

Patuxent River Blue Catfish

Blue catfish is an invasive fish that has spread throughout Chesapeake Bay and the population is increasing. They grow to large sizes (>120 pounds) and eat a wide variety of prey, including those of ecological and



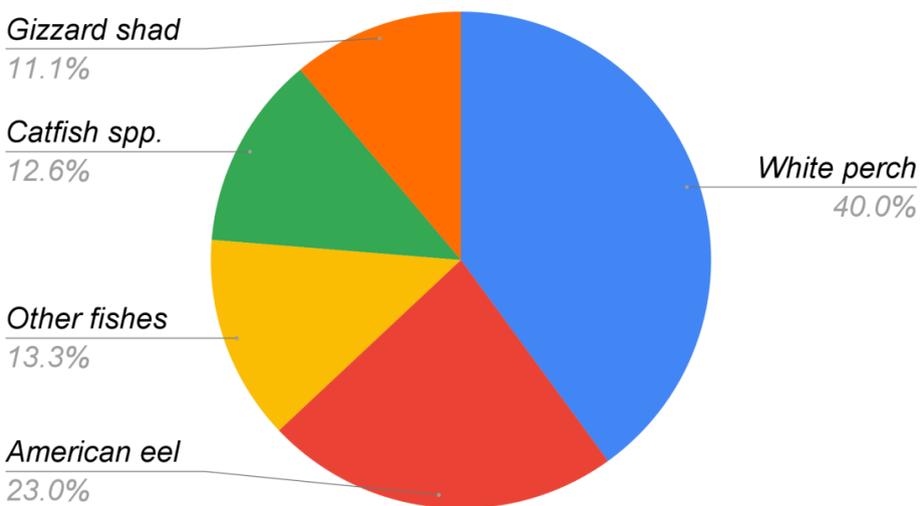
economic importance. Scientists from Maryland Department of Natural Resources and United States Geological Survey learned a lot of exciting information about invasive blue catfish in the Patuxent River from 2019 – 2021.

WHAT do they eat?

Scientists examined **2,172** fish stomachs and identified **over 40 different prey items**. Common fish prey were white perch, American eels, and gizzard shad. Aquatic plants, algae, and detritus dominated gut contents of smaller fish. Fish prey dominated the guts of larger blue catfish.



Common Fish Prey



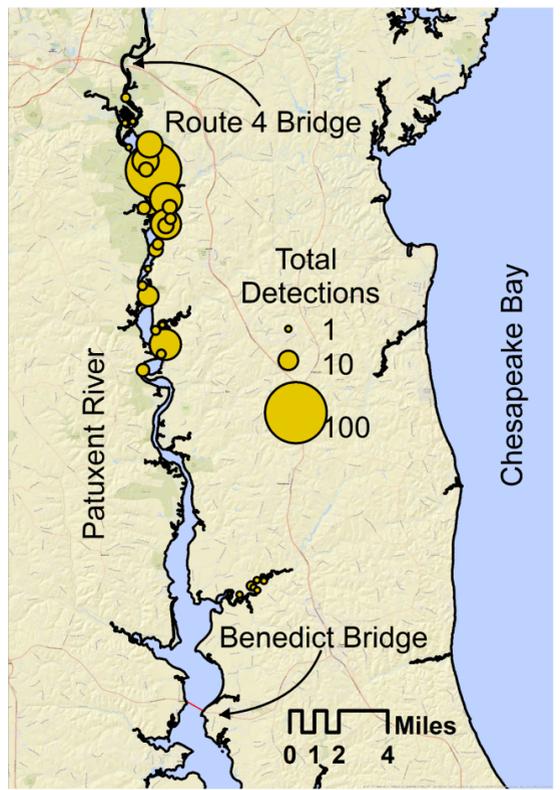
HOW many are there?

Scientists estimated **over 70,000** fish in a 5 mile stretch of the Patuxent River. Density estimates were up to **1,250 fish per acre** for fish that were 8-inches or larger.

WHERE are they?

Blue catfish preferred upstream and deep sections of the river with shallow waters nearby based on tracking 77 fish tagged with radio and acoustic transmitters (2020 – 2021).

[Explore tagged fish movements.](#)



HOW can you help?

Harvest blue catfish in the Chesapeake Bay. Please **catch and keep** blue catfish while fishing; it is illegal to release a blue catfish to a different water body than where it was caught. **Support local businesses** by purchasing blue catfish meals at restaurants and seafood vendors.

Larry Hogan, Governor | Jeannine H. Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary
 Fishing and Boating Services | 580 Taylor Ave B-2 | Annapolis, MD 21401
 In Maryland: 410-260-8257 | Out of state: 877-620-8367
 TTY Users call via the Maryland relay

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 3/2022 dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries

