

Ted Ellenbecker

regulation proposal

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Flathead trophy water proposal

This proposal is made with the hope of protecting the trophy class flathead catfish in certain destination bodies of water in the state of South Dakota. Comments I will make are supported by state fishery departments not limited to but including the SD fisheries. The goals are to allow specific bodies of water to achieve their potential. To protect a group of trophy catfish that belong to a residential population, these fish are not transient as are the blue and channel catfish. Secondary benefits would include the start of education about a species that is unquestionably misunderstood in the state of SD. The Flathead may be the most advanced predator in this state. And finally Catfishing and catfishermen have been considered a "lesser" in this state. Unfortunately people think of many things by what they are told and hear from others. Catfishing is no longer simply throwing a bait into dirty water. If anyone would like to hear more in detail I am available to answer any question concerning this. As well as provide research results from other states if requested.

The request

We request a regulation limiting the daily limit on flathead catfish to 1 per day per angler over 28". This puts this fish at approximately 10 pounds which is the point at which these fish are considered "a good fish" by most anglers in this state. At this size these fish are about 10 years old. At this point they can also increase yearly gain sub-

stantially. This allows the angler a daily bag limit of smaller fish and the capability of keeping one bigger fish if desired. We do not want to prevent harvest, we want to improve the fishery and number of larger fish available to all anglers. Simply manage it so all have the opportunity to enjoy a big fish. It also allows the tournaments on these waters to allow some good flatheads to come to the scales.

Why The Flathead will work in the development of a trophy fishery,
as well as why this is needed for this species

WHY THE NEED;

1) The increase in fishing pressure on some very small bodies of water due to overall human population increases in the area as well as an increase in interest in the sport itself. Also the increase in tournaments on the waters we will list for your consideration.

2) This species is a residential population spending its time in limited areas. "this is documented by several game and fish agencies". In short this means the population can be over fished on smaller waters quite easily, especially the smaller population of bigger fish.

3) During the spring "pre spawn" movement this species become concentrated in areas for a period of normally 30 to 60 days making the bigger fish very vulnerable to angler. this occurs as well in the fall for a shorter period.

4) It takes 10 years to grow a 10 lb fish, 20 yrs to go into the twenties, when one of this size is removed it will not be replaced for along time. remember they are a residential population. These waters do, when allowed grow fish 50 LB +.

5) In the state of SD this is the largest predator available to the angler! yes even bigger and stronger than the infamous musky.

largest fish available to the rod and reel angler. except possibly the snagging of paddlefish.

6) this species offers ALL anglers the opportunity to target a large trophy class fish in the state of SD regardless of personal finances, no boat needed, no sponsorships needed.

Why The Flathead Will Work In A SD Trophy Water Project

- 1) Everyone wants to catch a big fish!
- 2) According to Kansas fishery The flathead is a manageable trophy fishery!
- 3) Flathead are resilient and are an excellent catch and release species!
- 4) This species remains in its home territory! So is manageable.
- 5) can and does grow to over 50lbs in our waters!
- 6) no cost for the state to establish this fishery!
- 7) recruitment fish are available to move into the trophy class
- 8) waters suggested are already destination waters for this species
- 9) anglers from SD, IA, MN, and NE come to these waters to fish for flatheads
- 10) national popularity is on the rise

The area proposed

I will offer three suggestions for consideration with the understanding of potential issues with neighboring states. Please note these waters are already destination waters for this species. Also all waters are flowing bodies of water so winter kills are rare and never complete. this allows an ongoing improvement with management.

1) the area of Eastern Sd made up of the James river, the vermilion river, the Sioux river, and the missouri river from Yankton dam downstream to the state lines. The area of this layout, and size have been researched and would without question support and facilitate a fishery like this.

2) The James river, the Sioux river, and the vermilion river.

3) If issues with neighboring states becomes an issue the James river itself is a inland water for the state of SD requiring no contact with other states. This option would result in more limited results but would still be a viable place to start if that type of beginning is desired

Again I am willing and prepared to answer any and all questions from anyone that would like to ask. There is a time to do what is right. For SD, this species, these waters, and the people that utilize these waters now id the time. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you and looking forward to preparing a proper proposal. Ted Ellenbecker