

FLATHEAD CATFISH

[*Pylodictis olivaris* Raf.]



Fig. 1

UGA 1354044

Problem: Flathead catfish is native to watersheds west of the Allegheny Mountains including the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri River basins.^{1,2,3,5} This species has been introduced outside of its native range and preys on fish, crayfish, and insects (Fig. 1, 2, 3, 6).^{2,3} Based on its feeding habits in its native environment, flathead catfish have the potential to impact other species in river systems that they are introduced into.^{1,2,3}

Identification: Flathead catfish have broad, flat heads with small eyes relative to their head compared to other species of catfish.^{4,5} The fish have a mottled dark-brown and yellow-brown appearance.^{2,3,5} Their tail is flat or marginally notched.⁴ Flathead catfish are 1 to 30 kg in weight, but have been reported greater than 45 kg in southern parts of its range.^{1,2,3,5} The record reported catch in Pennsylvania is 18 kg.⁶ They feed on insects and crayfish as juveniles and switch to preying on fish as adults.^{1,5}

Signs and Symptoms: Flathead catfish are most likely to be detected by anglers catching the fish and reporting their catch to authorities.



Fig. 2

UGA 5413479

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Fig. 3



UGA 5413480 Fig 4

UGA 5371495

Similar Species: Channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*) [Fig. 5] are easily distinguished by their forked caudal fin. Brown bullhead catfish (*Ameiurus nebulosus*) and yellow bullhead catfish (*Ameiurus natalis*) [Fig.4] both bare a resemblance to flathead catfish but can be distinguished by upper jaws that protrude farther than their lower jaws, caudal fins that are either squared or rounded, and they lack the flat head and small eyes (relative to their head) of flathead catfish (Fig. 3 & 6).^{4,6}



Fig. 5

UGA 5430863



Fig. 6

UGA 1354043

[*Pyloodictis olivaris* Raf.]

(flathead catfish)

Text Citations:

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Figure 5: Larry Page, Museum of Natural History, Bugwood.org

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