

Sea Grant Extension  
Telephone 251/438-5690  
January 31, 2006

By: P.J. Waters, Aquaculture Extension Assistant  
Alabama Sea Grant/Auburn Marine Center

There are not many things that can compare to the taste of fresh catfish from your pond. If your pond's focus is bass and bluegill, but you would like to have access to some catfish, consider a combination of the three. Channel catfish are a very popular food fish, dominating aquaculture in west Alabama, and Mississippi. They are very easy to cook, and have a mild flavor that makes them so popular in a growing number of restaurants.

Channel catfish (4"-6") can be stocked at up to 100 fish per acre in a fertilized bass-bluegill pond without adversely affecting their production. In unfertilized ponds, reduce the stocking rate to 25 per acre. The key to stocking the catfish with bass is to put them in early such that they attain a size of 8 inches before the bass are added. This will allow the catfish to be large enough to avoid predation by the bass. This head start will allow you to harvest bass, bluegill, and catfish from the same pond, while maintaining a balanced and healthy system. Ponds with an established bass population can be stocked with larger catfish fingerlings, however survival may be lower.

If you are interested in stocking channel catfish and need a source for fingerlings you must look to a commercial hatchery. For sources of channel catfish fingerlings for your pond, you may contact me or your county agent. Delivery costs and fish prices will vary

by producer and fish size. Adding a third species to your pond should improve your fishing experience and create some variety on your dinner plate.

For additional questions or information, contact P.J. Waters, Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center, 438-5690.