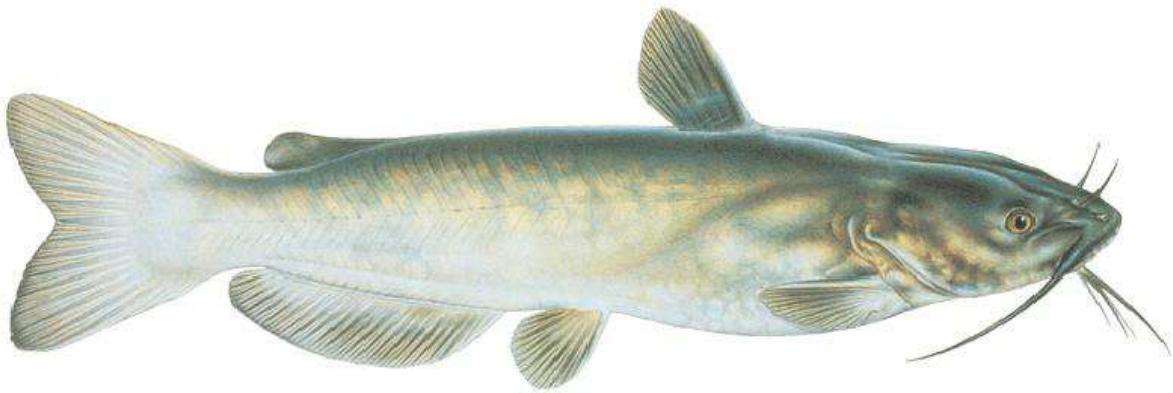


BULLHEADS:



Features: The three species of bullheads present in Oregon (brown, yellow and black) are distinguished from channel catfish by their square or rounded tails and lack of spotting. They seldom exceed 18 inches in length and a weight of 2 pounds. Brown bullheads are a mottled yellowish-brown with a yellow belly and dark chin “whiskers” or barbels that are white near the base. They have a square tail. Yellow bullheads are a more uniform yellow color with white or cream chin barbels and a rounded tail. Black bullheads have a square tail with a light vertical bar at its base and chin barbels that are all dark.

Habitat: Bullheads are found on the bottom in the shallows of mud-bottomed ponds, lakes, reservoirs and backwaters of rivers. The brown species is common throughout the state. The yellow bullhead is found mainly in the Willamette basin, while the black bullhead is primarily in reservoirs and streams tributary to the Snake River. Bullheads feed on almost any type of plant or animal material. Insect larvae and mollusks comprise much of the diet.

Technique: Bullheads can be caught any month of the year, but fishing is best from the first warm days of February through October. Bullheads feed most actively at night, utilizing the senses of touch and smell. Consequently the best angling for them is in the evening or at night under a lantern. Look for them where there is shallow water with a mud bottom. Use a bottom slip-sinker and bait rig with size 6 or 8 hook baited with worms or chicken livers. In shallow water, a bobber and bait rig may also be used with the bait on or near the bottom. When handling bullheads be careful to avoid the spines in the fins. When properly skinned and cooked, bullheads are fine eating.