

Taking a look at catfish juggin'

BY PHILLIP GENTRY
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Catfish anglers come in all shapes and sizes, though none are any cuter than Madelyn Ready. Madelyn is a catfish princess, and during the summer, she and her dad, Corey Ready, catch plenty of the whiskered fish.

No rod and reels are needed. Ready and family prefer to catch their catfish by running jug lines.

Jug fishing is great fun and a productive way to catch catfish. The anticipation of what might be lurking on the next line is as exciting as watching a rod bend over, and jug fishing offers a camaraderie that is seldom matched in other outdoor pursuits.

"I got into jug fishing probably about eight years ago," Corey Ready said. "Fell in love with it ever since. There is really no trick to it. You can make it as complicated as you want or as simple as you want. Basically, all you need to have fun with your family is something that floats, a hook, line and some bait."

The frequency of checking your jugs is determined by the areas and baits you're using.

"If you put them out and they're biting, don't leave them," Ready said. "You'll have smaller catfish that will rob your bait. I've seen people put them out and just leave them all night, usually with live bait just wanting to catch a couple big fish. If you're fishing with worms or little cut bait, something that will come off the hook easy, you probably shouldn't leave them long because they're just going to be sitting out there with a hook in the water and no bait."



COURTESY OF COREY READY

Summertime catfishing is a great family pastime — just add some jugs.

Ready prefers to fish closer to the shoreline at or after dark, when catfish will move out of the structure to shallower feeding spots along the bank.

"Along a natural bank is just good natural habitat for the fish," Ready said. "If it falls off and gets deep quick, you'll have deeper areas up against the bank. It gives the fish, flatheads, blues and channel catfish a place to come out and feed when they're not out in the big water."

In lakes that hold mostly channel catfish, numbers of fish are usually not hard to come by. If, for instance, catfish are holding in 5 to 15 feet of water on a long point, Ready will motor along that range, baiting and re-baiting jug lines. It can be some fast action chasing down bobbing jugs.

"Once you find the right

friends. He said there's no point going to a lot of expense, because jugs can be made out of about anything that floats. Also, on occasion, some of those jugs will just disappear, so there's no point investing a lot of money in them.

SC JUG FISHING RULES AND REGULATIONS

— Jug fishing is defined as a single hook and line attached to a free-floating device with a minimum capacity of one pint and a maximum of one gallon. Each jug may not have more than one line.

— A permit is required to fish up to the 50-jug limit. A licensee's name and customer ID number must be clearly marked on each jug.

— Jug fishing is legal only in lakes Greenwood, Hartwell, Secession, Russell, Thurmond and Stevens Creek Reservoir.

— A jug permit is not required for residents assisting jug permit holders.

— Jugs must be marked with name and customer ID number.

— Jugs must be removed from the water before one hour after official sunrise each day and not replaced prior to one hour before official sunset.

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depth on the shallow points, you'll have a bank that teeters out a long way," Ready said. "If the wind is blowing out of one side, you can let the jugs drift with the wind. That usually makes for some good fishing."

Ready's final thoughts about jug fishing are to make it fun first and foremost, whether you're out on the water with family or enjoying an evening with