



#### **94. BULLHEAD / KATZENWELS OR ZWERGWELS (*Ictalurus nebulosus*)**

**IDENTIFICATION:** The body of the bullhead is moderately long: The anterior part is almost round: the posterior part is compressed laterally. The lateral line is distinctly visible. The head is large, rather wide and flat with four longer barbels on the upper mouth and four shorter ones on the lower mouth. The first spine on the dorsal fin is very hard. Bullhead, like trout, have an adipose fin. The skin is scaleless. The back is dark brown and mottled or clouded on gold with an occasional violet hue, shading into lighter colors toward the belly.

**HABITAT:** Bullhead inhabit the warmer portion of lakes and sluggish streams and feed mainly at night. They are a hardy fish and can lie dormant in mud for many weeks after a pond dries out. The species was introduced to Europe from the United States in 1885.

**FOOD:**

- (1) **Diet:** Young bullhead feed on small aquatic animals: adults become increasingly predatory with age, feeding on small fish and fish fry.
- (2) **Value:** Bullhead flesh is orange-colored and has an excellent flavor.

**SPAWNING:** Bullhead spawn from March to May. Male and female construct depressions under ledges or in other protected areas in shallows. The female releases 3,000 to 4,000 sticky eggs that cling to the nest. The male safeguards the eggs and fry.