

Extraordinary Pigmentation in a Channel Catfish, *Ictalurus punctatus* Rafinesque (Ictaluridae), from Lake Eufaula

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The color of many freshwater fishes consists of the prevailing pattern of lightness on the ventral body surfaces, darkness on the dorsal surfaces, and gradual shading on sides from light below to dark on the back. The body color for the channel catfish is blue-gray over the back and sides gradating to white on the belly. Their sides usually have small, dark, randomly scattered spots, except in the very young or the largest adults.

On 12 August 1997, we collected from a gill net a dark, green and yellowish-green striped channel catfish. This specimen was taken from Eufaula Cove, Eufaula Lake in the city of Eufaula, McIntosh County (TS10N R16E S01).

The dorsal view (Fig. 1) shows a narrow, 2.5 to 4.0 cm, dark green stripe extending from the tip of the head, the upper jaw to the caudal fin, and a light, yellowish green stripe, 4.0 to 7.0 cm wide, on the sides extending to the ventral surfaces. The stripe extended from the tip of lower jaw, through the eye, to the caudal fin. Not visible in the photographs is a narrow, 2.0 to 3.0 cm, ventral, dark green stripe extending from the tip of the lower jaw to the caudal fin. The scattered, small back spots were not present. This specimen was 50.0 cm in length and weighed 1,190 g. We also collected 15 other larger specimens with the common blue-gray color pattern.

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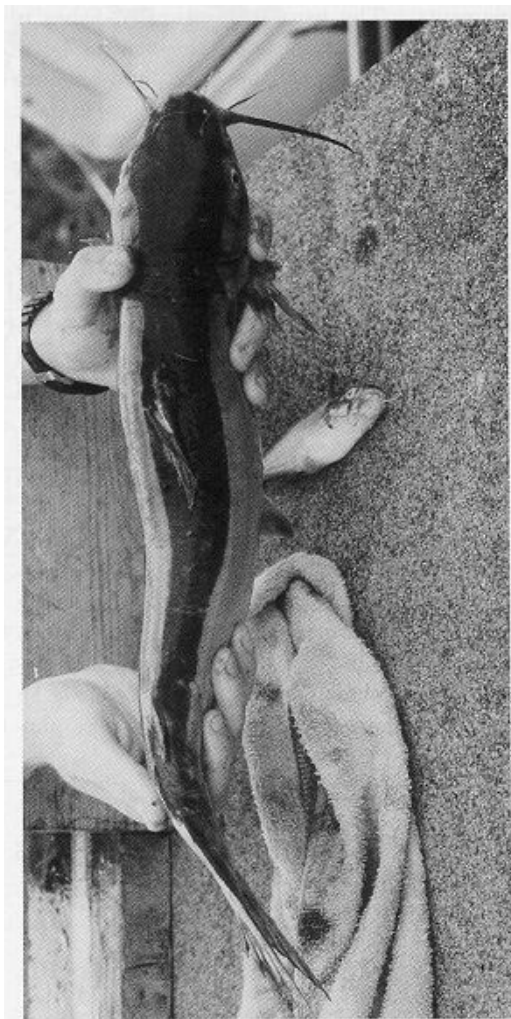


Figure 1. Dorsal view of channel catfish.