

# White River 2017 Catfish Survey

**River Information:** length = 312 miles (West Fork), 192 miles (East Fork), 50 miles (main stem); mean annual discharge = 12,690 ft<sup>3</sup>/s; drainage area = 11,349 sq. miles

**Fish Consumption Advisories:** Advisories for the White River can be found here at <http://in.gov/isdh/26778.htm>

**Counties Sampled:** Daviess, Dubois, Gibson, Knox, Pike

**Special Regulations:** Commercial fishing allowed on portions of the East, West, and main stem White River. Harvest of Channel, Blue, and Flathead Catfish less than 13 in long is restricted. No more than one Channel Catfish at least 28 in long, Flathead Catfish at least 35 in long, or Blue Catfish at least 35 in long may be harvested per day.

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## Methods

Catfish sampling took place at four sites on the main stem White River, two sites on the West Fork, and two sites on the East Fork during June - August, 2017. Fish collection effort consisted of 20 overnight hoop net lifts and one hour of electrofishing (30 minutes of both low-pulse and high-pulse DC) per site. Hoop nets were 1.5 in mesh, with 36 in diameter hoops, and were 12 ft long. Total length, weight, and pectoral fin rays were collected from each catfish, and a subsample of fish were aged.

## Summary

- A total of 419 Flathead Catfish was sampled that ranged in length from 2.3 to 45.0 in total length (TL) and weighed from 0.02 to 48.50 lbs. The average catch rate was 36.3 fish/h electrofishing and 0.8 fish/hoop net lift. Flathead Catfish reached 13 and 35 in at approximately 3 and 13 years (Figure 2).
- A total of 188 Channel Catfish was sampled that ranged in length from 1.9 to 28.5 in TL and weighed from 0.02 to 12.96 lbs. The average catch rate was 3.3 fish/h electrofishing and 1.0 fish/hoop net lift. On average, Channel Catfish reached 13 and 28 in at approximately 3 and 15 years (Figure 3). However, length varies considerably within age groups.
- Twelve Blue Catfish were sampled that ranged in length from 1.5 to 31.1 in TL and weighed from 0.02 to 14.33 lbs. The average catch rate was 1.3 fish/h electrofishing. None were caught in hoop nets.
- Average size of Channel Catfish was greatest at sites on the lower White River near Petersburg (Figure 4). Average size of Flathead Catfish was greatest at sites on the West Fork White River near Maysville (Figure 5).

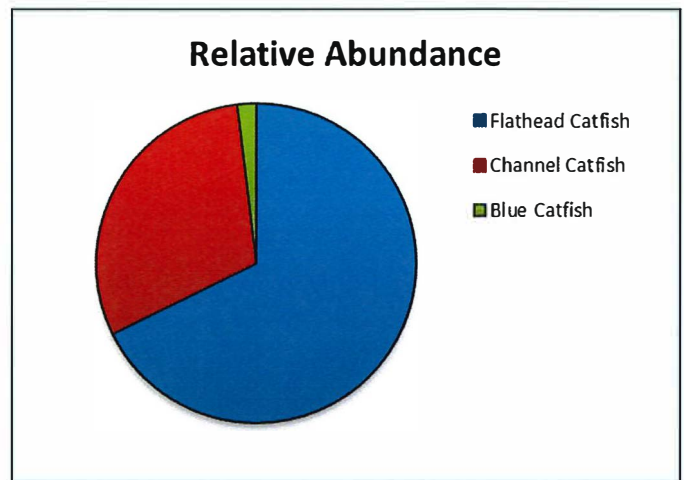


Figure 1. Relative abundance of catfish species captured during targeted monitoring.

Table 1. Blue Catfish, Channel Catfish, and Flathead Catfish catch.

Species	Size Class (in)	Number	Percent
Flathead Catfish	< 13.0	249	59.4
	13.0 – 23.9	137	32.7
	24.0 – 34.9	26	6.2
	35.0+	7	1.7
Channel Catfish	< 13.0	22	11.7
	13.0 – 19.9	88	46.8
	20.0 – 27.9	77	41.0
	28.0+	1	0.5
Blue Catfish	< 13.0	8	66.6
	13.0 – 23.9	2	16.7
	24.0 – 34.9	2	16.7
	35.0+	---	---

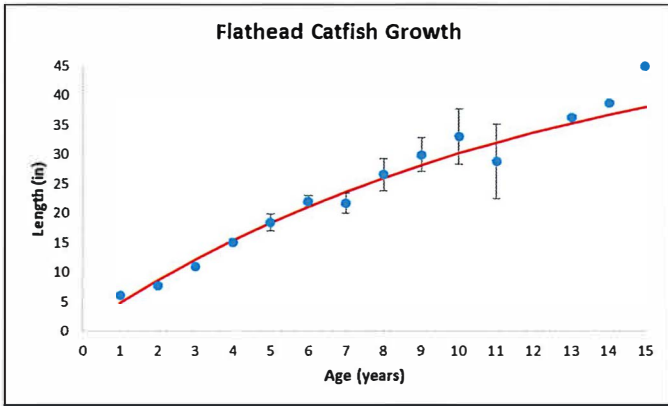


Figure 2. White River Flathead Catfish mean length at age with growth curve (generated using ages 1-11). Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

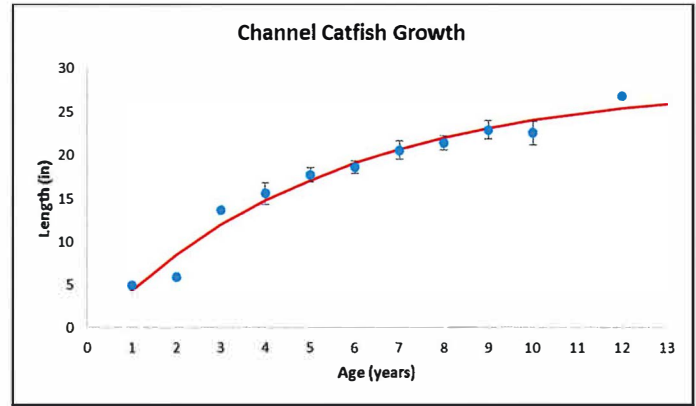


Figure 3. White River Channel Catfish mean length at age with growth curve. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

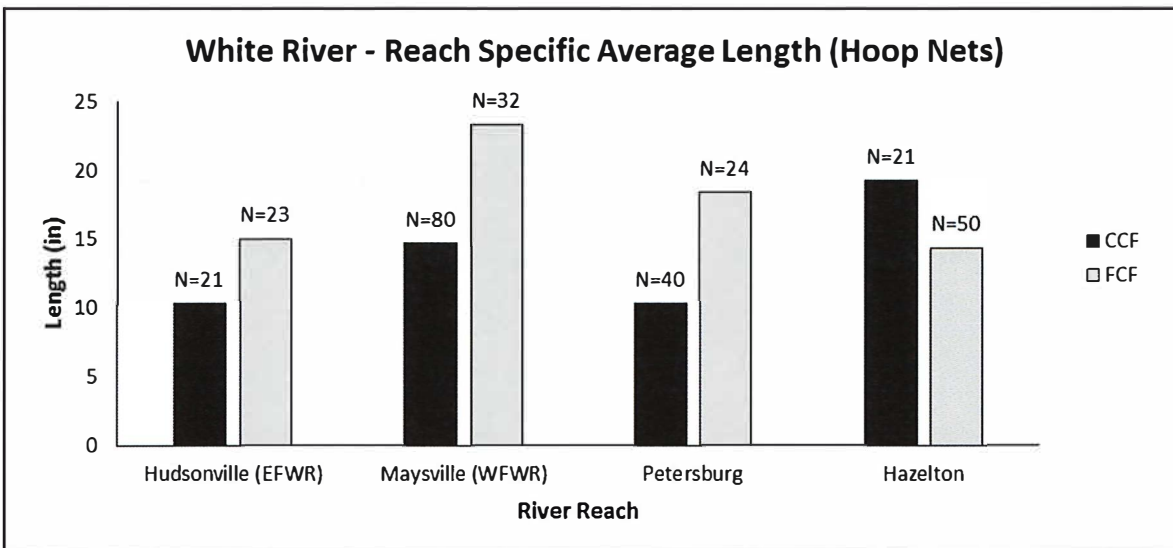


Figure 4. Reach specific average lengths (in) of Channel (CCF) and Flathead (FCF) Catfish collected using hoop nets.

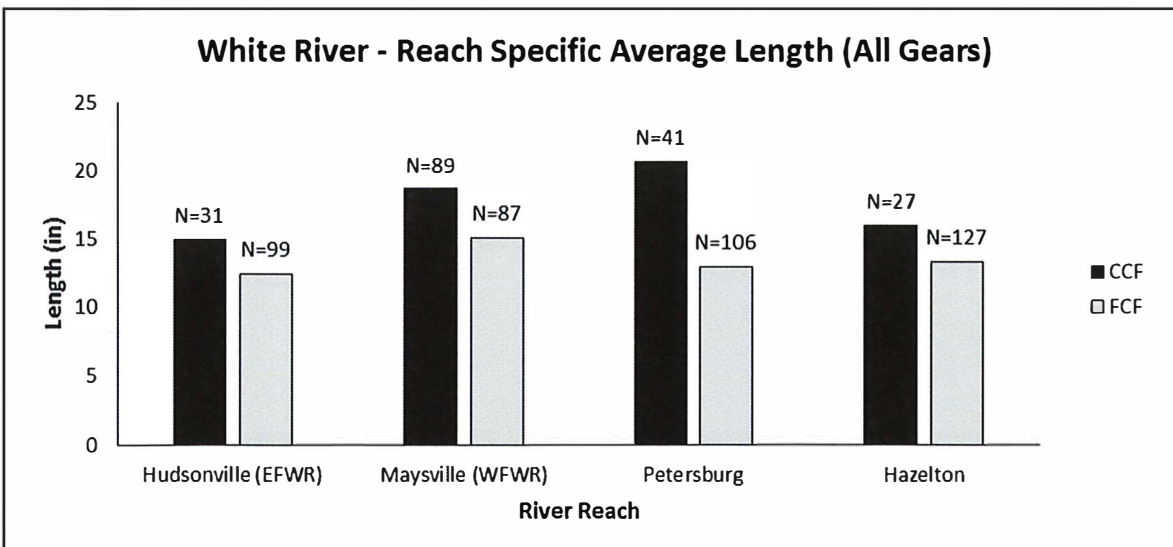


Figure 5. Reach specific average lengths (in) of Channel (CCF) and Flathead (FCF) Catfish collected using hoop nets and electrofishing.