

## Catching Catfish

In the twilight of almost any summer evening you can see them begin to gather on the banks of countless reservoirs and ponds. They are fishermen in search of catfish.

A gamefish that prefers discolored warm water doesn't sound like a fish you would find in Colorado, but channel catfish have been here all along. At the same time, the Division stocks thousands into various waterways each year. Most channels caught in Colorado weigh under five pounds, but fish over twenty pounds aren't uncommon.

Basically the catfish is a nocturnal feeder and because they prefer turbid water they rely heavily on their sense of smell. Night crawlers, shrimp, crayfish tails and a variety of commercial stinkbaits can provide good cat action. We recently stayed up most of the night and found catfishing to be pretty much of a waiting game. Carp cooperated quite a bit, but it wasn't until just after dawn that we finally managed to catch a nine pound catfish. Since it isn't always easy to see at night and some of us have the habit of nodding off, a bell on your rod tip helps to let you know when a cat has taken the bait.

Overall catfish are easy to identify...in addition to the facial whiskers known as barbels they have pectoral and dorsal spines. Both blue and channel catfish have deeply forked tails as well.

Some of the better places to catch catfish include Chatfield, Nee Gronda, and Trinidad reservoirs on the east slope and the lower Colorado and Yampa rivers on the west slope.