



WHITE CATFISH

Ameiurus catus

Description:

- ◇ moderately forked tail
- ◇ blue to gray black above
- ◇ white below
- ◇ spine on pectoral fins and dorsal fins serrated
- ◇ 4 pairs of barbels; 2 on lower jaw, 1 behind nostrils, 1 split on sides of upper jaw
- ◇ chin barbels are most commonly white
- ◇ upper jaw extends beyond lower jaw

Size:

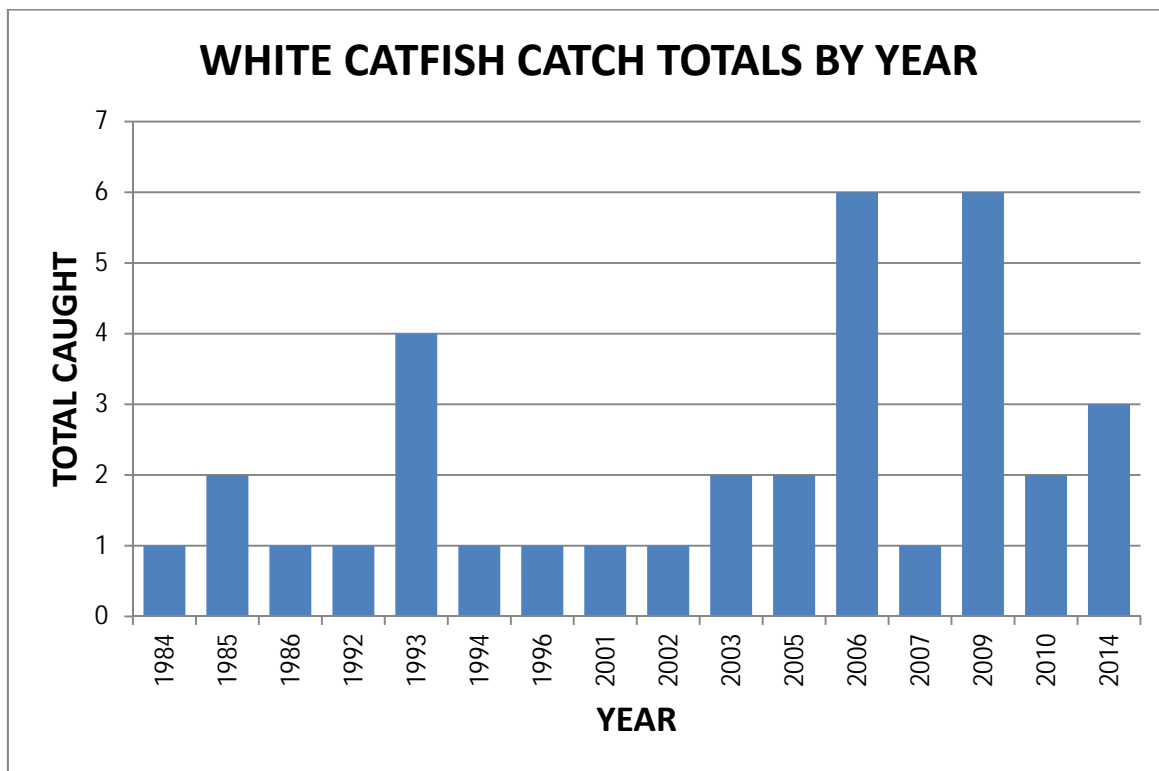
- ◇ up to 24 inches; more commonly up to 12 inches

Range:

- ◇ fresh and brackish waters along Atlantic and Gulf Coast states, from New York to Florida; introduced into Midwest and West Coast states

Facts:

- ◇ prefers slow, mud-bottomed pools, open channels and backwaters of small to large rivers, lakes and impoundments
- ◇ feed on anything from insects to crustaceans and fish
- ◇ average lifespan is 12 to 14 years
- ◇ mature at 3 to 4 years
- ◇ barbels contain taste buds which help find food in dark, muddy waters
- ◇ male and female form saucer shaped nest
- ◇ females lay 1000 to 4000 sticky eggs
- ◇ males guard and aerate the eggs
- ◇ males watch over the fry until they disperse



*white catfish were only caught during the years shown

NJ Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Fish and Wildlife
Bureau of Marine Fisheries
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