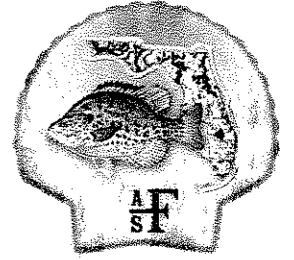


the shell-cracker

FLORIDA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY



<http://www.sdafs.org/flafs>

April, 2003

It was a memorable meeting and we sorely missed all of you who couldn't make it. A plethora of unforgettable topics discussing everything from the red snapper's "famous anus" to the elusive "pink snook" graced the big screen during the three-day event. Those of us present will not soon forget the propinquity of slippery dicks to 747 jetliners or just how big a sturgeon ovary really is. Tom Maher sacrificed a healthy vertebra to win both the newly inaugurated "Bonfire Olympics" as well as the coveted Lampshade Award (hang in there, Tom, maybe we'll give away a wheelchair next year instead of a canoe), and Jerry Lorenz moved us to tears with his description of the plight of the rare and threatened "pink snook" to take the Power Tie Award, hands down. As you may have already heard, the meeting and symposium were immensely popular with a record number of posters and platform presentations being delivered. In fact, we had more attendees than beds, and several people had to be accommodated in the recreation center. Student attendance was at an all time high, and for the first time in my memory we couldn't fund all student requests for travel grants. We fully funded eight and partially funded two but had to turn down requests from eight students for lack of funds. On a brighter note, the raffle took in over \$1500 (before expenses) that will go a long way toward funding more students at next year's meeting.

As has been our tradition, professional speakers from our ranks stepped up to deliver a series of truly outstanding contributed professional poster and platform presentations. Not surprisingly, competition was keen for top presenter awards. Indeed, it was perhaps the closest competition ever seen for these honors. The judges for the Best Professional Poster category were deadlocked on four - yes, count 'em - four posters! It fell to Past President Larry Connor to break the tie, and even he studied the submissions for well over an hour before pronouncing the winner. Not to be outdone, the panel of judges for Best Professional Paper insisted on an unprecedented two winners for this category. See Page 6 for the list of winners!

While the professional contributions were formidable, at the end of the day there was no doubt in anyone's mind that our students had stolen the show. Student submissions comprised one-half of all posters and more than one-third of platform presentations delivered. And boy did they ever deliver! Unbelievably, the Best Student Poster competition was even more contentious than the professional category with three student submissions vying for the top award. The winning poster was separated from the other two contenders by only a single point, and deliberations among the judges continued well into lunch on the last day before a final decision could be reached. The Best Student Presentation award was likewise a difficult decision for judges who were forced to choose from an array of truly superb presentations. The quality of our student's presentations was nothing short of stellar, and talk in the professional ranks underscored again and again the poise, imagination, and uncommon mental acumen that these young researchers brought to both podium and poster. We were enthralled by their presence, enlightened by their knowledge and we all stood a little taller around the bonfire knowing that they were one of ours. It's good to know that our future and our fisheries are in good hands.

All the Best,
Wayne A. Bennett, President

KIMBERLY I TUGEND
3240-A IBIS CT.
KISSIMMEE FL 34741

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Florida Chapter AFS
601 W. Woodward Ave.
Eustis, FL 32726

Non-Profit Organization
Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Eustis, FL
Permit No. 4



Getting in Touch

President

Wayne Bennett, Ph.D.
University of West Florida
Department of Biology
11000 University Pkwy.
Pensacola, FL 32514
phone: (850) 474-3362
email: wbennett@uwf.edu

President-Elect

Mike Allen, Ph.D.
University of Florida
Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences
7922 N.W. 71st St.
Gainesville, FL 32653
phone: (352) 392-9617 ext. 252
email: msal@mail.ifas.ufl.edu

Secretary/Treasurer

John Benton
FWC
601 W. Woodward Avenue
Eustis, FL 32726
phone: (352) 742-6438
email: john.benton@fwc.state.fl.us

Newsletter Editor

Kim Tugend
FWC
600 N. Thacker Avenue
Suite A-1
Kissimmee, FL 34741
phone: (407) 846-5300
email: kimberly.tugend@fwc.state.fl.us

Past President

Kathy Guindon-Tisdell
FWC - Florida Marine Research Institute
100 8th Ave. SE
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
phone: (727) 896-8626 ext. 1514
email: kathryn.tisdell@fwc.state.fl.us

Upcoming Events

Apr. 13-16, 2003 – Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration Meeting, Baltimore, MD.

Apr. 14-17, 2003 – Western Division AFS Meeting (soliciting papers on the Gulf of Mexico and Mexican fisheries), San Diego, CA.

June 2-5, 2003 – Florida Lake Management Society/NALMS Southeast Regional Conference, Orlando, FL.

Aug. 10-14, 2003 – 133rd Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society, Quebec City, Quebec.

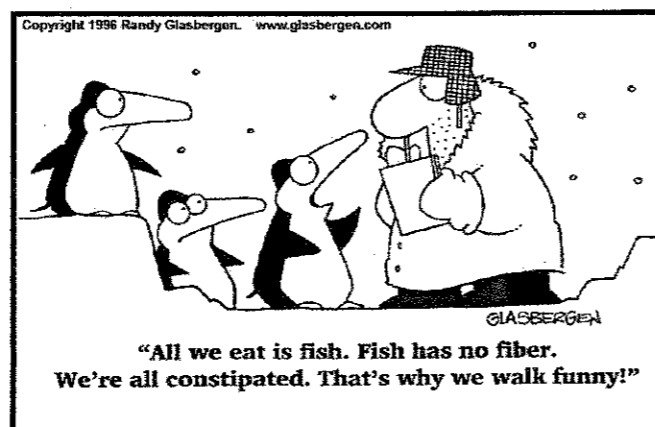
Aug. 20-23, 2003 - AFS Early Life History Section 27th Annual Larval Fish Conference, Santa Cruz, CA.

Oct. 11-15, 2003 - Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Mobile, AL.

Nov. 5-7, 2003 - 23rd International Symposium of the North American Lake Management Society, Manshantucket, CT.

Nov. 7-9, 2003 - 3rd Annual American Fisheries Student Colloquium, Morgantown, WV.

May 2-6, 2004 – 4th World Fisheries Congress, Vancouver, British Columbia.



Meeting Minutes, Continued...

A request for funding from the AFS Equal Opportunity section was discussed. A \$200 donation was made last year. Rich McBride made a motion to decline the funding request this year. The motion carried unanimously.

A request for funding was made for the 4th World Fisheries Congress in Vancouver. A motion was made by Larry Connor to provide \$500 for Dr. Bill Seaman's travel (he is a session leader).

Larry Connor informed the chapter that the Southern Division Business Meeting has been moved from the Southeastern Association fall meeting to the Mid-Year meeting.


A request was made for travel funding assistance for Mexican fisheries professionals to attend the Western Division Meeting. Larry Connor made a motion for FAFS to donate \$200 for that purpose. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion of using the parent society's capacity to accept charge cards at the meeting was made. Tom Maher made the motion that FAFS use this service at the 2004 annual meeting and absorb the 3.5% service cost. The motion carried unanimously.

Elections for Chapter Officers were conducted: John Benton was retained as Treasurer. Dr. Mike Allen was voted President-Elect and Dr. Wayne Bennett assumed the Presidency of FAFS and chaired the rest of the business meeting.

Under New Business, there was discussion of increasing professional memberships. One avenue for doing this and offering services to the membership was by offering Continuing Education training.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43pm.



Like to Write??

The Shell-Cracker staff is actively seeking individuals to write feature articles for upcoming issues. *Articles should address a current fisheries issue, program or research.* For more information or submission of articles, contact:

Kim Tugend
kimberly.tugend@fwc.state.fl.us



THANK YOU!!

A special thank you goes out to all of our paper/poster judges at the annual meeting in Brooksville. It was a tough job this year, but you did a tremendous job and deserve a great big pat on the back!!!

Another thank you goes to all of you who bought raffle tickets at this year's annual meeting. Because of you, we collected \$1,750, most of which will be used to fund student travel to next year's meeting.

Minutes of the Florida Chapter of the American Fisheries Society
2003 Annual Business Meeting in Brooksville, FL
February 26, 2003

President Kathy Guindon-Tisdell established that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm.

A motion was made by John Benton to approve the minutes of the 2002 Annual Business Meeting as published. The motion passed unanimously.

The treasurer's report was presented. Larry Connor made a motion for acceptance of the report. The motion was accepted by unanimous vote.

Dr. Chuck Cichra furnished a report on Student Travel Grants. Eight full grants (all meals and lodging) and two partial grants (one full day of meals and lodging) were awarded. Full grants went to: Patrick Cooney, Antony DiGirolama, Jeff Grimm, Julianne Harris, Jodie Rummer, Bryan Swanson, Karen Vaughan, and Heidi Wallman. Partial grants were awarded to Elizabeth Berens and Jaclyn Debicella.

Larry Connor presented the 2003 Rottman Scholarship Fund award for the M.S. candidate to Timothy Bonvechio, a student of Dr. Mike Allen's at the University of Florida. There was no award made for the Ph.D. level this year. Larry then presented a report of the annual balance of the fund. Larry made a motion that the FAFS forego reimbursement from the Scholarship fund for expenses incurred in this past year. This amounted to \$671.565. The motion carried. Information was presented on Roger Rottman's family and their awareness of this award.

Kim Tugend agreed to continue as the newsletter editor. The chapter ratified this.

There were no student concerns presented. Some interested students agreed to work within the framework of the bylaws review to explore other avenues for student involvement within the chapter.

Pat Fricano had no legislative report.

Tom Maher asked that chapter members solicit raffle items from their local vendors prior to the next year's meeting. Appeals to major sponsors that had produced results in previous years were declined this year. Tom will work with the raffle for one more year. Bridgett Tiffany will assist Tom.

The FAFS website will be switched to the Southern Division's server which will not cost the chapter any monthly fee. Bob Wattendorf will maintain the site.

Bylaw review was continued until next year. Four members agreed to assist Peter Hood in the review.

There was discussion of a request for adding the FAFS endorsement to the American Rivers (www.amrivers.org) group's request for funding. Pat Fricano made a motion to table the request for the endorsement. The motion to table passed unanimously.

The Flathead Catfish of Northwest Florida Rivers

Rich Cailteux and Dan Dobbins
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
5300 HighBridge Road
Quincy, FL 32351

In Florida, 23% of freshwater anglers target catfish followed only by black bass (49%) and panfish (26%) in popularity (USDOI 2001). Although this survey does not split out species, channel catfish *Ictalurus punctatus* is almost certainly the most popular species (J. Crumpton, FWC, pers. comm.), but in one North Florida river, another unwanted species is gaining prestige.

Native catfish species such as channel catfish, white catfish *I. catus* and several bullhead species *Ameiurus* spp. occur in all north Florida rivers. However, until recently very little information existed on these populations (Cailteux et al. 1999; Cailteux et al. 2002). Exacerbating this paucity of information, is the known presence, in at least six north Florida rivers, of an introduced top predator species of catfish, the flathead catfish *Pylodictis olivaris* (Figure 1). The flathead catfish is native to the Mississippi, Rio Grande and Mobile Bay drainage systems. It is a voracious predator, capable of exceeding 45 kg in weight and is second in size only to the blue catfish *I. furcatus*, the largest catfish in North America. Introduced flathead catfish populations have negatively altered native fish populations such as small bullhead species and the

much sought after redbreast sunfish *Lepomis auritus* in several southeastern states (Guier et al. 1981; Thomas 1993).

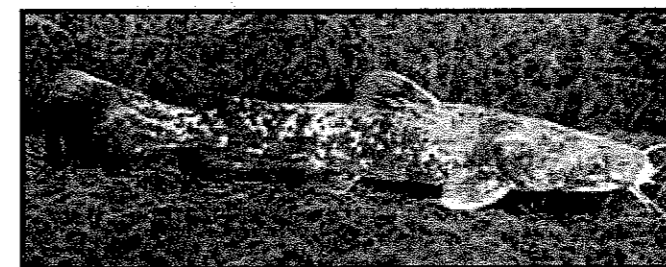


Figure 1. Flathead catfish (photo by Gray Bass)

Introduced into the Flint River, Georgia, in the mid-1950's (Quinn 1987), the flat head catfish was first encountered in the Apalachicola River in the early 1980's (C. Mesing, FWC, pers. comm.) but was rare in abundance. By the mid-1990's,

this species was being collected in high densities (>60 fish/hour) by electrofishing in the Apalachicola River (Cailteux et al. 1999), and it appeared that redbreast sunfish abundance was lower (FWC, unpublished data) than reported in the early 1980's (Ager et al. 1983). Many thought that if the numbers of flathead catfish could be drastically reduced that the redbreast sunfish would once again be present in good abundance. Flathead catfish are extremely vulnerable to low voltage electrofishing and with the advent of hand-held units (Hale et al. 1984), it was thought by some that a commercial fishery could be established to reduce the numbers of this species. However, with the potentially high catch rates and Dobbins et al. (1999) estimate of only 56 flathead catfish (>38 cm) per river kilometer, a commercial electrofishing fishery could not be sustained for more than about six months. Also, Cailteux et al. (1999) reported that greater than 96% of flathead catfish harvested by anglers were larger than 50 cm due to the low quantity of meat yielded from smaller fish.

In an attempt to simulate this phenomenon and increase redbreast sunfish numbers, Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) personnel removed flathead catfish of all sizes collected by electrofishing in a 70 km stretch of the Ocmulgee River over four consecutive years (R. Weller, GADNR pers. comm.). After four years, the size structure of the flathead catfish had drastically declined, but the catch rate of the species did not change. This in turn led to no change in redbreast sunfish abundance.

In the Apalachicola River, flathead catfish have become popular with anglers for the sport and quality of the flesh. Cailteux et al. (1999) reported that 31% of anglers interviewed on the Apalachicola River (N=279) fished to some extent for flathead catfish. The Blountstown Rotary Club started the first flathead catfish tournament in 1996 in which 154 anglers competed and has become an annual event. Since then, two other local civic groups, one in Bristol and one in Wewahitchka, also started annual tournaments. These events have become the major fundraiser for all three of these groups. From 154 up to 353 anglers have competed in each of these events. A rudimentary economic study was done on these three events in 2001 to assess the impact these tournaments had on the local economies of these rural counties (Cailteux et al. 2002). Estimated direct business sales ranged from \$32,000 to \$59,000 per each one-day tournament. These groups have turned a bad situation into a worthwhile cause.

While the Apalachicola River has the most abundant flathead catfish population, four other north Florida rivers have varying levels of population densities. The Escambia River (Pensacola area) currently holds the state record for flathead catfish (22 kg) that was caught in 2000. However, relative abundance in the Escambia River (11-27 fish/hr.) is much lower than in the Apalachicola River (69-84 fish/hr.; Cailteux et al. 1999). Flathead catfish relative abundance in the Ochlockonee (0 to 2 fish/hr.) and Yellow (1 to 8 fish/hr.) rivers are much lower than either the Apalachicola or Escambia rivers. This suggests that fish were introduced into the latter two rivers earlier than any of the others studied. In summer 2002, flathead catfish were collected in the Choctawhatchee River (1 fish/hr.) for the first time. Although, flathead catfish have been collected from the Blackwater River (D. Yeager, FWC, pers. comm.) no estimates of relative abundance have been reported.

Prior to flathead catfish introduction, spotted bullhead *A. serracanthus* (Figure 2) was probably the dominant ictalurid in most of the rivers east of and including the Choctawhatchee River in north Florida. Anecdotal evidence exists that suggests this was the case in the Apalachicola River (C. Mesing FWC pers. comm.) although as of summer 2002, only 2 fish/hr. were collected. In contrast, the Suwannee (no flatheads collected to present) and Choctawhatchee rivers have yielded estimates of 46 to 95 spotted bullhead/hr in every sample collected (Cailteux et al. 2002). As flathead catfish begin or continue to prosper in these systems, relative abundance of spotted bullhead will probably decrease as it has in the Apalachicola River.

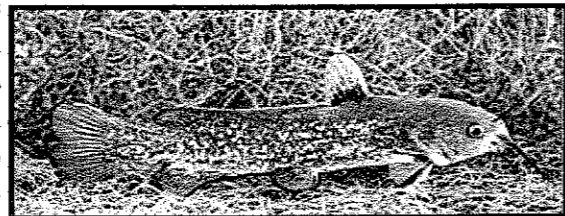


Figure 2. Spotted bullhead (photo by Gray Bass)

The continued spread of flathead catfish into other Florida rivers will likely occur in the future, perhaps in part due to their appeal to anglers. Efforts to educate the public to the many negatives of introducing species outside their native range are ongoing. While the flathead catfish is not a welcomed addition to the

ANNOUNCEMENTS



➤ The Western Division of the American Fisheries Society (WDAFS) and the California/Nevada Chapter of AFS are seeking your support in their joint 2003 Annual Meeting. The annual meeting, *Productive Pacific Ecosystems: Lake, Stream, Estuarine, and Marine Environments from Alaska to Baja* will be convened at the Hyatt - Islandia Hotel in San Diego, California during April 14 - 17, 2003. The meeting is intended to bring together scientists, biologists, resource managers, and students to address key marine, freshwater, and estuarine fisheries issues in Western North America.

➤ A new Committee has been formed to evaluate and update the Florida Chapter AFS by-laws. Anyone interested in making suggestions for improvements should address comments to one of the committee members listed below.

Peter Hood - Past FL AFS Pres. and Committee Chair
Bryan Demurat - Reedy Creek Improvement District
Mike Allen - Pres. Elect - G'ville
Chad Hanson - FSU, Crawfordville
Justin Krebs - FMRI, St. Pete

➤ The Florida Chapter has moved!! Please make note of our new website address:
<http://www.sdafs.org/flafs>.

NEW BOOK RELEASES FROM AFS !

Common and Scientific Names of Aquatic Invertebrates from the United States and Canada: Cnidaria and Ctenophora, Second Edition by S. D. Cairns et al.

Population Genetics: Principles and Applications for Fisheries Scientists by E. M. Hallerman, editor

Acid Rain: Are the Problems Solved?

Black Bass: Ecology, Conservation, and Management by D. P. Philipp and M. S. Ridgway, editors

Treasurer's Report



Fiscal Year 2002
(January 1, 2002 to December 31, 2002)

Beginning Balance:	\$28,796.92
Closing Balance:	\$28,332.00
Difference	\$ (464.92)

Credits:

Deposits	\$10,856.48
Dividends & Interest	\$ 660.36

Debits:

Checks	\$(10,129.72)
Funds to Purchase securities	\$ (418.05)
Other debits	\$ (250.00)

Asset Value:

January 1, 2002	\$ 9,003.00
Securities Purchased	\$ 418.05
December 31, 2002	\$ 7,771.51
	\$(1,649.54)

Major Expense Categories:

Annual Meeting	\$8,129.00	81%
Newsletter	\$1,123.56	11%
Rottman Award	\$ 655	6%

JOB LISTINGS

AFS Job Center Online:
<http://www.fisheries.org/jobs.html>

ASLO Job Listings:
<http://www.aslo.org/jobs.html>

Texas A & M University Job Board:
<http://wfscnet.tamu.edu/wfscnet/jobs/jobs.htm>

USA Jobs - Federal Job Listing:
<http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/>

Congratulations!!

BEST PROFESSIONAL PAPER:

The safety of some commonly used therapeutic chemicals on shortnose sturgeon eggs and juveniles by Jennica Lowell, Ruth Francis-Floyd, Darryl Parkyn, and Robert Bakal

A comparison of methods used in processing otoliths from Florida pompano (*Trachinotus carolinus*) by Chris Powell, Kathryn Tisdell, and Luiz Barbieri

BEST PROFESSIONAL POSTER:

Investigation of non-lethal methods for aging subadult and adult red drum in Florida by Derek Tremain

BEST STUDENT PAPER:

*Deeper is more devastating: The physiological effects of catastrophic decompression on red snapper, *Lutjanus campechanus** by Jodie Rummer and Wayne Bennett

Runner-up - *Winter distribution of Gulf of Mexico sturgeon and their benthic prey resources* by Julianne Harris, Darryl Parkyn, and Debra Murie

BEST STUDENT POSTER:

Divergent survival tactics among gobies inhabiting hyperthermal mangrove swamps on Hoga Island, Indonesia by Josie Taylor, Melissa Cook, Aimee Kirkpatrick, Stacey Galleher, Micheal Reaid, and Wayne Bennett

Runners-up - *Utilization of patch reefs by three common species of damselfishes within Dry Tortugas National Park, April 2002* by Heidi Wallman, Katie Fitchett, Cheyenna Reber, Chris Pomory, and Wayne Bennett

*Annual abundance of young-of-the-year striped mullet, *Mugil cephalus*, in Tampa Bay, Florida, from 1996 to 2001* by Jordan Sanford and Tien-Shui Tsou

Roger Rottmann Memorial Scholarship



This year's recipient of the Roger Rottmann Award was presented to University of Florida's **Tim Bonvechio**. Tim is under the direction of Dr. Mike Allen and plans to defend his master's thesis entitled "Effects of Hydrological Variables on Year-Class Strength of Sportfish in Eight Florida Waterbodies" in October. He has also worked on a study investigating the abundance, growth and mortality of the Suwannee bass, *Micropterus notius*, in three Florida Rivers. Tim is familiar with sectioning and aging otoliths from many types of freshwater sportfish. He also has experience with electrofishing, setting otter trawls, larval trawls, gillnets, and blocknets with rotenone application, pulling seine nets, administering creel surveys, identifying larval fish and zooplankton, and tagging largemouth bass. He plans to start searching for a state fisheries biologist position and graduate in the fall. "I am honored to receive this award and represent the Gators!"

A NOTE FROM ONE OF OUR WINNERS....

During my tenure as a Master's student, my research focus has centered on fish physiology, and I directly addressed physiological problems due to catastrophic decompression in an important Gulf of Mexico fisheries species for my Master's Thesis. This spring I was awarded best student presentation for my thesis work co-authored by Dr. Wayne Bennett and was selected to represent the Florida Chapter at the AFS Student Colloquium in West Virginia this November. I will be finishing my Master's Degree in Biology at the University of West Florida this August, and I have recently accepted a position to begin a doctoral program in the Fall in the Department of Zoology at the University of British Columbia. At UBC, I will be continuing to study fish physiology under Dr. Colin Brauner.

I especially want to thank members of the Florida Chapter for input over the past three years. I feel that student attendance and participation at scientific conferences is absolutely necessary for professional development and integration into the scientific arena. Thanks for always doing such a good job at promoting and financially supporting student involvement at the annual meetings.

- Jodie L. Rummer

ichthyofauna of north Florida rivers, anglers have adapted to this introduction by utilizing the species and making the best of a bad situation.

U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. 2001. National survey of fishing, hunting and wildlife-associated recreation. Washington D.C.

✉ If you would like to contact Rich Cailteux, he can be reached via email at rich.cailteux@fwc.state.fl.us

Literature Cited

Ager, L.A., C.L. Mesing, M.J. Hill, R.S. Land, M.J. Spelman, and H.R. Simmons. 1983. Fisheries ecology and dredging impact on the Apalachicola River system. Annual Report. Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Tallahassee.

Cailteux, R.L., D.A. Dobbins and J.J. Nordhaus. 1999. Apalachicola/Ochlockonee River Watershed Studies. Completion Report. Wallop-Breaux Project F-37. Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Tallahassee.

Cailteux, R.L., D.A. Dobbins and R.S. Land. 2002. Apalachicola/Ochlockonee River Watershed Studies. Completion Report. Evaluating sportfish and catfish populations in Northwest Florida lakes and streams. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Tallahassee.

Dobbins, D.A., R.L. Cailteux and J.J. Nordhaus. 1999. Flathead catfish abundance and movement in the Apalachicola River, Florida. Pages 199-202 in E.R. Irwin, W.A. Hubert, C.F. Rabeni, H.L. Schramm, Jr, and T. Coon, editors. Catfish 2000: proceedings of the international ictalurid symposium. American Fisheries Society, Symposium 24. Bethesda, MD.

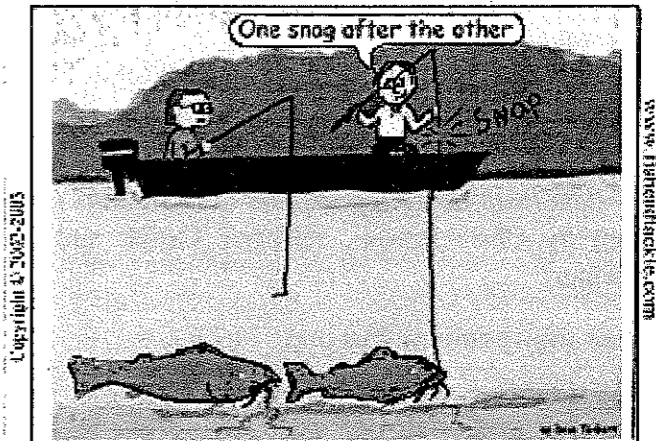
Guier, C.R., L.E. Nichols and R.T. Rachels. 1981. Biological investigations of flathead catfish in the Cape Fear River. Proceedings of the Annual Conference of Southeastern Fish and Wildlife Agencies 35:607-621.

Hale, M.M., J.E. Crumpton and D.J. Renfro. 1984. An inexpensive low voltage electrofishing device for collecting catfish. Proceedings of the Annual Conference of Southeastern Fish and Wildlife Agencies 38:342-345.

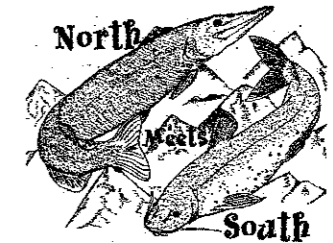
Quinn, S.P. 1987. Stomach contents of flathead catfish in the Flint River, Georgia. Proceedings of the Annual Conference of Southeastern Fish and Wildlife Agencies 41:85-92.

Thomas, M.E. 1993. Monitoring the effects of introduced flathead catfish on sportfish populations in the Altamaha River, Georgia. Proceedings of the Annual Conference of Southeastern Fish and Wildlife Agencies 47:531-538.

The Fishead by Dave Tackett



3rd Annual AFS Student Colloquium



All students from the Southern and Northeastern Divisions of the American Fisheries Society are welcome to a weekend of talks and socials! This will be a wonderful opportunity for fisheries students to learn more about current research in their field. The meeting will start on Friday with a social in Morgantown. We will have student presentations on Saturday and potentially Sunday at the Westvaco Natural Resources Center. All undergraduate and graduate students are encouraged to present proposed projects, preliminary data, or completed research. This is an excellent opportunity for students without presentation experience to talk in an informal setting and gain valuable feedback. For more information, refer to:

<http://www.forestry.caf.wvu.edu/wvuafs>.