

COLOSSAL CATS

Getting the drift of fishing rivers for giant catfish



Photo by John N. Felsher

Joey Pounders, a professional catfish angler, shows off a blue catfish he caught while fishing the Tombigbee River near Gainesville, Ala.

BY JOHN N. FELSHER

Big rivers can produce massive catfish. However, few blue and flathead catfish reach monstrous proportions so anglers must search for the giants.

In rivers like the Alabama, Tombigbee or the Mobile-Tensaw Delta streams, lunker blue cats might lurk anywhere. They usually don't like to sit in direct current, but they stick their noses into it. Catfish frequently hold next to or behind some type of current break, such as a tree or stump. They look upstream waiting for bait to come to them.

"Current plays a really important role in catfishing," explained Mike Mitchell, a professional catfish angler who recently caught and released a 117.20-pound blue catfish pulled from the Tennessee River system. "River cats are used to current. A big catfish likes to get around

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