats

If you are sorting your gear out and plan to go catfishing make sure you have a suitable unhooking mat. A forty pound catfish is likely to be at least 50 inches long. We must all ensure fish safety as far as possible. The Catfish-Pro unhooking mats are in two sizes 'UK' at 60in long by 24in wide or 'Euro' 85in long and 30in wide. The UK size will accommodate catfish to 65lb – above that the Euro is more suitable. There is a plain mat or one with a flap to cover the fish to keep it calm.



Unhooking mats