

INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

CHANNEL CATFISH PROHIBITED IN BC

(*Ictalurus punctatus*)

**Family Ictaluridae has 46 species of North American Catfish. All species of this family are prohibited in B.C.*

NATIVE RANGE

Channel Catfish are native to the St. Lawrence River, Great Lakes, Hudson Bay (Red River drainage), and Missouri-Mississippi River basins from southern Quebec to southern Manitoba and Montana south to the Gulf.

DESCRIPTION

Channel Catfish...

- Have a long and slender body with a narrow head
- Can grow up to 125 cm in length
- Have a forked tail
- Are nocturnal and omnivorous feeders
- Have distinguishing barbels (whisker like projections) around the chin
- Have large eyes near the upper surface of the head
- Are silver-grey, bluish green-olive, or slate coloured depending on environment
- Have scattered small dark spots on back and sides

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Channel Catfish...

- Could heavily predate on native fish species in B.C., if introduced
- Are known carriers of viral haemorrhagic septicaemia, which has been shown to cause death in various finfish species
*There have been reported large die-offs of native fish species in the Great Lakes from this disease
- Are known carriers of red spot disease that infects freshwater fish
- Are known to heavily predate on juvenile salmon
- Have shown to predate on crayfish, resulting in a decline in crayfish density in regions of the US where Channel Catfish have been introduced
- Are potentially linked to the decline of a native frog species in Arizona



Photo: Eric Engbretson

PRIMARY IMPACT:
If introduced, Channel Catfish could impact B.C. ecosystems by heavily predated on native fish and amphibian species.

REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES
www.reportinvasives.ca

DID YOU KNOW?

It has been reported that Channel Catfish were the first species to be raised for commercial aquaculture in the United States.

CHANNEL CATFISH

(*Ictalurus punctatus*)



Photo: US Fish and Wildlife /Wikimedia Commons

PROHIBITED IN BC



© Ryan Somma
/Wikimedia Commons /
CC-BY-SA-2.0

PROHIBITED IN BC

BIOLOGY & SPREAD

It is a concern that Channel Catfish could be intentionally stocked in B.C. waterbodies as a food source or sport fish just as has been done in the United States. Channel Catfish can reproduce quickly as they lay up to 20,000 eggs per nest. Adults are opportunistic feeders, enabling them to survive in a variety of habitat types.

HABITAT

Channel Catfish are found in deep pools and lakes, and prefer to lay their eggs in obscure crevices for protection. It is likely that Channel Catfish could establish in regions of warmer temperatures in B.C. such as the central interior as they prefer warmer waters for spawning.

LOOKALIKES

There are no similar looking native species in B.C.

ARE THEY HERE YET?

No. Channel Catfish have not been reported in B.C. There have however, been findings of Channel Catfish as far West as the province of Alberta and Washington State.

HOW CAN WE STOP THEM?

- Do not possess, breed, release, sell or transport live Channel Catfish in B.C. (It is illegal!)
- Be aware of the species that you buy for aquariums, as it could be PROHIBITED in B.C.
- Raise awareness to avoid the spread of this species into B.C. waters



WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND ONE?

Report Channel Catfish, or any other invasive species via the **Report Invasives phone app**, or via the **web form** available on the B.C. Inter-Ministry Invasive Species Working Group website:

www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species