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Ed Moes is founder, operator and owner of Crappie.com, the most popular crappie website. And, he loves to crappie fish.



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Opening Cast

Our magazine has been mentioning the ICAST show for several issues and we'll continue to cover fishing items we found during the show along with other interesting products. So exactly what is ICAST? It's the International Convention of Allied Sportfishing Trades. It's the world's largest sport fishing trade show that includes a showcase for the latest innovations in fishing gear, accessories and apparel. ICAST is the cornerstone of the sport fishing industry, helping to drive recreational fishing product sales year round. Wholesalers attend to show to place orders so they will have new items on the shelves and in catalogs by next spring. Media attends the show to find new products and visit with product experts.



Baits are always a part of the show with new designs and colors leading the way. I'm sure you can make room for the hottest new colors and a few bodies that the crappie haven't seen. It's always fun to have something that catches fish and be the first in your group of buddies to have the new bait.

On the opposite end of the scale are the high dollar items that can be on your want list, or must-have, or must-have after saving money. The question is: will it help you catch fish or enjoy your trip at a level that will justify the cost? If the answer is yes, figure out how to get it. Remember, your Christmas list might be a good back-up plan if you can't get it now. And yes, if it is time for a trolling motor upgrade the Minn Kota Ulterra should get a good look because if it lives up to its hype and potential, it will be awesome.

The summer has been brutally hot across most of the country but we can now enjoy fall for the next few months. I hope the remainder of your year is filled with good hunting and fishing.

Good fishin' & God Bless,
Tim

Cover Photo:
Jeanne Huffman catches a
Mississippi crappie. Netted
by John Mayo. photo by Tim
Huffman.

Seasonal Structure

by
**Tim
Huffman**

Open water fishing can be difficult. When fish are tight to structure, slow presentations can be used to target specific spots. However, when fish are suspended up and scattered it's a different story. Trolling methods offer ways to present more baits to more fish. Longling pulling jigs, longlining crankbaits and pushing cranks are three ways to target and catch these fish. One more method, we will call Power Trolling, is another aggressive way to target these fish and the method we will feature this month.

What is open water? Fishermen consider it to be water without cover. There is no standing timber or other cover coming up high in the water. Open water might be a 20 foot deep flat without cover, or, it could be a 30 foot flat with the bottom loaded with stakebeds and stumps but leaving the top 20 feet water open.

Power Trolling Basics

Avid outdoorsman and Mississippi crappie fisherman, Les Smith, says power trolling isn't for everyone but it's one choice that works great in the Mississippi lakes and should work in many waters across the country.

Smith says power trolling isn't doesn't work for everyone. The heavy weights and long poles requires strength. People who are not strong cannot physically handle it. Plus, it's a lot of hard work that some fishermen don't want to do.

"I've tried a lot of different equipment and have found the

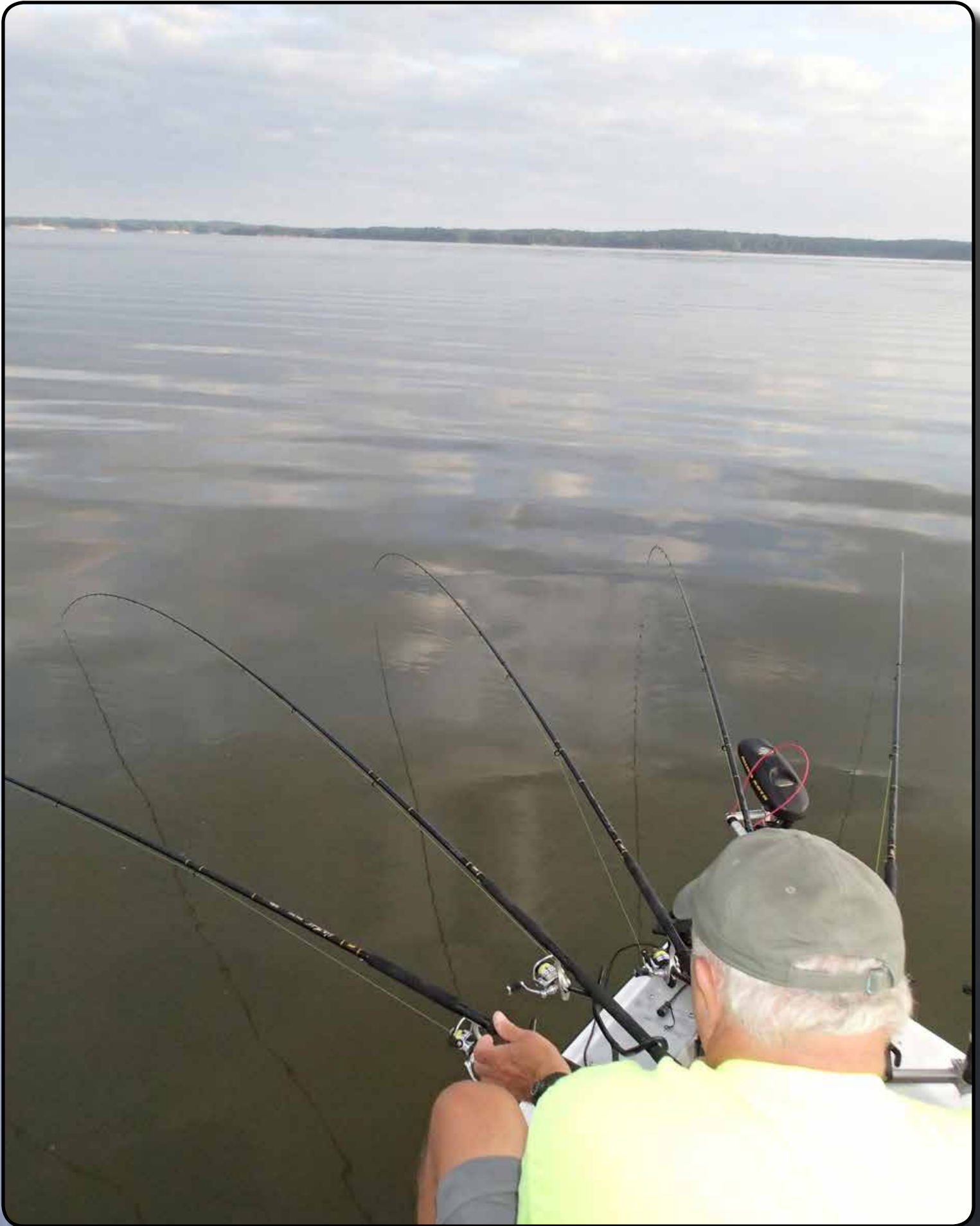
following works best for me. Driftmaster rod holders are strong and allow easy access to poles. I run them on a rack designed to fit my boat and be very strong. The poles are Wally Marshall Troll-Tech 16-footers. Each pole is strong, has a great backbone and the tip holds up to the heavy weights. I run high-

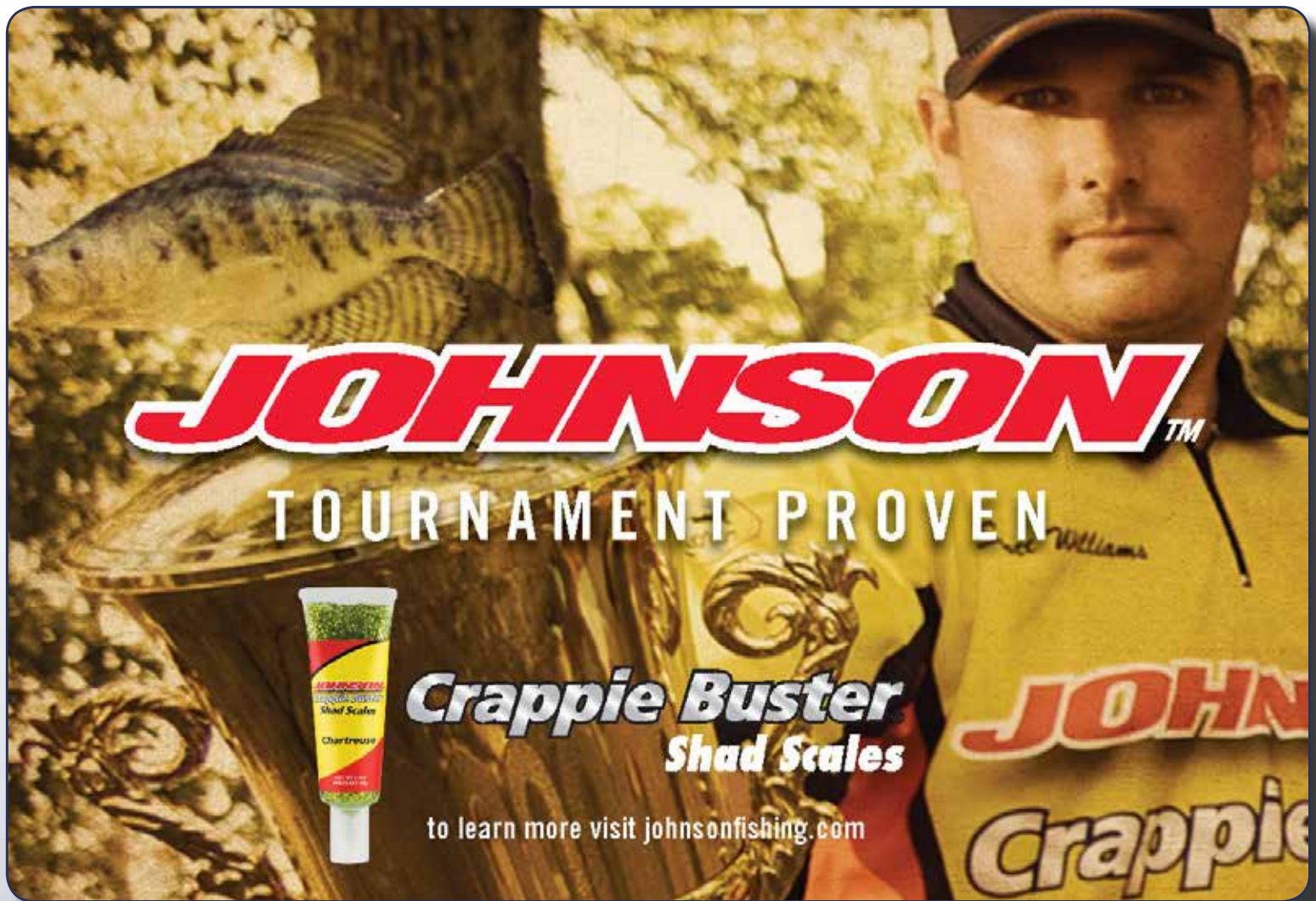
I like to look for tight contours meaning sharper drops.

vis line above the water because I want to see the line move. Once under the water I run a Seaguar Red Label leader, 15-pound test. The line doesn't stretch a lot under the heavy weights. I run an I-Pilot trolling motor to run the boat so I can fish."

Smith says, "My rigs are identical. I'm a fanatic about having everything consistent so I have a sewing mat with graph lines. I measure my lengths so everything stays uniform. I start with a barrel swivel then come down two feet and do three overhand knots. I have a six-inch leader for the top hook. I come down two feet to where I put my weight on the line I add a bead underneath to keep it from falling

Power trolling is an in-your-face tactic to attack open water fish. Heavy weights, big spinner jigs and fast speeds in the 1.0 mph range makes it possible to cover a lot of water with multiple baits.





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down so it leaves the weight free. The bead keeps it from cutting my line. Barrel swivel is next. I come down one foot to the next jig.”

He notes that two jigs on top with the weight on bottom is very popular and works but the bottom weight often slaps the boat when bringing a fish in. The sinker in the middle helps reduce the dings to the front of the boat. Also, it’s safer having the sinker in the middle.

“I’ve tried many different rigs, baits and sinkers. They all have different advantages. I’ve used 1-ounce to 12-ounce sinkers and found the 3-ounce is the ideal compromise for my style of power trolling.

“All of my setups have spinners.

Road Runners work fantastic. So do walleye jigheads with big heads and hooks. I have a 1/8-ounce on top and 1/4 on bottom. I use Muddy Water, along with a few other brands of bodies, and a Ziptailz skirt. Favorite colors include pink at Enid, lime-chartreuse at Grenada and orange-chartreuse at Sardis. A lot has to do with water color. If I could only have one color in Mississippi that works on all waters it would be the Blue Disco in the Muddy Water bait.

Catching Fish

Smith says power trolling works all year long but works best when fish are not tight to cover. But when the fish get out in open water he says he can catch more fish power

Power Troll Jig Rig

6-inch
leader

1/8-oz jig

3-oz sinker

bead

swivel

No-Knot Fas-snap

1/4-oz jig





trolling than with other methods.

“I generally go 1.0 mph using my I-Pilot trolling motor. The power trolling works so well because it’s using jigs fast but on vertical lines. Most of the time I’m following a ledge or channel, something difficult to do if longlining. We can run up on the ledges, turn around and head to the other side. Fish are often laying on the sides of the ledges. Finding balls of shad is another key ingredient so watching electronics for depths, changes in depths, shad and fish are all important.”

Smith starts with a wide variety of baits at the beginning of the day. When he catches fish he pays close attention to the type bait and color. A few fish on a particular color has him putting a few more of the same

A typical ¼-ounce Les Smith power trolling jig.

colors on other poles but he also keeps a few other colors out all the time in case the pattern changes.

Two tweaks are very important for him. One is blade type and size. He prefers a large blade. His favorite is a dimpled willow leaf. Another is Ziptailz skirts. He says the umbrella skirt has a rubber insert making it easy to slide up on the jig and makes it easy to change colors without removing the jighead.

“The bottom line is that power trolling offers better bait control. The downside of longline trolling is I have to make long turns and sweeps. With power trolling I can make an

immediate turn. Both power trolling and longline trolling work together if you want to do both.

“This technique works great into the fall with ledges, humps and drop-offs all being good spots to fish. I like to look for tight contours meaning sharper drops. I’m looking for deep holes next to timber. When you see the fish stacked up on the graph you know you should be getting a bite.”

More Power Trolling Tips from Les Smith

* “I use a No-Knot so I do not tie directly to the jig. I find another color is working I can remove a head or setup and pop another one on without tying. It’s bam-bam and I’m going again.”

* “What you think should work doesn’t always work. Stagger the bait depths. Let the fish show the depths where they are active. Also, you might catch a lot of fish at 12 feet but catch bigger slabs at 18 feet.”

* “Boat traffic varies day to day but when fishermen see you raising the poles they will come over to fish your spot. Power trolling is an advantage over longlining when going around crowds of boats. Pleasure boaters are more difficult to deal with because they go all over the lake. The best thing is to have your fish caught and off the lake by noon.”

* “Smith says fish move a lot. Be prepared to try different areas until you form a pattern.”

Final Thoughts

Power trolling requires a relatively expensive setup, requires a fisherman to be healthy and strong, and is work. Longlining jigs or crankbaits is easier. However, for those who make the choice to power troll, there are advantages and rewards of pushing large bladed



Bait Modification

Smith likes the additional bulk and action offered by a Ziptailz skirt. He modifies the skirt by clipping off the three outer tabs on the rubber making it easier to get it on a jig and so they don’t interfere with the spinner action. The skirt offers a bigger profile and adds more color to a jig.

jigs out the front of the boat. Boat control for following channels and ledges, good bait depth control and active, large, bladed jigs are a few of the primary advantages.

Manufactures/Products Mentioned

*Driftmaster driftmaster.com;
 *Muddy Water Baits at grizzlyjig.com;
 *No-Knot at basspro.com;
 *Road Runner ttiblakemore.com;
 *Seaguar Line seaguar.com;
 Lew’s Wally Marshall Poles mrcrappie.com;
 Ziptailz ziptailz.com.

Kent Driscoll of Cordova, Tennessee, has fished for crappie for over 30 years and competes in national crappie tournaments each season.

Question: Kent, how do you catch crappie when the weather's almost too hot to breathe?

Driscoll: I'll troll crankbaits all summer, fishing for suspended crappie. Right now, the crappie are just starting to get into their summer pattern and following big schools of shad out on the flats. I start early in the morning pulling shallow-running crankbaits, like Bandit 200s and Strike King Series 3s. These crankbaits run about 8- to 11-foot deep. As the sun rises, the crappie go down a little deeper and move from 12- to 16-foot deep in the lakes I'll be fishing this summer. So, I'll switch over to the Bandit 300s and the Strike King Series 5 crankbaits. I'll use deep-diving crankbaits as the crappie move deeper because of the light penetration and the action from water skiers and jet skiers on the surface. The surface temperature's getting warmer also causes the crappie to move deeper.

To learn more tips and tactics for catching crappie in the spring and summer check out Crappie: How to Catch Them Spring and Summer - <http://amzn.to/WGaJLT> available in either eBook or print book formats. Be sure to click on look inside to see the table of contents and read 10 percent of the book free.



Crappie Basics #120

Aberdeen Hooks

I remember my Mom using big gold hooks on black braided line. The line was attached to a long cane pole dad had cut and dried. A big squeeze-on sinker and a real cork float with a red peg finished the rig. Mom later advanced to zip fiberglass poles and monofilament line but the big Aberdeen crappie hook was always on the end.

Why did the Aberdeen light-wire hooks become so popular for crappie? Because the hook was designed and tempered to bend and come free when hung in cover. The hook could be bent back into shape and returned to fishing without retying.

Today the extra-light wire 214EL hooks are a top Eagle Claw seller for crappie. The smaller diameter hook doesn't do as much damage to the minnow. Its light weight allows the minnow better swimming action. It bends easily without breaking relatively small monofilament line. ...Tim Huffman



2017 Tentative Schedule

- January 27, 28 St. John's River, Deland, FL
- February 3, 4 Lake Talquin, Gadsden County, FL
- February 24, 25 Lake D'Arbonne, Farmerville, LA
- March 3, 4 Lake Greenwood, Greenwood, SC
- March 11 Lakes Washington, Whittington, Lee, Ferguson, Paradise, Greenville, MS
- March 24, 25 Grenada Lake, Grenada, MS
- April 8 Lake Fork, Emory, TX
- April 15 Lake of the Ozarks, Sunrise Beach, MO
- April 22 Lake Eufaula, Eufaula, OK

How to Fish Current Y

No matter whether you're fishing a river or a lake, the amount of current and muddy water present can make your fishing for crappie challenging. Most river systems have some current running all the time, but on rivers with hydroelectric plants on the upper and lower ends that form lakes, you never know when the current or how much current will run - especially in the summer months with the higher need for hydroelectric power. A lake that's controlled by two hydroelectric plants, can come up or drop 2 feet overnight. Then the place you've caught crappie the day before may become high and dry.

I've found that crappie on a river system are much more structure-oriented than lake crappie. If you locate structure on a

For me, the toughest time to catch a crappie is during the transitions.

river and mark it as a waypoint, that structure - perhaps a brush top or a logjam - may move when the water rises. I've even seen sandbars move within a week's time. However, river systems are building new underwater structure constantly.

The best advice I have on how to fish current, whether in a river or a lake, is to be aware of this underwater structure shifting. The terrain on the bottom and on the shoreline drastically can change in a short time too in a strong current. When a strong current runs for several days or weeks, you may have to spend more time with your electronics, searching for places to catch crappie, and less time actually fishing for crappie. Of course, as a tournament crappie fisherman, I'm not nearly as interested in catching numbers of crappie as I am in catching big crappie.

I've learned that prespawn crappie and postspawn crappie usually will hold in deeper water, on a current break. When crappie are deep, I'll fish a 3/4-ounce weight on the end of my line, particularly in the winter and the summer and in a stiff current, to put the bait in front of the fish's face and keep the bait there. But my rule of thumb is I'll fish the lightest jig possible - a 1/8-ounce - in a place where the current won't affect the vertical fall of my jig or blow my jig away from the structure. However, if I have to use a heavier weight to get down to the crappie in current, I don't hesitate to do that.

Muddy Water

If heavy rain falls for several days or several weeks, you'll have strong current and muddy water coming through the rivers or lakes you're fishing. Although most crappie fishermen



Year-Round for Crappie

By Jonathan Phillips with John E. Phillips



don't like to fish muddy water and a strong current, I've learned that crappie aren't as spooky in muddy water. I've discovered that big crappie are often caught in muddy water, so I've learned to love fishing in muddy water.

My wife Alicia and I won a tournament on Alabama's Logan Martin Lake when the water was so muddy that you just about could

Alicia Phillips knows when the current is running fast it's a good time to catch plenty of big crappie.

step out of your boat and walk across the mud. The lake was 12 feet higher than one week earlier and was running over the tops



How to Fish Current

of people's boathouses. We caught 2 pound+ crappie all day in a strong current in that muddy water.

We've learned to fish with bulkier-looking baits, bigger tube bodies, brighter-colored tubes and Ziptailz in strong current when the water's muddy. I tip my jig with a minnow then too. These lure characteristics allow the crappie to find a bait easier.

Floods and Fast Current

Not many people want to crappie fish under those conditions. In high water and fast current, I search for places away from the main river to fish in the back waters and creeks where the current may not be as strong as in the main river.

Under those conditions, I do everything I can to let the crappie know where the bait is. I'll be fishing a Roadrunner jig head that throws off a flash and makes more racket than a jig head without a spinner on it. I'll use scent on my lures to enable the crappie to smell the bait. Through the years, I've caught most of my bigger crappie in a raging current in nasty water – so nasty that most people don't want to put their boats in it.

The Toughest Times to Catch Crappie

For me, the toughest time to catch a crappie is during the transitions. For instance, when crappie are moving from: deep to shallow water to spawn and then back to the deep after the spawn; deep water in the summertime to the shallow water in the fall; and the shallow water back to the deep water as winter arrives. Crappie will be scattered then. You still can catch them, but you'll have to use various tactics and cover more water to take them.

Crappie fishing can be tough in the middle or the late summer too when the water clears up, and you can see 6-8 feet down in the water. The hydroelectric plants are running almost 24 hours a day, pushing current through the lakes and rivers. Under these conditions,



the crappie will be holding tight to the brush, and I want to get my bait to the bottom and in that brush.

Vertical jigging will be the best way to accomplish that task. To also fish that brush, if you prefer to minnow fish, use a drop shot rig by tying your weight to the end of the line, come up about 12 inches from the lead, tie a loop knot on the main line and either use a No. 2 or a No. 1 Tru-Turn hook. Next attach a minnow to the hook.

I'll look for crappie in 18-20 foot deep water in thick brush when the water's clear, the weather's hot, and the sun's bright. Remember, crappie have to eat every day. Generally they prefer to feed behind current breaks, eddy

holes or off the main river, if the current's running strong. However, you can identify and catch crappie every day of the year in clear water, stained water or muddy water, and whether current's not running at all, is running slowly, is running fast or is flowing briskly like a runaway train. You just have to adapt your tactics, and the size and color of your baits, as well as how and when you present your baits to the crappie.

Editor's Note: Jonathan Phillips from Wetumpka, Alabama, primarily crappie fishes the Alabama River and Lake Jordan on the Coosa River. However, he also fishes all over the nation wherever a Crappie Master Tournament is held. Contact Jonathan and Alicia Phillips on facebook or, 334-391-9735.

Author John E Phillips' Kindle ebooks include many on crappie fishing. Check'em out.



When there's a fast current and muddy water present, you must depend heavily on your depth finder to locate current breaks and the places where crappie are holding.



- By Jonathan Phillips with John E. Phillips

Check out the NEW 2" Crappie DAPPER!



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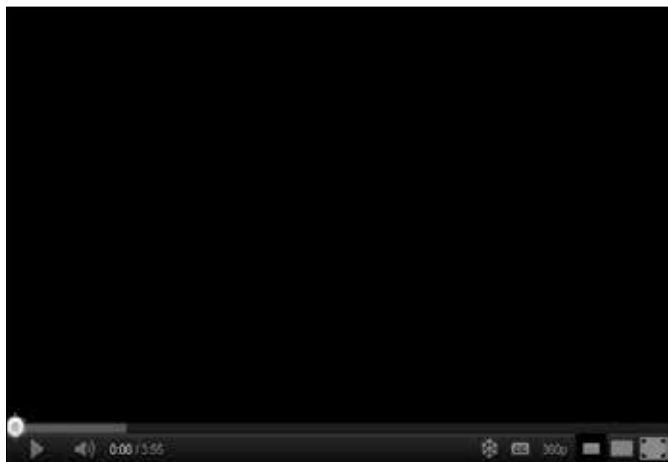


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Crappie Basics #121

Jighead Shapes

I've interviewed over a 1000 fishermen during my career. Everyone has a different 'favorite' when it comes to poles, line, holders, jig bodies, hooks and other items. One of the few items that most fishermen don't make a big deal about is the shape of their jighead.

There's round, bullet, horse head, minnow, teardrop, and many more shapes with various names. Still, most fishermen use a round head jig. The usual answer is "They work."

Round heads are the most economical, most popular so readily available at tackle shops and still look good when matched with a good body.

The bottom line is that some shapes may be good for special situations, but the round head has been a standby for many years and will continue to catch a lot of crappie. T.H.

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Products

Sure-Life Catch & Release & Better Bait **sure-life.com**

Keeping minnows and fish alive can be two difficult tasks. Sure-Life's Better Bait has been around a long time so it has proven success at keeping minnows alive and active. President Tony Gergley says, "Our water conditioner is used by minnow farms, wholesalers on bait trucks and by bait shops. We sell it from 10 gram containers to 55 gallon drums."

Fishermen needing to keep fish in good condition need Catch and Release. This is another product with a long history but Gergley says the product has gone through several improvements over the years. "This product calms the fish. We use 55 products in our formula and the powder ingredient has much less inactive ingredients. We go above what other brands are doing. We add electrolytes, remove ammonia, and remove foam. Removing foam is critical since 90 percent of the oxygen comes from the surface of the water. We stimulate slime cells to protect and add anti-bacterial, fungicides and more." Aprx Prices for 10-oz: Better Bait \$17; Catch & Release \$20.



Frabill Weigh-In Bag **frabill.com**

A good product for a weekend fisherman or tournament angler, the Frabill Weigh-In Bag offers some versatility. "The system has three components," says representative, Josh Lantz. "One is the weigh bag itself, that is reinforced and self-standing. An 11 gallon capacity creates a heavy bag and this one can handle the weight. Another component is the mesh bag. The mesh bag goes into the weigh bag, filled with fish and lifted from the bag when ready to remove fish for weighing or cleaning. The bag is also good for storage of bulky items when not in use for fish. The third item is the aerator."

Lantz says the system not only works great for tournament fishermen but it can be the perfect solution as a portable livewell in a small boats, a kayak and even bank fishing. The aerator run 30+ hours on two D batteries. Price is \$80.



Road Runner Glow Series ttiblakemore.com

There are hundreds of bait choices available to fishermen but few have the history and performance of Road Runner jigs. TTI-Blakemore's T.J. Stallings says, "We are helping fishermen by providing what they want...more glow series than ever before. It's what's hot in crappie fishing. Crappie fishermen have continued experimenting and fishing with glow and have learned how important it is to catching fish. The 1/16- and 3/8-ounce have been some of our best sellers this year."

"It's about being seen. Think about it, if shooting to the darkest places under a dock why not shoot something that can be seen. Glow makes a difference."

Stallings says the best glow paint balance between looks and effectiveness is a critical balance. "Glow paint by itself isn't attractive. A fisherman must have confidence the bait looks good or he won't use it so our first step is to make it look good. The second step is to maintain a good glow that the fish will see. We've done that." He says matching the glow Road Runner head with an opaque color jig is ideal. Price for 1/16-oz 9-pack is \$15.



Beyond Coastal Sun Care beyondcoastal.com

"Inactive ingredients can make up more than 80% of your sunscreen formula," says Andrew Bergquist with Beyond Coastal. "We use antioxidant rich, healthy ingredients and are always in the top three, out of 400, when rated each year by the Environmental Working Group (EWG)."

"For fishermen, we recommend a 30 SPF broad spectrum that protects against UVA and UVB rays. The 30 is fine with 97% protection. Going to a rating of 60 only gives one more percentage, 98%, protection. The quality of the product is the more important. Re-apply every three hours, wear a large hat and long sleeve shirt. The biggest mistake is not applying often enough." Prices vary based upon choice of product and size.



Products

Lew's Speed Shooter

lews.com

"Our new rod is called the Speed Shooter," says Mr. Crappie, Wally Marshall. "It comes in a 5.5-foot and 7.0-foot model. I personally like a longer rod when shooting because it allows me to stay back away from the dock a little and get more distance on the shots. Some people like a shorter pole so we offer a choice."

The rod had a very distinctive bright green color making it easy to pick out from the others. The IM-8 means a top quality blank and sensitivity. Marshall says the pole has a lot of backbone and a fast tip. "The stiffer design allows accurate and long shooting while the fast tip makes it very sensitive to the lightest bites. One of the best new features are the Airway guides. They remove the line slap and resistance giving a smoother action and longer casts." Price \$45-\$50.



Aqua-Vu HD700i

Aquavu.com

The first totally digital HD underwater viewing system features 720p HD resolution and 100-feet of heavy-duty optical cable and 7-inch monitor.

"With the new 700i I can see into darker and more turbid water than with any other camera," says professional guide, "Bro" Brosdahl. "The HD gives the advantage of seeing further and clearer. It also has a reverse view called Live Strike that allows you to point it toward your lure and watch the fish come up and eat it."

"One of the most important features is a screen that is four-times brighter," says Cory Schmidt with Traditions Media. "It's easier to see the screen in all conditions. Along with more detail provided by HD and the bright screen, the fisherman gets a better look under the water. Little details add up like green weeds and fish color making it more interesting. Instead of seeing one-foot we can now see two or three-feet. It's easy to set up and use." Price \$700.



Crappie Basics #122**Spider Rig...Do It Right**

Most serious slow troller fishermen are great at pole setup but some fishermen are either lazy or don't get it.

When setting poles in holders there are two simple, easy setup tricks that should be automatic. First, pole tip separation should be equal. Unless you are fishing very small targets, the more separation the better. More separation means fewer tangled lines while giving maximum coverage.

The second tip is to keep pole tips relatively close to the water and all the same distance from the surface. Keeping tips the same distance from the water means when you get a slow, light bite it will be easier to see when a pole tip is out of position. Also, the closer to the water the less wind will bother the line.

So do it right. Keep your pole tip separation and keep tips close to the water. -TH

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*New from Johnson, Crappie Buster® Shad Crank.
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**Crappie Buster
Shad Crank**

JohnsonFishing.com

Ed Moes, Crappie.com

By Tim Huffman

Crappie.com originated in 1996, went to a number one rating and has stayed on top every year as the most popular crappie site. The site's views have doubled most years since it began.

Owner and guru of the site is Ed Moes, a Chicago city raised boy who always had country boy blood running through his veins. Trips to the country in the summers to his aunt and uncle's farm only ignited the outdoors in him as trips through the woods and playing in the creek were his favorite things to do. The past few years he calls Florida his home where fishing waters are plentiful.

"I get to fish a lot," says Moes. "I fish in Florida but also get to fish all across the country with crappie.com members. I try to attend as many of the crappie.com events as possible and I never pull my boat. There are plenty of members who want to share their boat. I get to meet so many people and spend some time fishing with them."

The crappie.com events mentioned are organized by the members. They are simply gatherings where members meet, fish, eat and camp. Their popularity comes and goes, says Moes, but when interest in one loses enthusiasm a new one pops up. Most of the events begin in the south early in the year and work their way up north often associated with the spawn. When water starts cooling in the fall they start in the north and work to the south. He says the good thing is that the events are scheduled around some of the best fishing of the year no matter which state they are in.

More about the start-up? "I am a computer geek. I was knowledgeable in computers so I bought a few domain



names early when they were available. I put up one message board on crappie.com and things snowballed. I now have 150 forums, 30,000 registered members and about 100,000 page views a day. Its growth has been unbelievable."

Moes says there were two important turning points for the site. "Early on I was successful and grew because of Richard Williams, a Kentucky Lake guide, who posted fishing reports regularly. People followed his posts.

"The second thing had to do with us being family-friendly. A lot of stuff you see on TV you won't see on our site just because it's wrong and I don't want it on my site. Around 2003 a group of members, most from around Virginia, started writing things on the message boards I thought was out of line. I stopped it. Most of them got mad, quit, and I was really worried

bout the future. A moderator friend talked to me and told me I was doing the right thing. That was a turning point showing we were serious about being family-friendly, stuff you don't mind your kids reading. In the long run it was a positive decision and we continued growing. It defined crappie.com."

Your favorite place to fish? "I don't have one. I love shooting in Georgia, long lining in Florida, pulling cranks in Mississippi and one-poling pads in Florida; every technique has it's own best place. Honestly, it's not the lake that makes fishing special... it's the people who you're with."

What do you do when not working on your site or fishing? "This year most of my time was spent looking for a house for my mom. Not fun. I use to work on BMW cars but since moving to Florida that's waned since my BMW buddies are up north."

American hero? "John Wayne and the man who shot Osama Bin Laden."

Favorite boat food? "Nature Val-

ley granola bar, a snack food."

Sports team? "Since Jay Cutler is with the Bears I'm a Packers fan. When Cutler is gone I'll return to the Bears."

Favorite book/movie? "No, I don't care much for books or movies but I do go to the movies just to be with my daughter."

Something most others don't know about you? "I'm my own mechanic. I do all the work on my own cars and truck. I've rebuilt transmissions and do whatever is needed."

Any final words? "Crappie.com is a website full of caring, giving people. We often have fishermen replace a locator or something and offer the old one to a member who needs it. Members have sent fishing equipment to other members who have had theirs stolen. Members are good to each other and I like that."



- Tim Huffman

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HEAVY JIGS FOR FALL SLAB CRAPPIE

By John Neporadny Jr.

Veteran guide Barry Morrow knew he was in for a challenging guide trip on an October day when Fort Gibson Lake was being drawn down and the weather was turning colder.

When his clients caught only a few small crappie suspended in the standing timber, Morrow believed the weather and water conditions had caused the bigger crappie to hold tight to the bottom. "Once we got our lures down to the bottom we started finding bigger fish," Morrow recalls.

In order to keep his client's lures tight to the bottom, Morrow replaced the 1/8-ounce jigs they were using earlier with 1/4-ounce models. The switch to the heavier jig paid off that day as Morrow's clients were able to keep their lines vertical and detect strikes easier. They finished the day with 25 crappies ranging from 1 1/2 to 2 pounds.

While many crappie anglers

The reward of a good presentation can be a nice crappie like this one. Big jigs can play a big role.



Guide Barry Morrow favors heavy jigs for fishing in dirty, shallow water for crappie.

think small when jig fishing, Morrow and other pros believe in the big bait-big fish theory.

“If you are not flexible enough to change and know that is a tactic to use you are just not going to get bit,” says Morrow. He notes that in many instances you will keep catching smaller fish if you continue to use small lures.

“We don’t even own a 1/16-ounce jig,” says Kevin Rogers, who competes on the Crappiemasters tournament trail with his dad, Charlie Rogers. A 1/8-ounce jig is the smallest bait the Rogers team uses during tournaments.

Although small baitfish and insects are staple meals for crappie, these predators have mouths large enough to inhale bigger prey. “A lot of people think a crappie won’t hit a large bait,” says Morrow, who now guides on Missouri’s Truman Lake. “When I pull crankbaits I know they will hit them and when I am bass fishing I catch crappie so I know they will eat big baits.”

Since he only needs a tournament limit of seven crappie, Rogers relies on a larger and heavier jig that eliminates smaller bites and hooks bigger fish. He favors 3/16-ounce Bobby Garland Mo’ Glo jigheads and 1/4- or 1/2-ounce Northland Tackle Gum-Ball Jigs attached to 3-inch Bobby Garland Slab Slay’R soft plastics for most of his tournament tactics.

The fast fall of heavyweight jigs has helped Rogers win more than 30 tournaments throughout his pro career. “On a tournament day we only have eight hours so we are trying to fish as



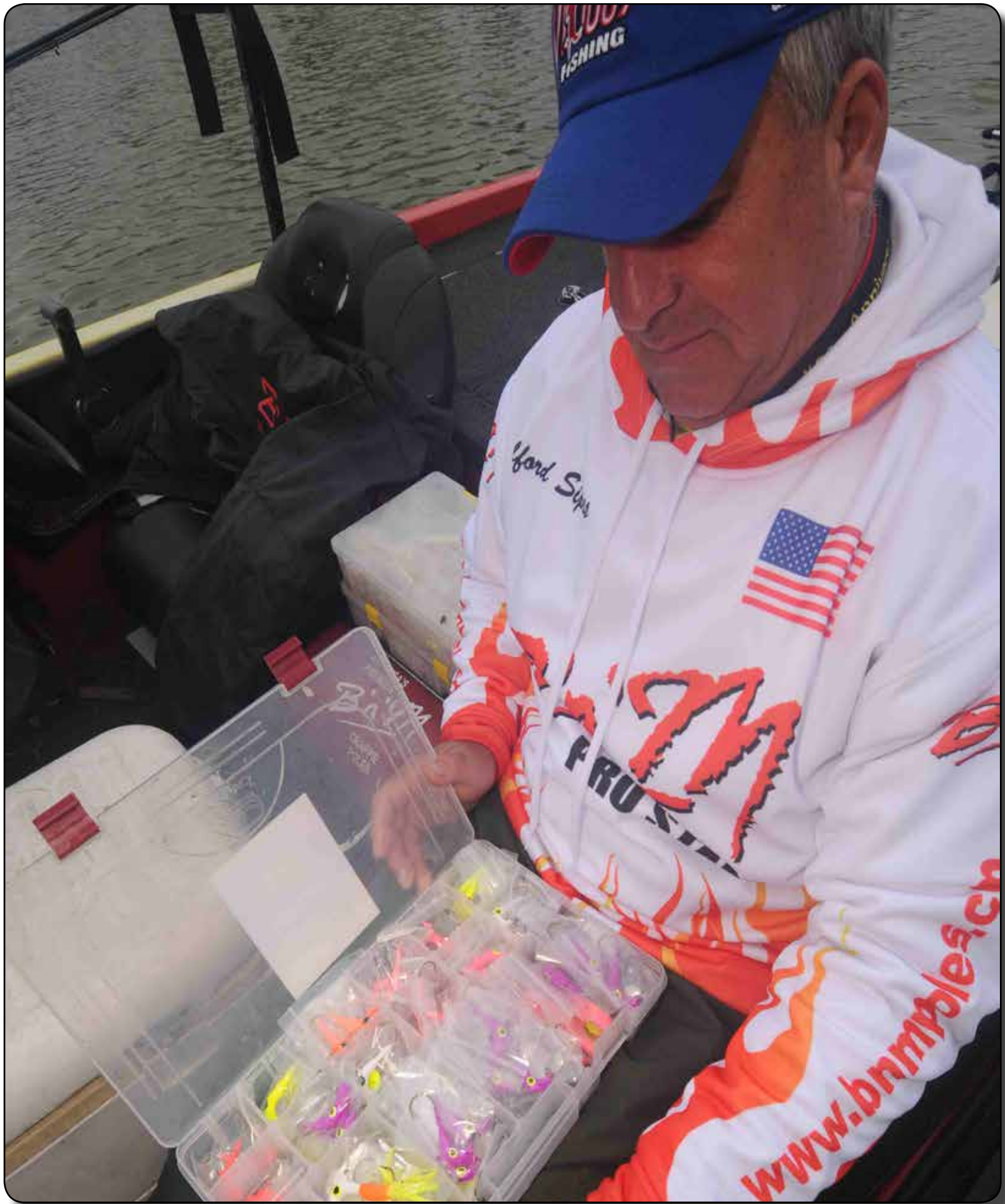
fast as we can and let that jig fall in front of that crappie’s nose as fast as possible to get a reaction bite,” says the Missouri pro. “It allows us to fish faster too. The jig gets down to the bottom faster so we can get it up faster and go on to the next spot. So it gives us more

“There is no way crappie can get that big hook out of their mouth.”

drops throughout the day than with a lighter jighead.”

Since he guided for several years mainly on Oklahoma’s Lake Eufaula which is known for its slab-sized crappie and large forage, Morrow fished most of the time with a 1/4-ounce Lindy Jig and Lindy Watsit Grub and on extremely windy fall days he opted for a 3/8-ounce jighead. He now matches the heavyweight jigs with a Crappie Town Daddee Shad or a Redneck Rubber Company Beaver Bottom Bait.





Gilford Sipes uses homemade 1-ounce horsehead jigs to catch bigger crappie while spider rigging.

Rogers and Morrow both prefer plying heavy jigs in dirty waters where crappie tend to stay in the shallows and are easier to catch. "I am looking at 12 inches or less of visibility when I am using those bigger baits," Morrow says.

Sensitivity is another reason Rogers and Morrow rely on bigger jigs, especially since they use line as heavy at 10- to 15-pound test. "The big jighead lets you feel the lure a lot better," Rogers says. "You can keep in contact with that heavier jig a lot more than you can with a 1/32-ounce jig."

The larger jigs Rogers and Morrow use are equipped with bigger hooks (1/0 or 2/0), which improves their hook-setting chances. "There is no way crappie can get that big hook out of their mouth," Morrow says. "They will inhale it but when they try to spit it out it just stays there. It also goes in the roof of their mouth--the bony part of the mouth-- and not in the cheek of the crappie."

The tournament team of Gilford and Sonny Sipes depend on heavyweight Roadrunner jigheads for their spider rigging tactics on shallow, dirty-water reservoirs during the fall. "The faster we are running the heavier the Roadrunner we are going to need to use, even up to 1 ounce," Gilford Sipes says. "That 1-ounce head will run up to 1.2 mph on a GPS reading."

The Sipes cousins frequently use 1/4-ounce Blakemore Roadrunners but when they need to troll faster and cover water quickly they opt for homemade 1-ounce horsehead jigs. The Alabama pros match their Roadrunner heads with a 2-inch soft plastic bait or live minnows. Their spider rig setup includes two Roadrunners tied on each of six long B'n'M crappie poles.

Since they are pushing their rigs from the front of the boat, the tournament competitors try to keep their baits a safe distance in front of them to prevent spooking the fish. So they use the heavier jigs to make sure their lines stay vertical while trolling. "You don't want the line more than 45 degrees back (towards the boat)," Gilford Sipes says. "If it gets more than 45 degrees usually you are going too fast and you have to add more weight."


The heavyweight Roadrunners usually work best in the fall for the Sipes team when trolling for suspended fish 7 to 8 feet deep on southern reservoirs. Gilford Sipes confirms their spider rigging tactic is a big fish technique since the smallest crappie they have caught on the heavy Roadrunners weighed 1 1/4 pound.


When crappie start to make the move to deeper water this autumn, try heavier jigs to catch more slab-sized fish.




- John Naporadny Jr.

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Hoodoo BBQ and Spicy Fried Crappie with Puppy Silencers

(Plus, vinegar history lesson...Robbers and the Black Plague)
by Vernon Summerlin

Vinegar, one of the ingredients in this month's BBQ sauce recipe for crappie, has been used by people for thousands of years, dating back to around 5,000 BC in ancient Babylonia. I found more than 20 varieties of vinegar online, ranging from apple, balsamic, rice and coconut to honey.

Vinegar consists of about 5 to 20 percent acetic acid, water and flavorings. Most commercial vinegar solutions available to consumers for household use do not exceed 5 percent. Solutions above 10 percent require careful handling. They are corrosive and damaging to the skin.

According to legend, in France during the Black Plague, four thieves were able to rob houses of plague victims without becoming infected. When they were caught, the judge offered to grant the men their freedom on the condition that they reveal how they stayed healthy. The thieves claimed a medicine woman sold them a potion made of garlic soaked in soured red wine (vinegar). Variants of the recipe, called Four Thieves Vinegar, have been passed down for hundreds of years and are a staple of New Orleans hoodoo practices.

You can make your own hoodoo BBQ sauce by varying the types of vinegar you use as well as spices and amounts. Most of us who make our own secret sauces claim they are secret because they can't be duplicated. In my case I can't remember how I made it last time and I'm too vain to write it down. You can whip up your secret BBQ sauce or use the one supplied in this recipe.

Grilled Barbecue Crappie

- 2-3 crappie fillets per person
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 cup salad oil
- 1/4 cup white vinegar
- 1/4 cup catsup
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- Red pepper, to taste

Combine Worcestershire, paprika, salad oil, vinegar, catsup, sugar, salt and peppers. Taste-test and add more spices if any seem deficient. Place fish in mixture for 30 minutes before grilling. Cook 3 to 4 inches from hot coals on well greased grill for about 5 minutes per side or until fish flakes. Brush often with sauce while barbecuing. Catfish

Vinegar tip: If you've added too much salt to a recipe, add a spoonful of white distilled vinegar and sugar to try correcting the taste.

Cajun Spicy Fried Crappie

2-3 fillets per person
 1 envelope Shake & Bake for pork
 3 tablespoons sifted flour
 1 cup instant potato flakes
 4 tablespoons cornmeal
 Salt
 Pepper
 1/2 cup buttermilk
 Hot sauce to taste
 Canola oil

Mix Shake & Bake, flour, potatoes and cornmeal. Salt and pepper the fish. Mix milk and hot sauce and pour over fish. Toss to coat evenly. Press dry mixture on each piece of fish, coating well. Pan fry until done. Turn with spatula to prevent breaking. The potatoes seal the fish keeping it moist.

I admit that my hush puppies, as simple to make as they are, lack something. It's not the ingredients but maybe it's the way I hold my mouth. Something just ain't right. So I leave them for my wife to prepare. Hers are yummy! Here are three recipes that aren't very different from each other (just mix up the stuff and fry'em) but you may have a preference of ingredients. Personally, I don't think you can use too many onions and other spices. Perhaps that's the trouble with my puppies; they're more like spicy onion balls.

Hush Puppies #1

2 cups cornmeal
 1 egg
 1 finely chopped onion
 Beer or milk (enough to form doughy balls)
 Canola oil

Mix cornmeal, egg, onion and beer or milk in mixing bowl. Roll into small balls. Drop in hot oil and cook until brown.

Hush Puppies #2

1/2 cup flour
 1 cup cornmeal
 1/4 tablespoon garlic salt
 1 tablespoon sugar
 1 egg
 1 chopped onion
 Buttermilk
 Canola oil

Blend flour, cornmeal, garlic salt, sugar, egg, onion and add enough buttermilk to form balls. Cook in hot oil until brown.

Spice tip: Humidity, light and heat cause herbs and spices to lose their flavor, so store your spices in a cool, dark place – not above your stove. For more cooking tips visit <http://www.foodnetwork.com>.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE

TIM'S FORD

JULY 22nd

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 1. Rodney Edwards/Coby Edwards | 4.81 |
| 2. David O'Dell/Mario Ortega | 3.1 |

BIG FISH

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 1. Rodney Edwards/Coby Edwards | 0.98 |
|--------------------------------|------|

EASTERN MISSOURI

MARK TWAIN/JACK & JILL

JULY 30th

- | | |
|------------------------|------|
| 1. Ruyle/Ruyle | 8.07 |
| 2. Simmons/Hall | 6.31 |
| 3. Messamaker/McGrann | 6.18 |
| 4. Moore/Moore | 6.06 |
| 5. Valentine/Valentine | 5.53 |

BIG FISH

- | | |
|----------------|------|
| 1. Ruyle/Ruyle | 1.68 |
|----------------|------|

Cool gear that's catching!



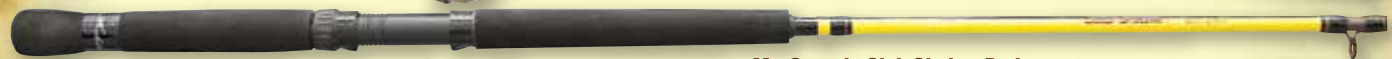
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CRAPPIE MASTERS

MARK TWAIN LAKE

AUGUST 6th

1. Brad Ruyle/Reggis Redinger	8.05
2. Paul Turner/Elizabeth Turner	5.15
3. Barry Morrow/Chad Maupin	5.14
4. Rick Taylor/Jeremy Taylor	5.08
5. Chris Dudgeon/Bo Shepherd	4.92

BIG FISH

1. Brad Ruyle/Reggis Redinger	1.96
-------------------------------	------

MALE/FEMALE

1. Paul Turner/Elizabeth Turner	5.15
---------------------------------	------

ADULT/YOUTH

1. Aaron Clark/Dylan Clark	4.37
----------------------------	------

CENTRAL ALABAMA

MILLERS FERRY

AUGUST 13th

1. Roger Milby/Rodger Brown	5.58
2. Gerald Overstreet Jr/Jennifer&Beth Ann	5.33
3. Eric Cagle/Jared Gilbert	5.11
4. Dan Dannenmueller/Sue Dannenmueller	4.15
5. James Heflin/Jamie Heflin	4.04

BIG FISH

1. Dan Dannenmueller/Sue Dannenmueller	1.42
--	------

CENTRAL ARKANSAS

LAKE NIMROD

AUGUST 13th

1. Lamar Bunting/Jeff Davis	9.67
2. Dustin Harris/Michael Kimble	9.01
3. Brandon Smith/Chad Carroll	8.61
4. Kyle Oscar/Megan Chambers	8.14
5. Greg London/Russ Clarke	8.08

BIG FISH

1. Lamar Bunting/Jeff Davis	1.85
2. Brandon Smith/Brad Carroll	1.75



EASTERN MISSOURI

TRUMAN LAKE

AUGUST 13th

1. Mike Whede/Jason Ness/Ron Molitor	9.08
2. Kurt Sherman/Dillion Stocking	8.04
3. Mike Friend/David Townsend	7.73
4. Brad Perotti/Rob Ott	7.13
5. Shane Cappel/Jesse Shoemake/Steve Burnsworth	7.05

BIG FISH

1. Mike Whede/Jason Ness/Ron Molitor	1.68
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MIDDLE TENNESSEE

NORMANDY

AUGUST 19th

1. Tyler Spray/Terry Spray	6.25
2. Joey Davis	5.74
3. Brad Beard/Will Trice	3.67

BIG FISH

1. Brad Beard/Will Trice	2.02
--------------------------	------

CENTRAL OHIO

INDIAN LAKE

AUGUST 20th

1. Steve Kennedy/Mark Reeves	5.59
2. Rick Spence/Austin Spence	3.27
3. Jerry Williams/Lynn Williams	1.34

BIG FISH

1. Rick Spence/Austin Spence	1.07
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CRAPPIE MASTERS

TRUMAN LAKE

AUGUST 20th

1. Barry Morrow/Chad Maupin	11.24
2. Jim Dant/Donny Zufall	10.5
2. Brad Ruyle/Reggie Redinger	10.5
3. Charles Bunting/Travis Bunting	9.41
4. Brian McGhee/Paul Alpers	8.98
5. David Cox/Steve Hockett	8.89

BIG FISH

1. John Shannon/Tracy Shannon	1.81
-------------------------------	------

MALE/FEMALE

1. Cory Batterson/Dianne Stevens	8.28
----------------------------------	------

ADULT/YOUTH

1. Aaron Clark/Dylan Clark	7.61
----------------------------	------

(Fishermen, check with club/association for exact dates, changes, cancellations and rules.)

SEPTEMBER	10th	CRAPPIENUTZ	LAKE BLACKSHEAR	CLUB
SEPTEMBER	10th	INDIANNA	RACON	CLUB
SEPTEMBER	10th	WAPPAPELLO	WAPPAPELLO LAKE	BEN KRUSE TOURNAMENT
SEPTEMBER	10th-11th	KANSAS	POMONA LAKE	CLUB
SEPTEMBER	11th - 12th	EASTERN MISSOURI	MARK TWAIN LAKE	FISH OFF
SEPTEMBER	17th	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	WOODS RESERVOIR	CLUB
SEPTEMBER	17th	CENTRAL ARKANSAS	TBD	CHAMPIONSHIP
SEPTEMBER	17th	CAT TEXAS	GRAPEVINE	OTW SEMINAR
SEPTEMBER	17th	MAGNOLIA	ARKABUTLA LAKE	CLUB
SEPTEMBER	18th	CENTRAL OHIO	PAINT CREEK LAKE	CLUB
SEPTEMBER	18th	GRAND LAKES	GRAND LAKE	CLUB
SEPTEMBER	24th	CRAPPIE USA	KENTUCKY/BARCLEY LAKES	CLUB
SEPTEMBER	24th	NORTHEAST OHIO	SHENANGO LAKE	3 MAN OPEN
SEPTEMBER	24th	SHOALS AREA	PICKWICK	CLUB
SEPTEMBER	28th-Oct.1st	CRAPPIE MASTERS	GRENADA LAKE	National Championship
OCTOBER	1st	CENTRAL OHIO	ALUM CREEK LAKE	CLUB
OCTOBER	1st-2nd	KANSAS	TUTTLE CREEK LAKE	CLUB
OCTOBER	1st-2nd	INDIANNA	SALAMONIE/MISSISSINEWA	CLASSIC
OCTOBER	2nd	GRAND LAKES	GRAND LAKE	CLUB
OCTOBER	8th	CAROLINA-CCA	TILLERY LAKE	CLUB
OCTOBER	8th	CENTRAL ALABAMA	LAKES JORDAN/MITCHELL	QUALIFIER
OCTOBER	9th	GRAND LAKES	GRAND LAKE	CLASSIC
OCTOBER	14th-15th	CAT TEXAS	LEWISVILLE	TSCC
OCTOBER	15th	CRAPPIENUTZ	WESTPOINT LAKE	CLUB
OCTOBER	15th	CRAPPIE MASTERS	TRUMAN LAKE	BIG CRAPPIE CHALLENGE
OCTOBER	15th	MAGNOLIA	SARDIS LAKE	CLUB
OCTOBER	15th	CENTRAL OHIO	DELAWARE LAKE	CLASSIC/OPEN
OCTOBER	15th	NORTHEAST OHIO	BERLIN LAKE	CLUB
OCTOBER	16th	WAPPAPELLO	WAPPAPELLO LAKE	CLUB
OCTOBER	22nd	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	TIM'S FORD	CLUB
OCTOBER	27th-29th	CRAPPIE USA	KENTUCKY/BARCLEY LAKES	CLASSIC
OCTOBER	29th	NORTHEAST OHIO	SANDUSKY BAY	CLUB
OCTOBER	29th	SHOALS AREA	LITTLE BEAR	CLASSIC

Photo Contest



1st Place This Month!

June 17th 2016
Mark K. Carder
Sardis Lake - Sardis, MS
17.25 inches, 2.75 pound

Photo Contest



Honorable Mention

James Biggs
Lake Cypress Springs, NE Texas

Don't forget to send in your recent photo by the 15th.

Crappie NOW e-magazine accepts color digital images for publication. A single photo will be selected after the 10th of each month for the next month's edition. The winner will be contacted via email with prize information.

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(Note that club news, results and schedules are taken from websites around the 10th of each month. Only those who provide information through their website or by email will have updated information and results included.) Fishermen, check with club/association for exact dates, changes, cancellations and rules.

Clubs/Regional Tournaments

MAGNOLIA CRAPPIE CLUB - MS
www.magnoliacrappieclub.com

CRAPPIE ANGLERS OF TEXAS (CAT)- TX
www.crappieanglersoftexas.com

WEST TENNESSEE CRAPPIE CLUB-WTCC -TN
www.westtennesseecrappieclub.com; also facebook

INDIANA SLAB MASTERS- IN
www.indianaslabmasters.com

MIDDLE TENNESSEE CRAPPIE CLUB -TN
middletennesseecrappieclub@gmail.com

SHOALS AREA CRAPPIE ASSOCIATION -AL
www.shoalscrappie.com shoalscrappie@yahoo.com

WEST ALABAMA CRAPPIE ASSOCIATION -AL
www.westalabamacrappie.com Tracy Humber 662-574-0649

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www.slabmasterstournamenttrail.net

EASTERN MISSOURI CRAPPIE CLUB- MO
www.easternmocrappie.com

EASTERN BUCKEYE CRAPPIE CLUB -OH
Easternbuckeyecrappieclub@yahoo.com
www.easternbuckeyecrappieclub.com

WILLIAM'S CREEK CRAPPIE CLUB- TX
www.williamscreekrappieclub.com

WAPPAPELLO CRAPPIECLUB- MO
Facebook: Wappapello CrappieClub

GRAND LAKE CRAPPIE SERIES- OH
www.grandlakecrappieseries.comule.com

COOSA RIVER CRAPPIE CLUB
Paul Whorton 205-821-8373
Roger Absher 205-283-7638
(see facebook)

CRAPPIE BUCKS- TX
www.crappiebucks.com

CRAPPIE SLAYERS TOURNAMENT SERIES- MO
See the www.crappie.com MO-tournaments

CAPITAL CRAPPIE CLUB- MO
Mike 573-230-3058, Ben 573-694-3588



Marshall Albertson 573-690-2370

ARIZONIA CRAPPIE ASSOCIATION -AZ
www.azcrappie.com (forum)

BUCKEYE CRAPPIE CHALLENGE -OH
www.buckeyecrappiechallenge.com

NORTHEAST OHIO CRAPPIE CLUB -OH
www.northeastohiocrappieclub.com

SPRINGFIELD CRAPPIE CLUB- IL
www.springfieldcrappieclub.com

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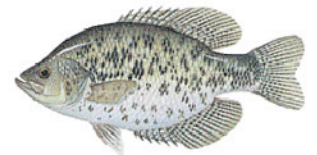
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Charlie S. Brewer Jr.



Charlie Brewer, Jr.
- Vietnam Navy Veteran -

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CAROLINA'S CRAPPIE CLASSIC

Winners for 2016

*Stokes McClellan
and
Jordan Newsome*

Used 2-1/8" Slider Minnow
and 3" Slider Grub

Fishing Funny's

by Jonny Hawkins



"STILL THINK MY SECRET BAIT IS A JOKE?"

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**Until next month, good fishing
from the CrappieNow Staff.**