

FIRST RECORD OF THE STONECAT IN SASKATCHEWAN WATERS

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Members of the catfish family (*Ictaluridae*) are not common or widespread in Saskatchewan waters. Three species, the black bullhead (*Ictalurus melas*), the brown bullhead (*I. nebulosus*) and the tadpole madtom (*Noturus gyrinus*) are reported by Scott and Crossman (1973) to occur in the Souris River basin of southeastern Saskatchewan.

In July, 1975, Mr. Anderson collected several specimens of the stonecat (*Noturus flavus*) while completing a fish collection as part of the course work for the Renewable Resources Technology Program at Kelsey Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences, Saskatoon. This species was collected in the Frenchman River (NE $\frac{1}{4}$ 33-4-17 W 3rd) from a pool of slow moving water on the north side of a high bank. Very little vegetative growth was present in the river and at this point and the bottom was composed mainly of mud and a few large stones.

Previous distribution records for this species in the prairie region of Canada indicate its presence only in the Red River as far north as Winnipeg, Manitoba and in the Milk River (Missouri River drainage) of southern Alberta. The Frenchman River in Saskatchewan is also part of the Missouri River system since it flows into the Milk River in Montana.

The stonecat can be distinguished from most other members of the family Ictaluridae by the presence of an adnate adipose fin (low ridged forward extension of the caudal fin). The much smaller tadpole madtom also has this feature. Other diagnostic characters of the stonecat are the premaxillary tooth patch with lateral extensions (lacking in tadpole madtom), square caudal fin, and body coloration strongly countershaded (dark above, yellow to white below).

The three specimens of stonecat collected from the Frenchman River in 1975 measured 85, 113 and 154 mm total length. One specimen is in the personal collection of Mr. Anderson, a second is in the fish collection at the Saskatchewan Fisheries Laboratory, Saskatoon and the third is in the collection at Kelsey Institute, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

BROWN, C. J. D. 1971. Fishes of Montana. Big Sky Books, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana.

FEDORUK, A. N. 1971. Freshwater fishes of Manitoba: Checklist and keys. Manitoba Dept. Mines, Res. and Envir. Management.

SCOTT, W. B. and E. J. CROSSMAN. 1973. Freshwater fishes of Canada. Bull. Fish. Res. Bd. Canada. Ottawa.