



## flathead catfish

*Pylodictis olivaris*

Kingdom: Animalia  
 Division/Phylum: Chordata  
 Class: Osteichthyes  
 Order: Cypriniformes  
 Family: Ictaluridae

### FEATURES

The flathead catfish may attain a length of 15 to 45 inches. Except in large adults, there is a white tip on the upper half of the tail fin. The rear edge of this fin is rounded or slightly notched. The head is flattened, and the lower jaw sticks out beyond the upper jaw. The small eyes are located on the top of the head. The back and sides are yellow to purple-brown with dark mottling while the belly is white to yellow. The chin barbels are white or yellow. The tooth patch in the mouth has backward-pointing projections.

### BEHAVIORS

The flathead catfish may be found statewide in Illinois except in the northeastern one-fourth. This fish lives in rivers and lakes in areas with submerged logs and other debris. The flathead catfish is a solitary species. Usually only one fish per drift pile is present. It spawns in summer. The nest is formed by one or both parents under or in an object on the bottom. About 100,000 eggs are deposited in a yellow mass. The adults fan the eggs with their fins during development to provide oxygen and remove silt. The male guards the young fish for about seven days after they hatch. This fish feeds at night, moving from deeper water into the shallows or riffles. It eats fishes and crayfish.

### HABITATS

- bottomland forests
- coniferous forest
- southern Illinois lowlands
- upland deciduous forest

### ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

### ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: statewide except the northeastern 1/4

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.

Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume 2: Woodland Habitats CD-ROM.