

## **Bigmouth Buffalo – *Ictiobus cyprinellus***

***Distribution*** – Native to the Lake Erie drainage south in Ohio and Mississippi drainages to northern Alabama, southern Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, west and north, west and north to Minnesota, Manitoba, and southern Alberta. *Ictiobus* is Greek for "bull fish" and *cyprinellus* is Latin meaning "small carp." Bigmouth buffalo are similar in color and shape to smallmouth buffalo, except that the mouth is not oriented downward in typical sucker fashion, but rather straight ahead. Prefers open water areas in lakes, large rivers and reservoirs.

***Life History*** - As with smallmouth buffalo, bigmouth buffalo appear to spawn in very shallow water during the spring when water temperatures reach 60°F to 65°F. Eggs hatch in 9-10 days. Typically, the species may occur in schools. Young fish seem to prefer eating bottom-dwelling invertebrates, while older individuals prefer crustaceans dwelling in the midwater.

***Life Span*** – Ranges from 4 – 7 years.

***Sporting Qualities*** - As with smallmouth buffalo, some anglers consider bigmouth buffalo to be a rough fish. However, the species is highly prized in many areas. Many people consider it quite a food fish despite its many bones. Some even relish the species' bony nature. Bigmouth buffalo in excess of 58 pounds have been landed by anglers in some parts of the United States. Angling techniques are similar to those used for smallmouth buffalo.