white catfish

Ameiurus catus

Kingdom: Animalia Phylum: Chordata Class: Actinopterygii Order: Siluriformes Family: Ictaluridae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, nonnative

FEATURES

The white catfish is the smallest of the North American catfishes, reaching a maximum length of 24 inches. They have a bluish grey body, a silvery white belly, and lightly colored pelvic and pectoral fins. Their chin barbells are white or yellow and their adipose fin is grey or black. The white catfish is distinguished from other *Amerius* by a head that is wider than the tail is long, and a weakly to moderately forked tail with rounded tips. They live for a maximum of 11 years.

BEHAVIORS

The white catfish is found in lakes and streams, and slow moving or standing water with sandy, silty substrates. They feed on aquatic plants, insects, and fishes. They become sexually mature at three to four years old and mate in early summer. The mated pair creates and guards their nest for a week until their eggs hatch. Very little information exists on their current distribution within the state, but records have mostly been made on the west side of the state, on the Illinois, Kaskaskia, and Mississippi Rivers.

ILLINOIS RANGE



© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2024. *Biodiversity of Illinois*. Unless otherwise noted, photos and images © Illinois Department of Natural Resources.



Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams; swamps

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none