

MONSTERS: High water can produce bigger catfish

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other items in these fertile streams. In the brackish tidal sections of the lower Mobile-Tensaw Delta, catfish can add salty morsels like shrimp, pogies and mullet to their diets.

“Blue catfish seem to be a little more abundant in the lower delta than other species,” Armstrong commented. “They can usually tolerate saltier water up to about a third the strength of seawater, which is about 35 parts of salt per thousand. Through most of the year, water in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta usually has less than one part per thousand to about five parts per thousand of salinity. In the lower delta, fish have the best of both worlds when it comes to food. Some catfish in the lower delta get pretty fat, much fatter than what most people catch in some freshwater reservoirs.”

North of the delta, William “Bill” Dannelly Reservoir, better known as Millers Ferry Lake, can produce excellent catfish catches. Better known as a great crappie lake, Millers Ferry also holds abundant bluegills and other sunfish that catfish eat. Giant blue cats



Photos courtesy of Sandy Flowers

Sandy Flowers shows off a flathead catfish she caught on an area river.

frequently follow baitfish schools so many anglers fish the main channel with live or cut shad and other baitfish. Try Bogue Chitto Creek and the Buzard Roost area.

“When I’m specifically targeting big catfish, I use a two-ounce lead sinker with a 4/0 to 5/0 circle hook and heavier line,” detailed Joe Dunn of Dunn’s Sports (334-636-0850) in Thomasville

who fishes the lake regularly. “I’ll bait it with a large, live shad or a big bream. If I can get some skipjack, I’ll use that instead. Skipjack is a super bait for big catfish. Sometimes, we can catch a bunch of skipjack with a cast net. I like to use a four- to six-inch live skipjack.”

Anglers can catch blues and channel cats on fish chunks, but flatheads generally prefer live fish. They devour bream, skipjack, shad, bullheads, small catfish and other morsels. Flatheads like woody cover where they can ambush prey. A sheer blue rock wall with a fallen tree or other nearby object makes an excellent flathead honey hole.

“We always try to catch fresh shad on the fishing day so they are as lively as can be,” advised Joey Pounders, a professional catfish angler who frequently fishes for flatheads on the Tombigbee River. “The Tombigbee River is a hidden catfish gem. I’ve caught quite a few catfish bigger than 50 pounds in it. We might catch a 40-pound blue and a 40-pound flathead from the same hole. For flatheads, we like to fish banks that go straight down and that’s typically a blue rock wall.”



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