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Cover Photo: Jacob Wheeler with an Oklahoma crappie. Tim Huffman photo

## **Opening Cast**

Wow, its fall already. Where has the year gone!? October is the month of change and catching some sizable limits of crappie across the country. We also have some exciting news for CrappieNow followers and readers.



October is the month when large quantities of shad

in the right sizes are plentiful for the crappie gorge on and store up fat for the winter. As the water temperatures cool, the crappie follow the shad near their summer haunts.

This is a super time to pull crankbaits, jigs, Rattle Traps, Thin Fishers and Road Runners all of which I like to pull behind Offshore Tackle Planner Boards...depth, area coverage and speed can all be easily controlled.

As to the exciting news? CrappieNow and the National Professional Anglers Association (NPAA) are joining forces to share important information. content and news concerning legislative actions, help promote and professional fishing attributes in the crappie sport. Crappie fishermen need a united voice concerning crappie fishing issues and potential impacts to the sport. You may watch for this news on the CrappieNow website, magazine and social media. CrappieNow will also share appropriate content with the NPAA members.

NPAA is a member of important legislative committees and organizations that support retaining our rights and privileges to fish in public waters. They are NOT a political group but watch and voice our opinions.

I have joined the NPAA and recommend that all crappie anglers do so. It is not just for tournament anglers but all anglers who love the sport. You may join at www.NPAA.net. Tell them that Dan sent you.

God bless and good luck fishing, Dan



Story & Photo by Ron Presley

# Security, Storage and Efficiency

here is no one cookie-cutter setup that applies to every crappie fishing boat. The following are good product and design ideas that can help make most fishing rigs more comfortable and efficient.

#### Adapting Racks and Holders to Angling Needs

Fishing rods are one of the most important pieces of equipment a crappie angler has. It is important to protect them. There is nothing worse than beginning that first pass through a crappie hole and discovering a broken tip or handle.

Fishing rods take plenty of abuse from anglers while fishing, but more when in transit from one location to another. No one knows better that Dan Dannenmueller, one half of the Crappie Country Fishing Team. He and his fishing partner, Garrett Steele, travel the country fishing crappie tournaments and they haul a lot of B'n'M rods with them.

"The problem is not just the abuse in transit," explained Dannenmueller (AKA Crappie Dan). "There is also the possibility of theft while stopped overnight or along the road for lunch. It happened to me at Granada. All my rods were stolen right in front of the hotel. Matt Morgan loaned me a set so I could fish. From that point on I decided I would not be vulnerable again."

"With 16-footers and 14-footers you can't really take them in anywhere," added Steele. "They might get broken if you carry them into a motel room and if you break them down it's a laborious

thing to get them rigged again for fishing. Some anglers have several rods with different baits so they don't have to change baits on the water. Storing all the rods safely is a must."

**HOW TO?** 

"For a thief to get my rods out of the locker they will have to rip stuff apart. If it takes them too long they are not likely to pursue it."

#### **Rod Lockers**

Crappie Dan contacted David Baynard with Driftmaster Rod Holders concerning the issue of transporting rods. He discovered that Baynard was already working on a system to secure long crappie rods above the gunnel of a boat. After many improvements and revisions, the new Driftmaster Rod Locker features accessibility, protection and security.

The newest versions easily accommodate eight pre-rigged rods and keep them from tangling. With the locking cover in place thieves cannot remove the reels from the rods so they remain safe too. Standard versions feature an 8-inch vertical stem to clear boat hatches and leave them accessible.

The tip saver end holds each rod separately and protects them between rubber coated fingers. The middle and the tip saver end can be mounted to accommodate different rod lengths and boat configurations. The Rod Locker can



be easily removed when not needed. Crappie Dan feels pretty safe when he travels now. "For a thief to get my rods out of the locker they will have to rip stuff apart. If it takes them too long they are not likely to pursue it."

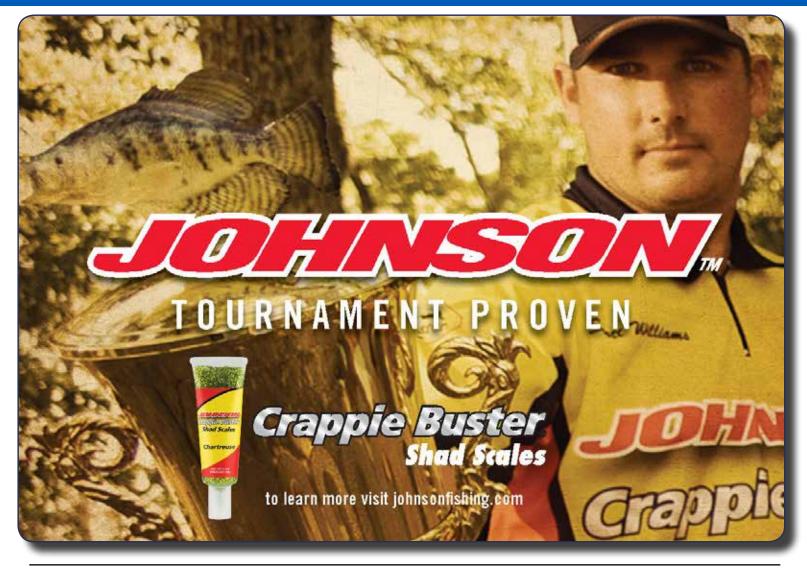
"The tip saver protects the most vulnerable part of the rod," continued Crappie Dan. "The middle support keeps those limber rods from bouncing all over the place. We can put two rods in each of those. We often put spare rods without reels in each fork to give us a backup rod if we need it."

"In addition to security, storage racks allow anglers to switch their fishing techniques efficiently," explained Steele. "Anglers can switch from pushing jigs to pulling cranks in minutes, without tangles. It is as simple The Rod Locker secures crappie rods and reels for roadside stops while protecting sensitive tips from abuse and damage in transit.

as exchanging a jig pole for a crank pulling pole in the rack."

#### Driftmaster Crappie Stalkers

"I use customizes Crappie Stalkers in the front," explained Crappie Dan. "They are strong, durable, and completely adjustable, folding all the way down to the deck for travelling. We use them to spider rig jigs, minnows, and even crankbaits. Off-the-shelf models work fine, but ours are tweaked to Crappie Country's personal preferences. They are taller and angled."



"Because we are setting, we wanted our knees below the rod holders and we wanted our hands to go straight to the rods. The idea is to get the rods out quickly without leaning forward and disrupting the bite by disturbing the boat."

"I have long legs," added Steele. "For spider rigging I needed taller holders. Driftmaster added an angle so when I spin around I am not hitting my knees on the holders. Whether I am going for the net, going for the rod, or just getting a drink from the cooler my movement is unencumbered."

Since the Stalkers are individual rod holders they do require more holes drilled in the boat. For anglers that don't like that, Driftmaster offers systems that fit in the seat hole that can be removed

when not in use. These systems require no new holes at all.

#### **Trolling Racks**

When not spider rigging Crappie Country is likely pulling Off Shore Tackle Planer Boards. "Traditional pulling racks have a bar across the back that can get in the way," advised Crappie Dan. "If you are trying to net a fish, open your hatch to the batteries, or access the back of the boat you are blocked from access."

He went on to explain the difficulty of keeping the lines separated when turning with the boards 200 feet behind the boat on each side. He asked Driftmaster to develop a rear rod rack that would accommodate the requirements of pulling boards and



allow two people to fish them effectively. "It takes two people to run an efficient planer board operation," clarified Dan. "We wanted a rod rack with stations where one person was responsible for one side and another person responsible for the other side. When a fish gets on one side the other

David Baynard, Driftmaster owner and designer, shows off the results of using add-on accessories to the angler's best advantage.



person comes over and helps out with all the tasks that have to be done. With this technique it is not as important to get the rod as soon, but it is important to be able to get two people back there to run the operations."

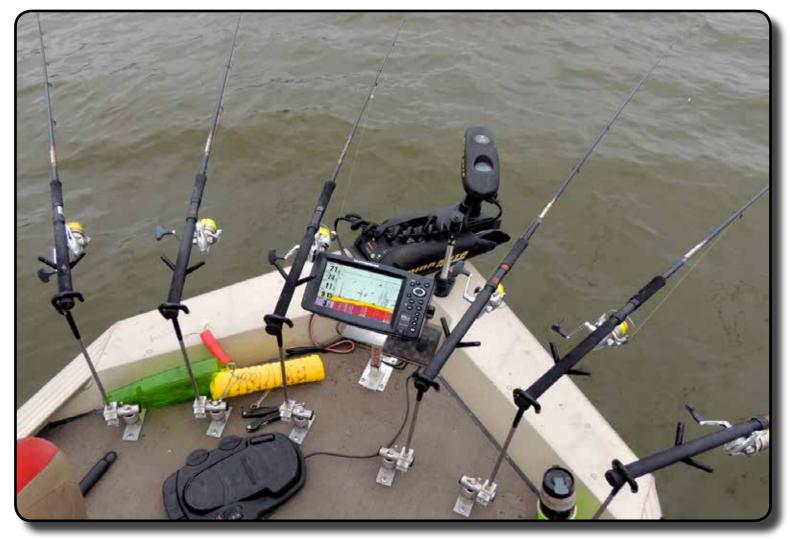
The carefully thought out response was a rack design that followed the outside contour of the rear deck and could be either inside or outside that contour. They are constructed so there is room to get underneath them to net a fish and not in the way of trees or anything you might run up against when you are not fishing with the boards.

"Notice that the rod holders run from high in the front to low in the back," noted Steele. "The high to low construction gives each rod a different height and that helps with line separation. The tiered rack and the angle of the rod holder is extremely The rod rack on the back of the Crappie Country boat is designed to allow two anglers to work the planner boards and still leave room for netting the fish.

important in pulling boards."

The right side, left side notion is built into the hardware. "The rod holders have right and left threads on the appropriate side so they won't come loose under pressure," said Crappie Dan. "If the rod holder is pulled on, by a fish or a snag, they won't come loose. They are designed for one side and must be mounted on that side."

"The tiered rack and the high to low construction makes it easier to grab the rods," explained Steele. "We use the B'n'M Silver Cat Poles because they are strong enough to pull the

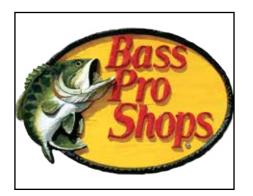


boards. The rack has to be strong as well, to withstand the drag created by the boards."

Crappie anglers are innovators and never stop looking for better ways to catch fish. Sometimes it is only a matter of adapting existing products and accessories to your own style of fishing. Follow the lead of Crappie County, be creative, and make your crappie fishing better through innovation. Crappie Stalkers are shown here on guide Jim Forrest's boat. They can be ordered customized for additional height and an angle to give knee room.







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#### Dock Crappie Without a Boat By Jeff Williams

One place you always can find crappie throughout most of the year is under or near floating boat docks. Most people who rent slips in a boat dock will put brush at the back end or the front end of that boat slip.

Ask the marina owner if you can fish in one of those vacant slips. If you can't fish there, consider the possibility of leasing one of those slips just as though you have a boat to put in it. But instead, sink brush or stake beds in the slip. Crappie will come to brush. If you put brush in a boat slip, you can go to your slip and fish any time of the day or night and at any time of the year. This tactic works best on deepwater floating docks.

Jeff Williams is the owner of Outdoor BrandZ in Grove, Oklahoma. He makes and distributes the Fle-Fly www.flefly. com.

To learn how to "Catch Crappie All Year: Fishing a Single Pole, Using No Boat and Farming Crappie" click here http://amzn.to/1DBpnNh









## Crappie Basics #123

#### **Keep Moving**

Crappie move a lot in the fall and so should you. One of the best places to start is near spring spawning areas. Instead of getting super-shallow, work water that is about twice the depth of where the fish spawn. So if they spawn at 3 feet in the spring, start at the 6-foot depth in the fall. Use your electronics and test-fish to find the crappie.

Other keys include finding baitfish and cover. Keep moving until you find the right elements and you'll find the crappie. Once found you can slow down and work the area. –TH



## Drift Fishing: Story & Photos by Darl Black The Pynatuning Drift

Within any specific geographic region, anglers often popularize a lure or style of presentation for which a lake becomes known. Such is the case on 82year old Pymatuning Lake in northwestern Pennsylvania where the headline technique is "drift fishing" during much of the year for several major species including walleyes, catfish and crappies.

The 17,088-acre impoundment on the Pennsylvania/Ohio border was dedicated in

with uniform depth and no fish-finding sonar during those early days, probably triggered the popularity of drift fishing. Rather than putt-putting along from spot to spot, anglers began drifting...simply drop the bait over the side and let the breeze be your propulsion.

Drift-fishing remains popular today because this style of presentation gives the casual angler the opportunity to catch a few fish while relaxing with friends in a rocking boat and enjoying a beverage under pleasant skies.

## A small drift sock tied off the bow may be all that is needed to slow the drift.

1934. Built primarily for flood control, by the 1950s Pymatuning Lake had transformed into a renowned fishery for warmwater species. Today, Pymatuning remains a mecca for anglers seeking crappies, walleyes, bluegills, bass and muskies.

Pymatuning is a relatively shallow, wide open lake. Lacking large bays or creek arm fingers, anglers often find themselves at the mercy of winds from any direction.

Although the largest inland lake in Pennsylvania, the two controlling state authorities ironically maintained a 10 horsepower maximum for boats on Pymatuning – until 2008 when legislation passed by both OH and PA increased the permitted horsepower limit all the way to 20 HP. This isn't a lake where you move around quickly by boat!

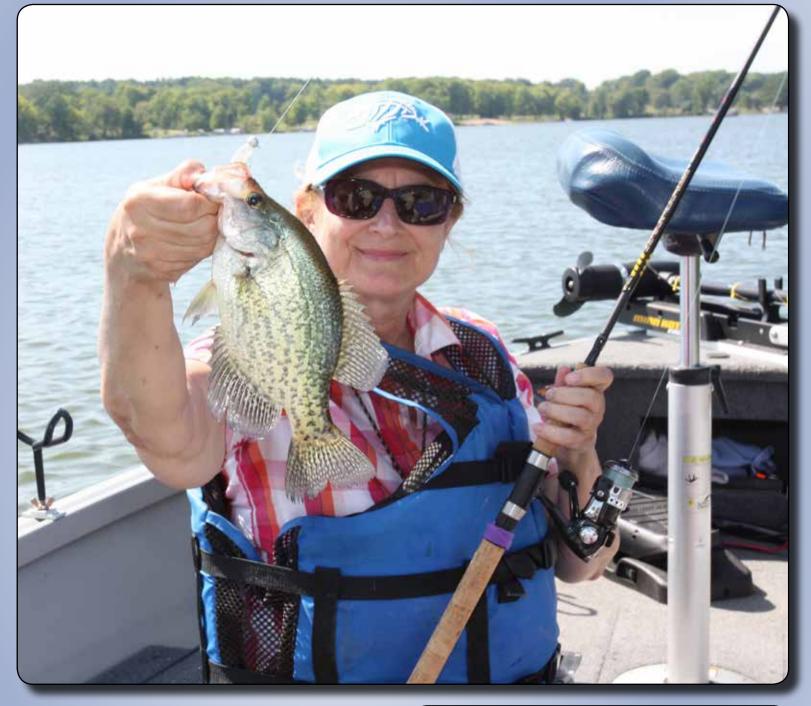
Horsepower restrictions, relatively shallow water throughout the lake, large flats

Rather than considering drift-fishing as solely a random presentation, proficient anglers seeking crappies can actually tweak this style of fishing to their advantage during the late summer and early fall. Instead of being pinned down to specific cover and depth during this time, crappies tend to roam – following young-of-year shad and alewife schools.

Crappies will hold temporarily on deep cribs or stump rows in a here-today, gone-tomorrow scenario. Not until late fall do crappie congregate heavily around cover again. Turns out drift fishing can be an effective presentation from midsummer through October to catch gadabout crappies – especially in light of the PA Fish Commission and PA State Park's deployment of man-made fish-attracting cribs dropped in somewhat of a straight line on flats.

Fortunately, technology has provided

#### **Drift Fishing- The Pymatuning Drift**



us with updated tools today that can enhance the "drift" technique.

#### Electronics

Today's down-scanning and sidescanning technology is such an improvement over traditional sonar that it is impossible to believe how much better it is until you've fished with the newer gear.

I run a moderately-priced Garmin GPSMAP 7608xsv (8-inch display) which provides the clearest images I've ever seen; sharp enough to identify – with practice Good presentations can result in good northern crappies like this one.

– crappie schools versus other species. Coupled with built-in Lake Vu HD maps, I can mark a string of man-made cribs on a flat, or a series of rises/humps as waypoints. Then run back to the start of the track, set out lines according to observed depth of fish and baitfish, and begin a drift.

When crappies are roaming the area



rather than holding tight to the cover, drifting is a wise option. The electric motor trolling motor (either bow-mounted or transommounted) is used to make course corrections to hit each waypoint. Should crappies be observed on a particular crib, stump or brushpile, use the trolling motor to slowly circle that cover several times before moving on.

#### **Rod Holders**

Rather than leaning the rod against the gunwale, quality rod holders are needed. My Driftmaster Rod Holders ensure a rod/ reel combo does not disappear should a large musky or catfish grab the bait – or when a guest angler inadvertently bumps an unsecured rod sending it over the side.

With a bit of practice, you can remove a rod from a Driftmaster quicker than any other locked-down rod holder. Use a two-hand grab, placing one hand on the rod blank in front of the handle and the other on the butt of the handle; lift the rod upward with the first hand while moving the butt downward and to the left with the second hand. Drifting for crappies is popular on many northern lakes.

#### Rods, Reels & Riggings

Utilizing the proper rod goes a long way to increasing catch numbers. The B'n'M side-pulling rod named "The Difference" (designed by Roger Gant) is the perfect drift rod for pulling jigs; it telegraphs the slightest bite.

B'n'M ProStaff Spinning reels are spooled with 10-pound braid with a six-foot monofilament leader. Two jigs are attached to each line. Depending on the strength of the breeze, the anchor jig will be either a 1/8 or 1/4-ounce Road Runner head with a Bobby Garland Slab Slay'R. Three feet above the anchor jig is a 1/16-ounce Crappie Pro Mo'Glo head with a Garland Baby Shad Swim'R body.

I also carry a couple slightly stiffer Buck's Ultimate 8-foot rods with slip floats so I can set a jig at the exact level of shallow baitfish schools observed on the sonar. Floats are particularly useful on near calm days

#### **Drift Fishing- The Pymatuning Drift**

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when baitfish schools are riding within a few feet of the surface. The preferred jig is a Garland Baby Shad or a hand-tied white hair jig.

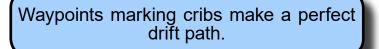
#### **Drift Socks**

Being prepared for calm days also means you must also be prepared for breezy days when your boat may move too quickly along its drift course. That's when you break out a drift sock. I carry two different sizes.

In a moderate breeze, it's the bow of my aluminum boat that wants to move faster than the heavier stern

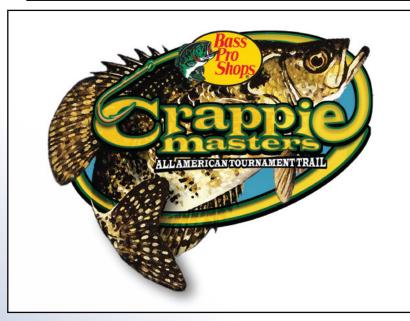
of the boat. A small drift sock tied off the bow may be all that is needed to slow the drift. Of course somedays the wind and waves may simply be too much even for any drift sock. Then it is time for an alternative plan – like looking for the nearest café for an early lunch!

Right now on moderately shallow northern reservoirs, crappies are in transition moving from open water towards late fall and



winter locations. Drifting jigs will continue to work until the water temperature drops into the lower 50s. Go Fish...Now!





#### 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

Info

Waypoints







Crappie NOW How To October



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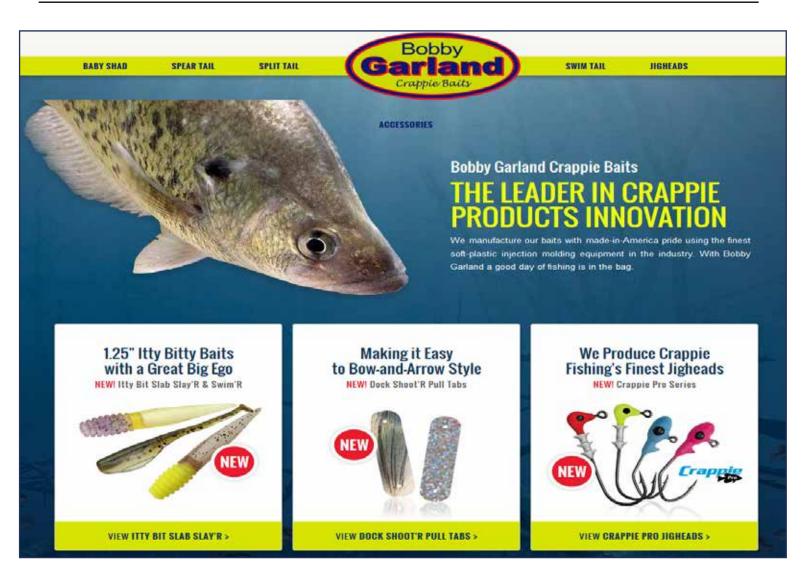
## Crappie Basics #124

## **Shooting Docks**

Try shooting docks in the fall. Docks are good gathering places for crappie. Also, baitfish are roaming around them in the fall.

Shooting is often done with a short rod but a 6.5 or 7-foot rod gives more power for shooting and gives better leverage for setting the hook. High-vis 6-pound test line is good to keep diameter small yet provide good visibility for seeing light bites.

Jigs should be 1/32- or 1/16-ounce. Use the lighter jigs when crappie are suspended just under the surface down to four or five feet. The light jig has a slow fall and stays in the strike zone longer. Use a 1/16 when crappie are deeper or when wind is a factor. -TH



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#### Wireless Kill Switch Fell Marine

Don't be a statistic. Man Over Board System, MOB+, stops the boat if the driver falls overboard. Fell Marine is obviously in the business of saving lives, maybe yours.

A great feature of MOB is maximum wearability as a wristband, in your pocket or clipped to your livevest or belt, or clipped to your lanyard around your neck. The purpose is ease of use so it will be used, not like the coil-based cords seldom used in today's fishing boats.

Their system is fast using wireless electronics that doesn't interfere with any other systems. Auto MOB with 6 second direct restarts means a driver overboard immediately kills the engine but within 6 seconds passengers can restart the engine to pick the person out of the water.

The unit is rough and tough, has plug and play operation and looks good.

Fellmarine.com MSRP \$179





#### Guide Booking Service EZ Waves

EZ Waves launches an online booking service for fishing, kayaking and all water-based activities. They have the only program that streamlines the maritime booking process providing live scheduling that allows guests to book online directly on the captains' schedules and be on the water in as little as three hours.

Founder Vickie Waller says, "Combining my love for the water and passion to teach entrepreneurs about the business of running a business is how EZ Waves became a reality. Small business owners take big risks when putting their resources on the line to follow their passions and I love helping make those dreams come true."

The service is great for both guides and customers because it makes booking and follow-ups much easier.

Ezwaves.com

#### Jump Starter Weego

There's nothing worse than a dead battery. The Weego 44 helps solve the problem. "We've come up with a better, easier to use, versatile jump starter," says CEO, Gerry Toscani. "It will jump a 6.4 liter engine and provides safe power for small devices including phones, laptops and other USB devices."

"The number one reason for a bad jump is poor connection. We have an intelligent box on the cables to guide you. A green light means a good connection with reverse and poor connection lights for those conditions. Our clamps open very wide and have power to each side of the clamps for a better connection."

The unit is great for camping, boating and everyday use. It includes a 500 lumen flashlight. The unit is always ready to use because it only loses 2% per month in storage.

Myweego.com MSRP \$150.





#### **Alligator Bob's Premium Meat Snacks**

If you like experimenting with unique taste of exotic game or enjoy trying different flavors or meat, Alligator Bob has the quality products in his Premium Meat Snacks.

These snacks contain no fillers, extenders or animal fat additives and are smoked in a real smoke house with natural hardwoods. All are approved USDA inspected and passed.

Snacks were made to offer a touch of Florida for visitors to the state labeled as a "Unique, edible Florida souvenir," but have become popular all over the country as quality snack foods and as gifts. Choices include alligator, ostrich, venison, wild boar and buffalo.

Gatorbob.com. Variety six pak sampler, \$17. Singles \$2-\$3.

## Lew's Ozark Fishing Museum

Photos by Tim Huffman

A 1,000 square foot museum showcases the history of Lew's plus other Ozark region people and companies. The museum resides in a building with Lew's corporate offices and the Sportsman's Factory Outlet in Springfield, Missouri.

"Lew Childre introduced a lot of industry 'firsts' from the 1950s to 1980s, many of which are still used in today's fishing gear. The man and his innovations deserve a place of preservation in fishing's history," says Lew's CEO Lynn Reeves. "We have the BB1 serial #2 Speed Spool reel here, along with many of Childre's earliest prototypes that I believe folks will find highly interesting whether they fish or don't. These are things the public needs to see and we're pleased to make that possible."

Many of the items have come from Reeves personal collecting efforts,

while the rest have come through company purchases or from donations by individuals. Reeves said among the most prized possessions are one of the Lew's gold rings that Childre used to recognize special friends and achievements, the original pistol grip rod handles that Shag Shahid handcarved from wood and ultimately led to Lew's Speed Sticks being the country's best-selling bass rods in the 1970s.

The J.D. Fletcher White River collection consists of more than 5,000 lures, a variety of other antique fishing items and scores of old photos of White River and Table Rock Lake area where Fletcher guided.

Lew's President Gary Remensnyder says, "This museum captures an era and region of equipment heritage that without a doubt played a critical role in the development of today's tackle. These items have rightly earned their place in fishing's history."

The Lew's Ozarks Fishing Museum is accessed through the adjacent Sportsman's Factory Outlet store. Museum hours are Monday thru Friday 9am-6pm and Saturdays 9am-3pm. Admission is free.



#### Lew's Ozark Fishing Museum







## Lew's Ozark Fishing Museum



Lew's Ozark Fishing Museum









Crappie NOW How To Shooting Docks BnM Poles.





#### Story and photos by John E. Phillips

Editor's Note: The Alabama State Championship was held the first weekend in May, 2016, on the Alabama River near Prattville and at Lake Jordan, 40 minutes away. Both places hold plenty of crappie in them. Scott Williams of Cochran, Georgia, and his dad, Billy Williams, won the championship by fishing Lake Jordan. Here are the critical aspects that Scott Williams says produced the win.

he Alabama River has more white crappie in it that tend to be bigger than the black crappie in Lake Jordan," Scott Williams explains. "A few ounces often determines the winner in a tournament. But black crappie tend to survive better in hot weather and are heartier in live wells. Lake Jordan's water was 2 or 3 degrees cooler than the Alabama River's water. My dad in pre-practice caught several Lake Jordan crappie with roe still in them, making them heavier than the alreadyspawned-out white crappie on the river. So, we decided to fish the lake."

From this tournament, the Williamses learned that water temperature, the timing of the spawn and the targeted species play major roles in the decision of whether to fish lakes or rivers for crappie at certain times.

#### The Role Current Plays

The Williamses have found that the primary difference in fishing success on a lake or a river is the way current affects crappie. Rivers have some type of current running at all times, so river crappie will be more predictable in how they act, and where they're positioned than lake



"If I had to pick the one ingredient that makes the biggest difference in fishing lakes and rivers, it would be the amount of current present and how often that current runs," Scott Williams explains.

#### The Differences in Crappie Fishing Rivers and Lakes

crappie. Lake crappie intermittent receive current, depending on when the dam or the power plant at the head of the lake decides to release current, and how strong that current is. In a river throughout of the most year, crappie usually will hold anywhere there's a current break along the river channel or a maior creek channel and let the current bring the bait to them.

"In lakes, the crappie generally will hold on the edges of drop-offs or deep water close to shallow flats, especially during spring or summer," Williams reports. "In lakes you need to find

edges, humps, brush piles and/or ledges with eddies that break the current for the crappie. Since crappie don't like to fight current, in lakes when the current's running strong, crappie usually prefer to be close to but not necessarily holding on structure. Once the current starts running, the crappie only have to move a few feet to reach a current break or an eddy. However, river crappie, because they deal with current constantly, more than likely will be holding much closer to cover or an eddy area. Other places to find river crappie are at the bends of a river, where the current hits the bank, forcing it to slow down before it continues to travel on down the river. Or, the crappie will be behind sand bars that break the current and produce an eddy on the back side of the sand bar."

## The Effect of Water Temperature and Muddy Water

In January and February, river crappie will move from the mouths of creeks further



Another major difference in fishing for crappie in rivers and lakes is that the bottoms of rivers, including drop-offs, ledges, brush piles and logjams, will change much more often than that of lakes due to current and weather.

up the creeks, searching for shallow water when they're waiting on the water to warm up. Then they'll move into shallow water and spawn. On a lake, the spawn will start on the north end of a lake because warmer water will be there. In a river system, the water temperature will remain about the same. Wherever you pinpoint crappie spawning in creeks that feed the river, you can travel 5-10 miles down the river and find crappie spawning in the same places in other creeks.

"In the Southeast where I primarily fish, you rarely ever see a difference in water temperature for miles and miles down a river, but in a lake, the water temperature

#### The Differences in Crappie Fishing Rivers and Lakes



may be drastically different on the north end of the lake as compared to the southern section of the lake," Williams says.

The drainage systems that form the river you're fishing also play a major role in water temperature and when and where crappie will spawn. For instance, since the Mississippi River starts in the far north of the U.S. and runs all the way to Louisiana, the water there in the spring generally will be cooler than a river system that starts and Veteran crappie fisherman Billy Williams, pictured here, relies heavily on his son's Scott's knowledge and experience using the Humminbird side-scanning depth finders.

ends in Louisiana. The Mississippi River crappie generally will spawn later too.

In the Southeast, crappie in rivers often will move off the main river channel and into creeks to get into back waters with their shallow spawning flats to spawn much earlier than lake crappie. Lakes don't have those big, shallow, backwater areas that rivers do. Rivers are fed by many creeks, making the river water much dirtier and warmer than lake water after a rain. River water also for the most part clears up faster than lake water.

"Remember dirty water doesn't bother crappie as much as it does fishermen,"

"To catch crappie consistently, consider changing your tactics to fit the type of water you'll be fishing."

Williams mentions. "Crappie are accustomed to living and feeding in dirty water. Even when a lake muddies up, you often can go the lake's north end and find clear water. In a lake or a river, muddy water serves as an ambush point for crappie to attack bait. If you fish the edges of muddy water, oftentimes that's where most of the crappie in a lake or a river will be concentrated."

#### The Impact of Brush Piles

"When I put out brush piles in rivers, I'll use up to about 300 pounds of weight to hold each brush pile in place, due to the strong current in rivers," Williams explains. "In a lake, you don't have to use as much weight in a brush pile. Identifying places to put brush in lakes is much easier than in river systems, because in lakes, you can put brush out on points, ledges, flats and other bottom breaks not generally found in rivers.

"Lakes often home many more current breaks than river, and the bottom terrain is usually much different than that in river systems. I generally sink hardwood trees in 16 feet of water, whether I'm fishing rivers or lakes, since that's the depth I've learned where crappie want to hold in the hot summer and the cold winter months.

"To catch crappie consistently, consider changing your tactics to fit the type of water you'll be fishing. If you're accustomed to fishing rivers and beginning to fish lakes, understand the differences in rivers and lakes, and how crappie that live in them react to various water, weather and current conditions and the types of places where they'll choose to hold."









Vern' Cooking & Tidbits

Wrapping a Crappie in a Tortilla

#### Vernon Summerlin

Tortilla is Spanish meaning "small cake". A flour or wheat tortilla is a type of soft, thin flatbread made from finely ground wheat flour. Originally derived from the corn (maize) tortilla, this bread predates the arrival of Europeans to the Americas.

Flour tortillas are commonly prepared with meat, mashed potatoes, cheese and other ingredients. Tortillas are widely used in the United States, in recipes of Mexican origin. They are commonly used in burritos. As a testament to their popularity, the Tortilla Industry Association estimated Americans consumed approximately 85 billion tortillas in 2000 (not including tortilla chips). Tortilla chips are made from maize tortillas cut into wedges and then fried.

Some alternative ways tortillas can are eaten in the United States include combinations with beans and meat, apple cinnamon and sugar, or peanut butter and jelly. The results of such alternative dishes are often referred to as "wraps". Flour tortillas are also used to make fajitas, sandwiches, casseroles and stews, and hot dogs, among their numerous other uses. Many people from northern Mexico and some Mexicans in the southwestern United States eat tortillas as a staple food.

#### Spicy Crappie Tortillas with Sauce

10 crappie fillets (or how many are required for your dining) 10 tortillas (one per fillet) 1 cup cornmeal 1 teaspoon salt 1 teaspoon black pepper Canola oil Shredded cabbage Onion, finely chopped (optional) Cheese, shredded (optional) Hot sauce, ad lib (optional)

Mix corn meal, salt and pepper. Dredge fillets in dry mix and fry in hot oil (350-365 degrees F.) for about 6-7 minutes or until done. Drain on brown paper grocery sack, paper towels or draining rack. Save other ingredients for when you're ready to build your tortilla.

#### **Spicy Tortilla Sauce**

10 corn tortillas (or one per crappie fillet)

- 1 cup mayo
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 chipotle peppers (canned)
- 1/2 lime, fresh juice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

Blend mayo, sour cream, chipotle peppers, lime juice, salt and black pepper for about 1 minute in food processor. Chill unless it will be consumed shortly. Heat tortillas in

#### **Cool Crappie Soups**

a dry skillet or lightly spray with oil to soften tortillas (about 30 to 40 seconds). On a plate or platter, place one fillet in a tortilla, top with sauce and cabbage and roll it up. If you prefer any of the optional ingredients, add those before rolling the tortilla. Hot sauce can be sprinkled inside or on the outside of the rolled up tortilla. TIP: Test-taste and season your ingredients at every stage of cooking. If don't, by the time you're ready to plate your dish, it's probably too late to alter it.

#### Mississippi-Style Fried Fish

2-3 crapple fillets per person
2 cups of yellow enriched cornmeal
1/2 cup of self-rising flour
2 teaspoons of cayenne pepper
Salt\*
Tony Chachere's Creole Seasoning\*
Canola Oil
Lemon juice

Mix corn meal, flour, cayenne pepper, salt and Creole Seasoning in large sealable bowl with lid or in a sealable plastic bag. Taste-test dry ingredients before committing them to your fillets.

Wet fillets and cut to bite-size. Put handful of fish in bowl or plastic bag at a time to avoid getting the dry mix too wet. Cover fish completely. Fry fish in oil at 350-365 degrees F.

Cook until done. Sprinkle lightly with lemon juice, if desired. \*Be salt conscious: Tony Chachere's Creole Seasoning's first ingredient is salt.

TIP: Draining fried foods – fish, chicken, fries and other items – on a brown paper grocery sack saves paper towels. Some cooks prefer the paper sack and some say they use the brown paper because it more or less a family tradition – and it's cheaper. Some cooks prefer to drain their fried items on a rack. Paper towels work for me.







By Tim Huffman



A trip to Oklahoma last October with several of the Gene Larew/Bobby Garland pro staffers provided good access to several of the country's best fishermen. A few hours on the water with Jacob Wheeler, a 26 year old from Indianapolis,

Electronics is the key to catching any species of fish. Wheeler finds the right spot before he considers picking up his rod. Indiana, provided insight into the heart of a young, aggressive bass fisherman. Wheeler has successfully fished several of the pro circuits reaching levels many of his competitors only dream of reaching. His biggest claim to fame, so far, is winning the 2012 Forest Wood Cup Championship and being the youngest pro fisherman to reach \$1,000,000 in winnings.

So why feature a bass pro in CrappieNow Digital Magazine? Because Wheeler is an avid crappie fisherman. He says he has the opportunity to crappie fish about ten months a year but has to work trips in around a busy schedule.

"When I'm home I love getting out and catching crappie," says Wheeler. "Our lakes in the Midwest do not get the notoriety of the Mississippi lakes but crappie fishing can be good. I'll fish any season but really enjoy the spring."

His favorite technique in the spring is casting jigs up on a flat. He enjoys the fun of basic fishing with a jig or jig-float combo. His summers are filled with bass tournament but he gets back to the crappie in the fall and winter.

"Fall and winter are great times to catch crappie. When the water gets below 60 degrees the fish start bunching up. Of course it doesn't happen every time, but more times than not I'll catch 200 fish a day. Any fisherman has to enjoy that. For a bass guy crossing over that's a lot of fun."

Jigs include usually mean 1/16 and 1/32-ounce, but a larger 1/8 when necessary. As the water gets cold getting the jig to the bottom is important. He believes a lot of crappie fishermen miss this important point. In this situation he uses a 1/16-ounce on calm days and 1/8-ounce when it's windy.

"My retrieves vary. Last year they got on a pattern where a snap, snap, snap, pause would trigger a hit every time. But don't get hung up on just one type of retrieve and figure that's what they always want. Try different actions until you learn what the fish want on a particular day."

He keeps everything as simple as possible starting with his line. Mr. Crappie 4-pound highvis yellow line allows him to see the line while the small jig falls faster on light line and longer casts can be made. His favorite jig is a Bobby Garland Baby Shad in black-chartreuse or

#### Ft. Gibson OK Crappie...Now

through December Now is a good time to search the ledges following the crappie as they move into deeper water. In October they will still be relatively shallow in the 12 to 22 foot range. In December they'll be 25 to 30 feet deep along the ledges. The good news is they will usually be schooled up so catching numbers of fish isn't <u>unusual. On a good day you can</u> expect to catch 40 or 50 crappie. On a slow day here you can zero.

Both wood and rock formations are important. Find either one in the right depth zone and you'll hook up with fish. Baitfish is also an important factor right now. Without them you will not find the crappie.

When going deep it's best to stick with light 4- or 6-pound test line. A jig will drop faster, you'll have better control and you'll get more bites the lighter you go on pound test.

Natural colors or white works on Ft. Gibson, as do other colors. One trick locals like to do is glue the body to the jighead. When action is fast having a body that stays on the jig in the deep water is a big advantage. The Bobby Garland Baby Shad and Swim'R are both popular choices at Gibson.

#### **Bassin' Pro Jacob Wheeler Talks Crappie**



Bass Pro Jacob Wheeler earns his money bass fishing but often switches gears to crappie to unwind and have fun. blue-chartreuse. Those colors work almost anywhere that water has some stain.

#### **Crossing Over from Bass to Crappie**

"There are a lot of similarities that people should realize. Both fish are opportunistic feeders and they will set up where they can eat. Some of my best crappie spots are also my bass holes.

"My biggest thing is using electronics to help find the fish. I don't stop unless I see some fish. I will idle seven hours to fish one hour. I mean that. That's the problem with some fishermen that when they see a brushpile they are going to stop and fish it. But you need to know that fish are there. I'm going to look until I find the fish and not guess that a brushpile might have fish on it. My electronics include a 12-inch Garmin and a Humminbird Down Imaging unit. The Down Imaging really separates the structure and fish. Learning how to map and find contours is very important to both bass and crappie fishing."

When asked if other bass fishermen give him trouble about his crappie fishing, he said, "Oh my! In the fall the deer are moving and smallmouth are biting but I'll take a day and go crappie fishing. My buddies are telling me I'm crazy. I just tell them I'm catching 150 crappie a day. You may or may not see a deer all day but I know for sure I'll catch my 150 crappie. I love it.

#### More Wheeler Crappie Tips

"Pay attention to the time of day and the need to change colors. Bright blue skies might mean a Baby Shad in light or natural colors. It turns darker and they tear up blackchartreuse even in clear water. I've used six or eight colors before I figured it out."

"Abrushpile quits producing I'll actually ease back over it with Down Imaging to make sure the fish are still there. If they are there, I'll fish them and try to figure them out."

"Rock pile. Back home there will be a school of crappie on the rock pile. I immediately catch six or eight crappie and slow down. When Fred gets caught three of

#### **Bassin' Pro Jacob Wheeler Talks Crappie**

his buddies follow him out toward the boat. Do that eight, ten or twenty times and there are a lot of fish pulled off and scattered. I graph and there are not many fish left on the pile so I leave knowing I can come back later and catch more."

"Fronts and falling water bother crappie and bass. Crappie are really fickle. They can be patterned but difficult to figure out."

#### **Final Comment**

"I'm very blessed to have the opportunity to go fishing and do what I love," says Wheeler. "I'm in love with fishing in general whether it's bass, white bass, walleye, crappie or whatever. Fishing is enjoyable. My drive is trying to figure the fish out and catch them."

You can follow Jacob Wheeler on facebook and twitter.







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	CAT TEXAS	
AUGUST 20th	LAKE TAWAKONI	
DIVISION 1		
1. Richard James/Tommy Ezell		9.67
2. Gary Sims/Pat Martin		9.39
3. Mark Standridge/Darrell Standridge		8.72
BIG FISH		
1. Richard James/Tommy Ezell		1.59
DIVISION 2		
1. Clay Gann/Todd Froebe		8.65
2. Jimmy Milsap/Michael Perry		7.38
3. Mike Lane/Jerry LeBlanc		5.91
BIG FISH		
1. Richard James/Tommy Ezell		1.59
2. Donny Holder/Charles House		1.55
	CRAPPIENUTZ	
October 10th	LAKE BLACKSHEAR	
1. Steve Bridges/Al Whelchel		6.89
2. Mike Nipper		6.44
3. Clint Shipman/Brady Bowden		4.61
4. Richard Malcom Brice Roberts		1.68
5. Rodger Brown/Tony Underwood		0.56
BIG FISH		
1. Mike Nipper		1.41
IND	DIANNA SLAB MASTERS	
October 10th	RACOON LAKE	
1. Jason Snyder/Bob Raymer		3.33
2. Brett Cunningham/Keith Lucas		3.32
3. Rodney/Lloyd Hiler		3.3
4. Kirk Wyman/Walter Moore		3.15
5. Rick Daniels/Larry Yates		2.93
BIG FISH		
1. Jason Snyder/Bob Raymer		1.15

	KANSAS	
October 10th-11th	POMONA LAKE	
SATURDAY		
1. Frank Haidusek		
2. Dustin Hobbs		
3. Joe Bragg		
SUNDAY		
1. Dustin Hobbs/Logan Hurd		
2. Ryan/Todd		
3. Frank Haidusek/Don Beckstrom		
	CHATTANOOGA	
October 11th	CHESTER FROST PARK	
1. Brian Howard/Tina Howard		.11
2.Brandon Huskins/Will McGhee		.04
3. Bobby Ramsey/Tabathat Ramsey		.28
BIG FISH		-
1. Max Xenos/Darren Caughron	1	12
	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	
October 17th	WOODS RESERVOIR	
1. Dave Odell/Kane Jackson		.85
2. John Wells/Kenneth Cantrell		.67
3. Rodney Edwards/Coby Edwards	5	.48
BIG FISH		50
1. John Wells/Kenneth Cantrell	l	59
	CENTRAL ARKANSAS	
October 17th	LAKE DARDANELL	
1. Jason Westerberg/Jim Westerberg	10	.17
2. Dustin Harris/Michael Kimble	8	.72
3. Chris Chandler/Kyle Dines	8	.21
4. Russ Clarke/Greg London	7	.61
5. Jeff davis/Lamar Bunting	5	.82
BIG FISH		
1. Dustin Harris/Michael Kimble	1	79
2. Jason Westerberg/Jim Westerberg	1	61

	MAGNOLIA	
October 17th	ARKABUTLA	
1. Chaney Starnes/Matt Collier		13.66
2. Jeremy Aldridge/Clinr Egbert		13.49
3. Shelton Culpepper/David Thornton		13.46
4. Vic Finkley/Kim Gray		13.21
5. Terry Stewart/Larry Holmes		13.2
	CENTRAL OHIO	
October 18th	PAINT CREEK	
1. Rick Spence/Austin Spence		5.25
2. Kim Endsley/Troy Becker		4.39
3. Newsome/Newsome		4.3
4. Jerry Williams/Lynn Williams		4.18
5. Randal Tucker/Kendall Stamper		3.57
BIG FISH		
1. Newsome/Newsome		1.49
	EAST TENNESSEE	
October 18th	CHICKAMAUGA LAKE	
1. Wyatt Coleman/Madison Bean		8.27
2. Brian Howard/Mike Johnston		7.34
3. Scott Bunch/Neal Alvis		7.18
BIG FISH		
1. David Cordell		1.52



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

OCTOBER	1st	CENTRAL OHIO	ALUM CREEK LAKE	CLUB
OCTOBER	1st-2nd	KANSAS	TUTTLE CREEK LAKE	CLUB
OCTOBER	1st-2nd	INDIANNA	DAY1 SALAMONIE/DAY 2 MISSISSINEWA	CLASSIC
OCTOBER	2nd	GRAND LAKES	GRAND LAKE	CLUB
OCTOBER	8th	CAROLINA-CCA	TILLERY LAKE	CLUB
			CHESTER FROST PARK/Forgotten Child	
OCTOBER	8th	CHATTANOOGA	Fund	SPECIAL EVENT
OCTOBER	8th	CENTRAL ALABAMA	LAKES JORDAN/MITCHELL	QUALIFIER
OCTOBER	8th	COOSA RIVER	WEISS LAKE	CLUB
OCTOBER	9th	GRAND LAKES	GRAND LAKE	CLASSIC
OCTOBER	14th-15th	CAT TEXAS	LEWISVILLE	TSCC
OCTOBER	15th	CRAPPIENUTZ	WESTPOINT LAKE	CLUB
				BIG CRAPPIE CHAL-
OCTOBER	15th	CRAPPIE MASTERS	TRUMAN LAKE	LENGE
OCTOBER	15th	EAST TENNESSE	WATTS BAR LAKE	CLUB
OCTOBER	15th	MAGNOLIA	SARDIS LAKE	CLUB
OCTOBER	15th	CENTRAL OHIO	DELAWARE LAKE	CLASSIC/OPEN
OCTOBER	15th	NORTHEAST OHIO	BERLIN LAKE	CLUB
OCTOBER	16th	CENTRAL ILLINOIS	LAKE DECATUR	CLUB
OCTOBER	16th	WAPPAPELLO	WAPPAPELLO LAKE	CLUB
OCTOBER	22nd	CENTRAL ALABAMA	LAY LAKE	CHAMPOINSHIP
OCTOBER	22nd	COOSA RIVER	LOGAN MARTIN	CLUB
OCTOBER	22nd	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	TIM'S FORD	CLUB
OCTOBER	27th-29th	CRAPPIE USA	KENTUCKY/BARCLEY LAKES	CLASSIC
OCTOBER	29th	CENTRAL ILLINOIS	LAKE SHELBYVILLE	OPEN
OCTOBER	29th	NORTHEAST OHIO	SANDUSKY BAY	CLUB
OCTOBER	29th	SHOALS AREA	LITTLE BEAR	CLASSIC
OCTOBER	30th-31st	CRAPPIE USA	LAKE CUMBERLAND	SUPER
NOVEMBER	5th	CRAPPIENUTZ	LAKE EUFAULA	CLUB
NOVEMBER	5th	CAROLINA-CCA	LAKE JORDAN	CLUB

(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

SLAB MASTERS TOURNAMENT TRAIL -GA 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.williamscreekcrappieclub.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

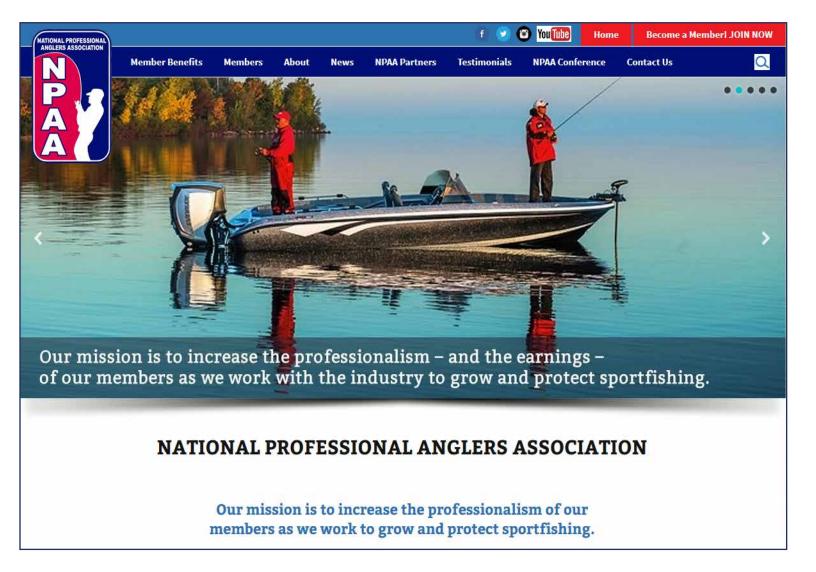
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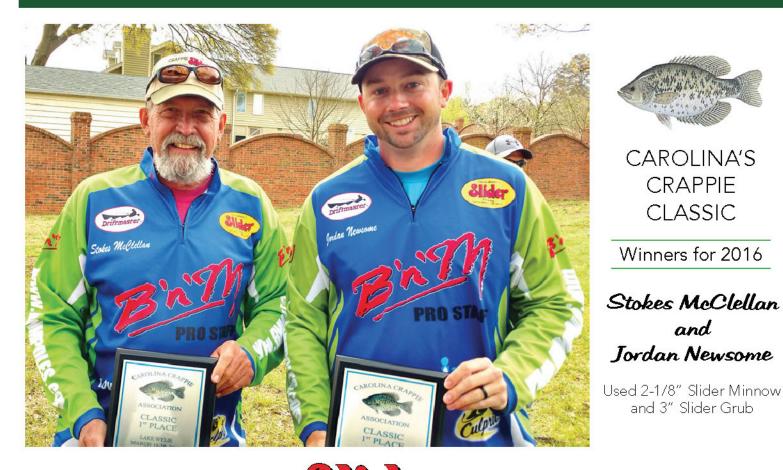
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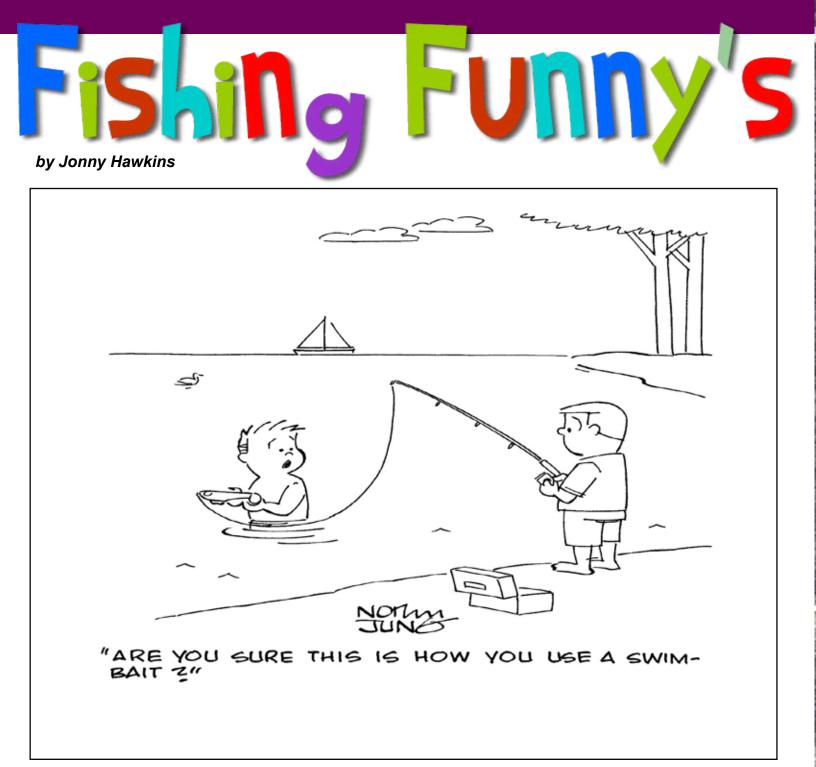
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