



Catfish Production

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Water Surface Acres Down 3 Percent

The water surface area to be used for catfish production in the three major producing States (Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi) during July 1 through December 31, 2026, totaled 41,100 acres, down 3 percent from a year ago. Acres used for Foodsize fish totaled 32,100, down 6 percent from the same time period in 2025. Acres used for Fingerling production at 6,165 acres, are up 24 percent, and acres for Broodfish at 2,145 acres, are up 4 percent. Of the total acres in production, 805 acres were scheduled to be renovated from July 1 to December 31, 2026 compared with 705 acres taken out of production during the period of January 1 through June 30, 2026.

Foodsize Inventory Down Slightly

Catfish operations in the three major producing States had 93.4 million Foodsize fish on hand on July 1, 2026, down slightly from July 1, 2025. The breakouts of Foodsize fish inventory numbers on July 1, 2026, with their respective percent change from the previous year were: Large foodsize at 2.19 million fish, down 13 percent; Medium foodsize at 24.6 million fish, up 2 percent; and Small foodsize at 66.6 million fish, down slightly. The three major Catfish producing States also had 770,000 Broodfish on hand on July 1, 2026, down 1 percent from last year's 775,000 Broodfish.

Catfish operations in the three major producing States had 153 million Stockers on hand on July 1, 2026, down 16 percent from the July 1, 2025 total of 183 million Stockers. The breakouts of Stocker fish inventory numbers on July 1, 2026, with their respective change from the previous year were: Large stockers at 86.5 million fish, up 2 percent from the previous year and Small stockers at 66.8 million fish, down 32 percent from last year. Producers had 227 million Fingerlings and fry on hand on July 1, 2026, down 7 percent from July 1, 2025.

Water Surface Acres Used for Production - Major States: 2025 and 2026

State	Water surface acres used for production July 1 - December 31	
	2025	2026
	(acres)	(acres)
Alabama	10,500	9,700
Arkansas	3,700	3,500
Mississippi	28,100	27,900
3 State total	42,300	41,100

Catfish Water Surface Acres by Use – Major States: 2025 and 2026

Year and State	Acres intended for utilization during July 1 - December 31 for					Acres taken out of production during January 1 - June 30
	Foodsize	Fingerlings	Broodfish	Currently under or scheduled for		
				Renovation	New construction	
	(acres)	(acres)	(acres)	(acres)	(acres)	(acres)
2025						
Alabama	10,300	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Arkansas	2,400	(D)	(D)	(D)	-	(D)
Mississippi	21,400	4,200	1,800	890	(D)	490
3 State total	34,100	4,965	2,055	1,105	35	1,825
2026						
Alabama	9,600	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Arkansas	2,200	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Mississippi	20,300	5,100	1,900	530	(D)	510
3 State total	32,100	6,165	2,145	805	310	705

- Represents zero.

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.

Catfish Inventory by Size Category – Major States: July 1, 2025 and 2026

Size category and State	Fish		Live weight			
			Total		Average	
	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026
	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(pounds per fish)	(pounds per fish)
Large foodsize						
Alabama	770	480	2,900	1,650	3.8	3.4
Arkansas	420	520	1,500	1,750	3.6	3.4
Mississippi	1,320	1,190	4,750	4,250	3.6	3.6
3 State total	2,510	2,190	9,150	7,650	3.6	3.5
Medium foodsize						
Alabama	5,470	4,950	10,200	9,100	1.9	1.8
Arkansas	2,570	3,150	5,300	6,400	2.1	2.0
Mississippi	16,000	16,500	29,500	30,500	1.8	1.8
3 State total	24,040	24,600	45,000	46,000	1.9	1.9
Small foodsize						
Alabama	15,700	13,800	14,200	14,100	0.9	1.0
Arkansas	5,150	5,930	5,150	6,100	1.0	1.0
Mississippi	46,100	46,900	44,700	45,800	1.0	1.0
3 State total	66,950	66,630	64,050	66,000	1.0	1.0
Total foodsize						
Alabama	21,940	19,230	27,300	24,850	(X)	(X)
Arkansas	8,140	9,600	11,950	14,250	(X)	(X)
Mississippi	63,420	64,590	78,950	80,550	(X)	(X)
3 State total	93,500	93,420	118,200	119,650	(X)	(X)
Broodfish						
Alabama	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Arkansas	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Mississippi	700	630	4,650	4,150	6.6	6.6
3 State total	775	770	4,925	4,604	6.4	6.0

See footnote(s) at end of table.

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Catfish Inventory by Size Category – Major States: July 1, 2025 and 2026 (continued)

Size category and State	Fish		Live weight			
			Total		Average	
	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026
	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(pounds per 1,000 fish)	(pounds per 1,000 fish)
Large stockers						
Alabama	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Arkansas	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Mississippi	50,200	39,300	22,900	14,600	456	372
3 State total	84,800	86,500	36,600	37,200	432	430
Small stockers						
Alabama	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Arkansas	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Mississippi	53,500	42,500	6,650	5,450	124	128
3 State total	97,840	66,800	11,790	8,450	121	126
Total stockers						
Alabama	61,500	43,300	13,750	15,060	(X)	(X)
Arkansas	17,440	28,200	5,090	10,540	(X)	(X)
Mississippi	103,700	81,800	29,550	20,050	(X)	(X)
3 State total	182,640	153,300	48,390	45,650	(X)	(X)
Fingerlings and fry						
Alabama	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Arkansas	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Mississippi	183,000	164,000	3,300	5,900	18.0	36.0
3 State total	242,930	227,100	4,208	6,690	17.3	29.5

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.

(X) Not applicable.

Terms and Definitions

Used for Catfish Production Estimates

Broodfish: Fish kept for egg production, including males. Broodfish produce the fertilized eggs, which go to hatcheries. The most desirable size is 3 to 10 pounds or 4 to 6 years of age.

Fingerlings: Fish weighing 2 to 60 pounds per 1,000 fish or 2 to 6 inches in length.

Foodsize (large): Fish weighing over 3 pounds.

Foodsize (medium): Fish weighing over one and one-half pounds to 3 pounds.

Foodsize (small): Fish weighing over three-fourths of a pound to one and one-half pounds.

Fry: Fish weighing less than 2 pounds per 1,000 fish or less than 2 inches in length.

Stockers (large): Fish weighing over 180 pounds to 750 pounds per 1,000 fish.

Stockers (small): Fish weighing over 60 pounds to 180 pounds per 1,000 fish or over 6 inches in length.

Statistical Methodology

Survey Procedures: All known catfish producers in the three published States are surveyed to collect production data. Individual NASS regional field offices maintain a list of all known catfish producers and use known sources of producers to update their lists. Operators are mailed a questionnaire as close as possible to July 1 and given time to respond by mail. Those that do not respond by mail are telephoned or possibly enumerated in person during the middle of July.

Estimating Procedures: Sound statistical methodology is employed to derive the estimates from reported data. All data are analyzed for unusual values. Data from each operation are compared to their own past operating profile and to trends from similar operations. Missing data for large operations are estimated based on similar operations or historical data. Summary expansions account for the remaining non-response operations. NASS regional field offices prepare these estimates by using a combination of survey indications and historic trends. Individual State estimates are reviewed by the Agricultural Statistics Board for reasonableness.

Revision policy: Estimates for the previous year are subject to revision when current estimates are made. Revisions are the result of late or corrected data.

Reliability: In the three published States, catfish production estimates are based on a census of all known active producers and therefore, have no sampling variability. However, estimates are subject to errors such as omissions, duplication, and mistakes in reporting, recording, and processing the data. While these errors cannot be measured directly, they are minimized through strict quality controls in the data collection process and a careful review of all reported data for consistency and reasonableness.

Information Contacts

Listed below are the commodity specialists in the Livestock Branch of the National Agricultural Statistics Service to contact for additional information. E-mail inquiries may be sent to nass@usda.gov.

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Shulonda Blackmon – Capacity of Refrigerated Warehouses, Cold Storage	(202) 720-3240
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Ryan Cowen – Cattle, Cattle on Feed.....	(202) 720-3040
Kim DaPra – Milk Production.....	(202) 720-3278
Fatema Haque – Poultry Slaughter, Turkey Hatchery, Turkeys Raised	(202) 720-3244
Derron Martin – Catfish, Census of Aquaculture, Egg Products, Trout.....	(202) 690-3237
Ralph Mondesir – Hogs and Pigs	(202) 720-3106
Suzanne Richards – Cost of Pollination, Honey, Honey Bee Colonies, Sheep and Goats	(202) 720-4448
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Takiyah Walker – Broiler Hatchery, Chicken Hatchery.....	(202) 720-6147

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For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Agricultural Statistics Hotline at (800) 727-9540, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, or e-mail: nass@usda.gov.

If you have specific questions you would like an expert to respond to, please visit our “Ask A Specialist” website at www.nass.usda.gov/Contact_Us/Ask_a_Specialist.

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