Catfish Identification Tips

**White catfish** *Ameiurus catus*
- Moderately forked tail
- Sides silvery gray, with no spots
- Anal fin rays 19-23

**Blue catfish** *Ictalurus furcatus*
- Profile steeply sloped and straight
- Sides pale gray or blue with no spots
- Edge of anal fin straight, with 30-36 rays

**Channel catfish** *Ictalurus punctatus*
- Deeply forked tail
- Sides often spotted, especially on juveniles
- Deeply forked tail
- Anal fin rounded, with 24-29 rays

**Flathead catfish** *Pylodictis olivaris*
- Entire body mottled
- Tail square or slightly forked; upper part often pale
- Anal fin rays 14-17

**Bullheads** *Ameiurus species*
- Tail rounded, square or slightly forked — not deeply forked
- The picture above depicts a brown bullhead. There are four other bullhead species in North Carolina — the yellow, black, snail and flat. Color varies from gold to black.
- Tail rounded, square or slightly forked — not deeply forked
- Sides often spotted, especially on juveniles
- Deeply forked tail
- Anal fin rounded, with 24-29 rays

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**Entire body mottled
- Tail square or slightly forked; upper part often pale
- Anal fin rays 14-17

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**Upper jaw has large tooth patch with extensions going back into the mouth on both sides
- Flattened head with protruding lower jaw
- Anal fin rays 19-23

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**Pylodictis olivaris
- Entire body mottled
- Tail square or slightly forked; upper part often pale
- Anal fin rays 14-17