

Catfish

Regno: fauna

Fish

 [pescegatto.jpg](#) [1]

Catfish - Ameiurus melas

The Catfish, which gets its name from its 4 pairs of barbels, originally came from the United States of America and Canada, but was imported to Italy at the beginning of the twentieth century, first in the Plain of Lombardy and then in the central regions of Italy.

The introduction of both indigenous and allochthonous species for repopulating the area is carried out by the Public Authorities and often directly by the anglers themselves, in the illusion that artificial control of fish populations aimed at guaranteeing a constant supply, to some extent regardless of the number of human "predators", can replace natural control.

Consequently, as well as the Catfish, this century has seen the introduction of the Pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*) and the Large-mouthed North American Black Bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) from North America, both efficient predators of invertebrates, amphibians, fish and their eggs with unimaginable effects on the autochthonous fauna.

In the Italian wetlands, the Catfish is in constant expansion because it easily adapts to even the most prohibitive environmental conditions; if the habitat where it lives dries up, it can still survive for a certain period by burying itself in the substrate.

Unlike most other fish, moreover, it practices parental care and protects both eggs and the fry during their first stages in life. Even the fry adopt defensive strategies against their predators, swimming among the water plants in typical roundish, compact shoals.

The adults have strong spikes on their dorsal and pectoral fins, which can inflict an extremely painful stab on unwary predators.

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