

CATFISH: A metal spoon will flash and mimic baitfish

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but it can produce some big fish. I've caught as many as 10 catfish from under one tree."

A metal spoon creates flash that mimics baitfish and generates tempting vibrations in the water. That triggers predatory instincts in catfish, but a spoon doesn't give off tantalizing scents. Since catfish find food primarily with their highly tuned senses of smell, taste and feel, sweeten each spoon with a juicy natural morsel like a baitfish strip or piece of shrimp. The lure produces wobbling action and flash while the natural oils and scent oozing off the bait make an irresistible combination for any hungry catfish.

"With the combination of the spoon and bait, it's a one-two punch," Barton



Photos by John N. Felsher

Catfish like this blue hit spoons, particularly spoons tipped with a piece of skipjack strip.

explained. "The fish sees the flash of the spoon and feels the vibration. It also smells the meat. I hook a skipjack strip on a spoon with just the tip of the hook sticking through the meat. Leave the skin on the fish strip and rig it so that the skin faces the outside. That way, it looks more like a fish

swimming. In general, the more it smells, the better cats bite it. In deeper water, I throw a 1/4- to 3/8-ounce spoon and let it sink to the bottom. I pull it up about two feet off the bottom and let it drop on a tight line. Most of the time, fish hit it on the drop."

Spooning for cats gener-

ally works best on channel cats, but this technique could also entice monster blues and flatheads. Flat-head catfish prefer live bait and normally hunt at night. Even on the darkest nights, cats can still home in on the combination of vibration and scent emanating from a wobbling spoon.

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