

# A look at some catfish tactics that can

BY PHILLIP GENTRY  
FOR THE JOURNAL

Regardless of whether you're a burgeoning catfish tournament angler or just out on the water to collect some tasty catfish fillets, catfish tactics can be broken down into three major tactics.

These tactics can be tailored to fit a specific catfish species, which usually involves altering the size and type of bait used, the size tackle and whether you are fishing in still or moving waters.

The three most sought-after catfish species are blue catfish, flathead catfish and channel catfish, but all three can be caught using one or more of these tactics.

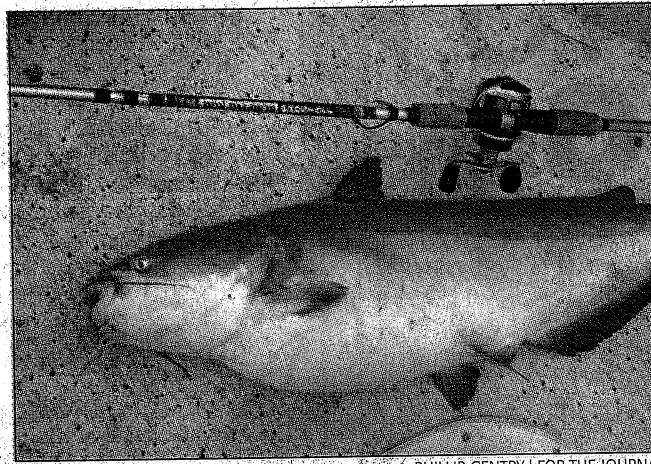
## ANCHORED FISHING

Probably the most well-recognized tactic, catfishing from an anchored position is not as

haphazard as it may first appear. It's incumbent upon the angler to pick the proper location for anchored fishing. Suitable locations may be a deep-water hole, a hump, a channel edge or the confluence of two tributaries.

Positioning the boat can be done with rope and anchor, although most catfish anglers now opt for using an electric trolling motor that uses GPS navigation to lock on a particular spot and hold the boat in position. The result is faster and easier anchoring with more precision.

Once the boat is in position, multiple rods are cast around the boat to target different depths. Catfish may be moving from shallow to deep, deep to shallow or somewhere in between. It's also important to pay attention to any fish-holding structure such as laydowns, rock piles or stumps and then place



PHILLIP GENTRY | FOR THE JOURNAL

Regardless of the catfish species you prefer, try one of the three tactics listed below to catch them.

baits adjacent to these spots.

## DRIFTING OR TROLLING

Trolling for catfish is largely dependent on a particular type of rig — one that allows the angler's bait to be pulled over and through nearly any type of structure without hanging up. Often referred to as a drift rig, the main line is attached to a three-way swivel.

One of the other eyes contains a short leader to which slinky weight is tied. Slinky weights can be homemade or obtained commercially, and they allow the weight to be pulled into bottom structure without fouling.

The bait line is tied to the remaining eye, often a 2- or 3-foot section of monofilament leader with a small Styrofoam float pegged midway between

# fit every occasion

the hook and swivel. The bait hook is tied to the tag end. The buoyancy of the float helps keep the bait and hook well above the weight so that the hook rides near the bottom but above any potential snags. Rigs are deployed at an average of around 50 yards behind the boat.

If enough wind is present, catfish anglers will allow the wind to push the boat sideways, sometimes with the aid of a drift sock, and place as many as six rods in rod holders along the windward side of the boat, dragging the baits in the boat's sideways wake.

## BUMPING

Bumping is most effective in rivers or other areas with heavy current. Large rivers and waterways are the top spots, but tail races or canals coming out of reservoirs — especially when releasing current — are another option.

Bumping is a natural presentation that mimics food washing down

current, where catfish will lay facing upstream waiting for something to come by.

When bumping, position the boat into the current and allow the current to push the boat back while using the trolling motor to troll into the current enough to roughly cut the backward-drift speed in half. The boat is going slower than the current, so the bait is also going slower down the river.

Bumping might seem to be a vertical presentation but is very similar to trolling the bottom in reverse. To get the right angle in the presentation, the angler lets out more and more line until the bait is nearly sliding across the bottom with the current at a much slower speed than trolling with the current.

PHILLIP GENTRY is a freelance outdoor writer who has been writing a wide variety of outdoor articles across the Southeast since 2004.