

CRAPPIE NOW! DIGITAL MAGAZINE

fishhound

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Soft and Hard Water Crappie



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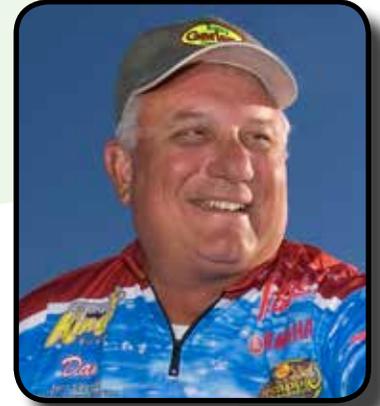
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Opening Cast

A new year is here and I am very excited to witness all the great fishing opportunities it will bring! A few of my goals for the year include reaching more of you through our digital presence to share information, techniques and issues impacting our fishing community.



Recently, I attended the National Professional Anglers Association annual conference in Wisconsin. Both Kevin Van Dam and Al Lindner headlined the conference speakers list and they gave profound presentations targeting the correct actions of a Professional Fisherman and the industry supporting it.

I highly recommend that any fisher person who desires to become a professional fisherman join the NPAA. Membership brings opportunities to watch and read about what is expected, how to work with sponsors, write an appropriate bio and proposal for sponsorships, etc. Just fishing national tournaments does not define a person as a professional. Fishing is the same as any other profession, to become a professional requires lots of work, ability to market/promote products and of course perform in the sport.

I believe that our crappie fishing population deserves the same priorities, recognition, funding and educational opportunities as any other. It is at the core of our national heritage, belief systems and rights. Crappie fishing embraces not only professionals but mainly family events and fun! It brings stress relief, accomplishment, the joy of the outdoors and memories to last a lifetime.

With this in mind, I have asked our editor, Tim Huffman, to work with me on not only helping you with the best how-to information but also to expand our kids focus in our digital zine.

God Bless and Good Fishing!
Dan Dannenmueller, Publisher

Cover Photo:
Terry Richard with two beautiful Florida crappie.
Ron Presley photo.

Seasonal Structure

by
Tim
Huffman



“Shooting gives you so much more accuracy and lets you get into spots you can’t get by casting or flipping.” Travis Bunting, 2017 American Crappie Trail Classic Champ.

Winter dock shooting may be foreign to many crappie chasers. Some fishermen don’t have lakes with docks while others choose to fish in warmer months or simply don’t know about the dock action.

Docks are usually hit-and-miss any time of year. Fish are there or they’re not. It doesn’t take long to find out by fishing or with side

Travis Bunting loads the rod to shoot a floating dock. It takes timing and practice to shoot but no other technique allows the jig to be put in small openings at long distances.

imaging electronics.

Docks

There are four major dock types: floating; floating with a roof; piling; and piling with a roof.

Fishing can be different at each one.



A dock with no roof provides less shade but that's not always a bad thing in the winter. These docks are easier to fish so may be a top pick for a weekend fisherman. Flipping or short casts can be used for working along a boat or walkway. Floating docks offer more floatation to heat up with the sun. Piling style docks give the most underwater vertical cover.

Covered docks provide walkways, boats and underwater cover. Sunlight might be limited but is an important factor. When the sun is high, the shaded areas near the sunny spots can be good.

A third type dock is a covered or uncovered piling dock on lakes or rivers with winter drawdown. When water is down it places more space between the water surface and the walkways giving more room to get baits into

Typical shooting baits are 1/32- or 1/16-ounce jigs.

Keeping a distance in clear water is sometimes necessary. Also, the fish may be hanging near the corners of a dock.

prime locations. Water may be shallow but it will warm quickly drawing baitfish and crappie, especially when the dock is near deep water.

Pitching & Casting

Fish are suspended somewhere between the bottom and the top of the surface so along with shooting, a more simple pitching or casting technique can be often be used. Open docks are the easiest for these techniques but the edges and under pontoons can be worked under covered docks with boats.

Pitching and casting along the walkways or underwater covers are the most basic of fishing. All depths must be checked but after a couple of crappie are caught at one depth the remainder of the presentations can focus upon the strike zone. Keying in quickly on the



More Winter Dock Tips

>Don't hesitate fishing the cables running up from anchoring points to a floating dock. These are often used by crappie as cover.

>Keeping a bow in the line when using a lightweight jig gives a good strike indicator. Any jumping of the line indicates a strike.

>In general, the further back you get a jig the better the chance of catching a big crappie.

>A lightweight head and a big plastic body gives a slow fall rate. Great shooting jigs do not easily slide down or foul the hook. They skip. A few good examples are: Muddy Water Jig; Bobby Garland Shooter; and Brewer Crappie Slider Grub.

>No matter the season, a cold front will slow the bite.

>The clearer the water the further a crappie will come to a bait.

>Put a tube body inside the head or use a solid plastic body.

>A good rod is important when shooting. It should be sensitive while being somewhat stiff to allow power shooting of very light jigs. Example, BnM Sharpshooter Six.

>Electronics can be huge for winter dock shooting. A side scan is a good way to eliminate many unproductive docks.

>Crappie may be at two feet from the surface but deep water under or near the dock or very close is important.

>Repeat casts to a spot that produces.

>Don't stay with a dock that is not producing. There are others that will be productive.



Obstacles are everywhere around a dock so it is not unusual for a fisherman to go to a fish to get it landed.

strike zone is important because a float can be used to maintain the right depth.

Baits with actions tails can be good but in the cold water a tube jig, shad with a straight tail or other less-action bait might be best. presenting different baits will show which the fish prefer.

Probe corners and areas under the dock. Shade can be critical but so can sunshine in the winter. Hit both sun and shade areas at each dock.

Pitching equipment includes a 7- to 10-foot pole rigged with a spinning reel. A lightweight, sensitive pole is very important for less fatigue, easy handling and maximum sensitivity. A shorter rod is best for short



When a lake is pulled down a few feet during the winter, it's easier to get a bait under a piling dock.

pitching and casting while a long pole is best for pitching and flipping.

Shooting

Shooting allows a jig be shot back into the darkest reaches where big crappie often hide. Shooting 25- to 30-feet is possible when room allows. A jig can be shot between floatation that has a 6-inch opening under a walkway by an experienced shooter.

Shooting is nothing more than a bow and arrow technique. Line is released to let out about three or four feet of line. The reel's bail remains open and the line from the reel is held with the pointer finger against the rod to hold it in place. The jig is grabbed by the head, hook kept clear of the fingers, and then pulled back. The rod is held pointed at the target with the jig underneath and pulled tight to bend the rod. The rod is aimed, the jig released and the line released to keep the bait close to the water with a fast trajectory. It takes practice but it doesn't take long to get a basic level of proficiency.

Typical shooting baits are 1/32- or 1/16-ounce jigs. The depth of the fish is a major factor for jig weight. Although winter crappie are considered to live in deep water homes, the heating of floatation might have fish at six inches to three feet from the surface because of the warmer water around the floatation. Other times the fish might be suspended or on bottom. Six-pound test line is a good size for most waters to give bait control while offering enough strength.

 - Tim Huffman

First Impressions ...Into to the St. Johns River

by Ron Presley

The first visit to a new body of water produces feelings of anxiety and hope. The anxiety comes because of the unknown factors at a new location that will impact the fishing. The hope comes from the fact that most crappie anglers are naturally optimistic and start their day with expectations of the best day ever.

When the American Ethanol Team of Terry Richard and Casey Rayner travelled to Deland, FL for their first look at the St. Johns River they not only discovered good fishing, but the beauty of the river as well.

“Traveling the country in chase of the paper lip grey ghost is always an adventure,” said Richard. “You never know what to expect when you approach a new body of water. For Casey Rayner and myself, this was our first time to wet a line on the St. Johns. What a beautiful body of water it is. It has a variety of things to fish. Ledges, flats, creek channels, plenty of lily pads, and miles of beautiful river banks with laydown structure to fish.”

Having the luxury of fishing the same body of water over an extended period of time can pay big dividends in locating fish and identifying what their biting. Richard and Casey were in town for a Crappie Masters event and planned a few days of pre-fishing the river.

The methodical approach that they

apply to new waters is a great lesson for other anglers. It includes observation, technology and experimentation. Learning the lesson they offer will help recreational anglers catch more crappie.

“Within the first hour we had two large black crappies ...”

Observation and Technology

One of Yogi Berra’s famous Yogism’s says, “You can observe a lot just by watching.” The statement is true in crappie fishing. Observing and making notes of the opportunities presented by a body of water can help anglers catch more crappie.

“Any time you launch your boat in new water, it is always best to search an area thoroughly before fishing in the blind,” instructed Richard. We do the same thing with any body of water. We spend the first day, using our Humminbird, graphing and observing the areas to fish. On the St. Johns we spent most of our first day graphing and marking creek channels, ledges and brush piles.”



The continuing improvements in sonar technology have changed the game for crappie fisherman. For tournament anglers like Richard and Rayner it has become a necessity to be competitive. For recreational anglers it has improved their ability to put dinner in the boat consistently.

After completing their homework of graphing and observing potential spots, and making notes, Richard and Rayner turn their attention to experimenting with different fishing methods. The St. Johns lends itself to most fishing methods, so the challenge is to find out which one works best on any given day.

“Even though we used longlining to catch the majority of our specs, we also caught an abundance of crappie single pole jigging and spider rigging,” said Richard.

Experimentation

“We started our St. Johns River fishing

Local anglers Toni and Don Collins are well aware to the great single pole jigging available on the St. Johns

with one of our favorite methods,” offered Richard. “Longline trolling. This is a method of pulling jigs from multiple poles behind the boat at speeds from .8 to 1.4 mph. Different weighted jig heads and speed put your bait at different levels in the water column. Colors, speed, and size of jig heads are changed frequently until you dial in to the precise combination that works that day.”

“Within the first hour we had two large black crappies,” reported Richard. “Both tipped the scales at more than 2.5 pounds. We felt good about that area so we moved on to spider rigging.”

Spider rigging, or pushing, is a method that uses multiple poles deployed out the





front of the boat. Anglers can easily control speed, depth, lure color and size of the presentation. Most crappie anglers agree, this is the best method available for catching large numbers of crappie. Another option is to tip the jig with minnows. Sometimes the crappies want it with minnows and sometimes they don't. Some anglers swear by the old reliable minnow and use straight double minnow rigs.

"We spider rigged the edges of the creek channels," said Richard. "The baits were pushed in 10-12 feet of water while experimenting with different depths. The method caught good numbers of crappie, but they had no size to them. We spent two days going back and forth between longlining and spider rigging."

On the third day Richard and Rayner decided they wanted to "feel the thump." They turned to their self-declared favorite method of catching crappie — single pole jigging. The St. Johns offers miles of lily pads, grass and laydowns to fish vertically by dipping jigs extended from long jigging poles.

Spider rigging is a very effective method for catching crappie on the St. Johns River, but so is single pole jigging. Note the pads and cover along the shoreline just waiting to be dipped.

The length of the pole is a personal choice, but most anglers like to dip with 10 foot or longer poles. It all depends on how far away from the boat you want to fish. A long pole gives the advantage of covering a larger area from a single location.

The crappie will often be in schools and once you find them under the pads you can return to the same location for up to two weeks and find them right there in that same spot.

Some crappie anglers run the boat along the side of the pads and dip baits up in them. Others run the boat right up in the middle of the pads and fish all around the boat. When the crappies are in the cover it is up close and personal fishing. You may only have 2 or 3 feet of line between the rod

tip and the lure.

The idea is to find a hole in the cover that you can drop a jig in. For small openings, grasp the line just above the reel and pull the jig all the way up to the tip. Place the tip over the opening and let go of the line. The jig falls vertically through the spot you choose. Carefully raise and lower the jig by hand, always being careful to “feel” the underlying structure and work your way around it to prevent tangles.

When you feel the crappie hit, that’s the thump that crappie anglers talk about, and the signal to set the hook.

“To us, single-poling is the most exciting way to catch crappie,” stated Richard. “We fished lilies and structure up and down the river. Most of our quality fish came in 6 to 7 feet of water on the edges of the pads closest to points.”

Final Thoughts

Crappie anglers normally keep a close eye on the weather forecast because a change in weather conditions can change the bite. Richard and Rayner’s week ended with such a change. The hard work they put in pre-fishing the river was altered when colder temperatures and high winds arrived in Deland. Almost like clockwork a weather front arrived just in time for tournament day. As crappie anglers know, that usually changes everything and will likely change the strategy they worked hard to establish.

“Like every Crappie Masters tournament we ever fished, weather threw us a curve ball,” joked Richard. “We felt good going into tournament day until we watched the forecast. Because of the dramatic temperature drop and high winds, our fish moved. We fished all of our methods in all of our good areas and produced nothing but



Casey Rayner displays a pair of nice St. John River crappie

small fish. We struggled through the two-day tournament and we were actually happy to have 14 weigh fish.”

“Florida’s St. Johns River is a fisherman’s dream,” concluded Richard. “Our tournament weights didn’t reflect our week on St. Johns River. We had an amazing fishing adventure experiencing the beauty of the Florida black water. Amazing is actually an understatement.”

“The wildlife, the scenery, the different possibilities to catch a crappie, and the variety of techniques you can use to catch fish, all make the river a bucket list destination. In my opinion, the St. Johns River might hold the most beautiful black crappie in the nation. We are excited about returning in January of 2018.”

 - Ron Presley



Crappie NOW - Rigging
Electronics on the Trolling Motor

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Our mission is to increase the professionalism - and the earnings - of our members as we work with the industry to grow and protect sportfishing.

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Crappie Basics #155

Specific Targets

“February and March are good times to spider rig. A lot of fishermen think spider rigging is putting down baits on eight poles and drift around. That’s fine for them if it works but we catch more fish by targeting specific items. At least 99-percent of the time we are targeting something.

“We look for ledges, cover or in an open water lake like Washington it will be shad. If there isn’t something on the screen we won’t fish it.

“Spring winds can be a problem when spider rigging, so to stay in a spot in rough waves we hold a pole in each hand.” -Kevin Jones

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They're Different Under the Ice

by Vic Attardo

Some guys like their distilled grains “neat” -- meaning not diluted or mixed with anything. Then again other guys like their refreshments “on the rocks” -- with a couple of frozen cubes.

Crappie take it both ways. They can swim around plain water, very neat, or they can have so much ice atop their heads you and I can walk right over them. Imagine that, being able to walk a top a crappie.

In the soft-water season, we troll for crappie, we dock-shoot for crappie, we pick and plunk them in heavy weeds, and we spider rig off the bow and stern. But when it comes to the ice time you can leave those methods in the boat. Ice time is when crappie seem a completely different fish.

Even the Geico sloth is too fast for dead-sticking.

Bunching it up, iced-in crappie are not going to chase down a Road Runner or whack a wiggling crankbait or rise up for a floating minnow plug. But they will take jigs.

Oh my do they take jigs under the ice! Indeed jigs, either plain or with live bait or soft plastics, and sometimes just live bait, is what you'll be using if you want to catch crappie under the ice.

Then there's the speed thing. In the wet season, crappie chase bait. No doubt about it. I've seen them gather up and run down

a school of minnows like lions after zebras, and I've seen lions chase zebras.

But in the ice season, crappie move in slow motion if they move much at all. Crappie under the ice act more like slow-motion jello. They're the bananas and apple slices suspended in the cold jello mold.

Under the ice crappie are completely different, tactically, technically and metabolically. If you don't want to take my word for it, travel with an ice angler toting an underwater camera. With a high definition color screen or even a camera connected to an iPad, you can watch the slow-motion capers of crappie under the ice.

I remember the first time I was standing in a dark hut when a friend pulled out an iPad and lowered the water-proof lens. Besides all of us whistling about the advanced technology, we got excited as heck watching some slab come out of the darkness and slowly, and I do mean slowly, slink up to the jig then gingerly suck it in like it might or might not be poison.

We could practically look into the eyes of that fish and see the decision making process change from “may be not” to “why not” to “that dinner is mine.” This scenario is something you're just not going to see when cruising with your spider rig.

So the first real lesson in what makes crappie different under the ice is speed.

This is a good time for great fishing and fun in the northern states.



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Actually their lack of speed, their slow-motion selection of whether or not to take a bait.

For equal time I'll give you one example where that fact is Not true under the ice -- because there is always an exception to a rule.

When you've drilled a hole and first drop your jig to crappie level and before you can spell c-r-a-p-p-i-e, your rod is forced down and the fight is on. This crappie really did slash a reaction strike, but those are few and very far between when ice fishing.

You can also study the slowness of iced-in crappie on your sonar. These days more ice anglers have flasher units than any other contemporary piece of ice equipment. And what they are seeing are slow-moving red (or green) lines that indicate a crappie has slid into the sonar's cone of vision and then the fish practically licking at the bait.

An angler can't make a slower presentation than dead-sticking. Even the Geico sloth is too fast for dead-sticking.

What flashers have taught winter crappie anglers is the need to jig responsibly. Whereas we used to expend a lot of arm strength with mighty exaggerations of the short ice rod: lifting the rod along the face of the imaginary clock, from seven to eleven. That just isn't done much any more.

By studying the jello-slow pace of crappie on the sonar, and the camera, most jigging is now done with short shakes and wiggles of the rod tip. Sure you can occasionally bounce the rod tip like a basketball but it's not the contemporary thing.

Of course, the rule exception is the quick rise and sudden fall of a jig to initially attract a cold crappie from a distance. But

when it actually comes time for the strike, the follow-up is a confined, seemingly steady jiggle of the jig and plastic.

In the wet water season, say the height of summer, you can lift your jig high along a tall green weed then let it speed fall into their wheelhouse for a strike. But when it comes to iced crappie, it's better to act like a melting snowman. Lower the jig at a snowman's pace. Slow and steady wins the day.

A technique that demonstrates the lack of speed, namely the slower metabolism of iced in crappie, is one called "dead-sticking."

An angler can't make a slower presentation than the aforementioned dead-sticking. Even the Geico sloth is too fast for dead-sticking. In fact when I first saw the commercial with the sloth drawing a picture I thought the picture was going to be of dead sticking.

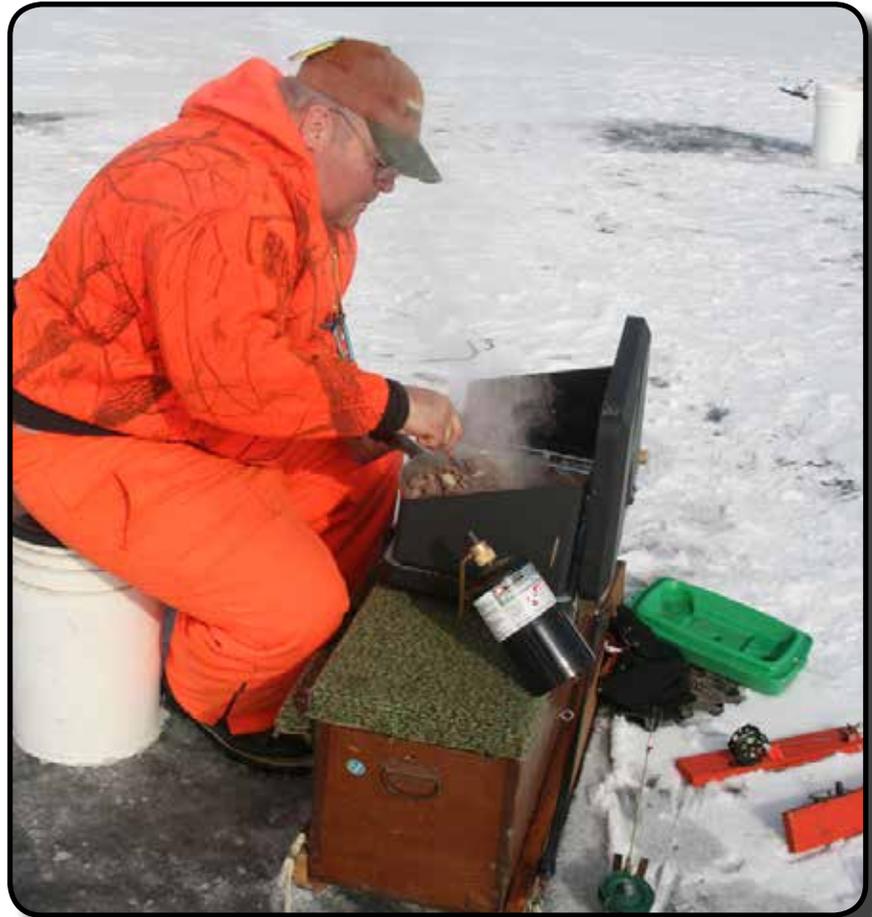
Dead-sticking is done like this: one puts a short rod either across the lid of a bucket and presses the bucket handle down over the reel so it all won't slide off, or one uses a wire frame contraption which stands the rod up at an angle.

After dropping the bait into crappie land, the rod is left entirely alone. Not wiggled, not jiggled, not touched. It's best to do this with a larva bait rather than a bit of soft plastic as there is more attraction with a live larva. But the effectiveness of dead-sticking clearly shows the slowness of crappie moving under the ice.

Just be sure that as you fish, you're positioned close to the stationary rod -- for when a crappie does strike, it doesn't pull the rod away in slow motion.

Each winter there are a few times, and a few places, where I can actually sight-fish for iced-in crappie. That doesn't happen when the water is soft and algae green.

Over a depth of about 7 to 15 feet, in winter clear water, I can watch crappie come across the ice hole and belly up to the bait. At such times when a couple of crappie are moving in, I can pull the hook away from a



You can't do this while spider rigging but on the ice you can "chase" crappie with a hot stove and a venison burger.

small fish and wait until a bigger calico noses close.

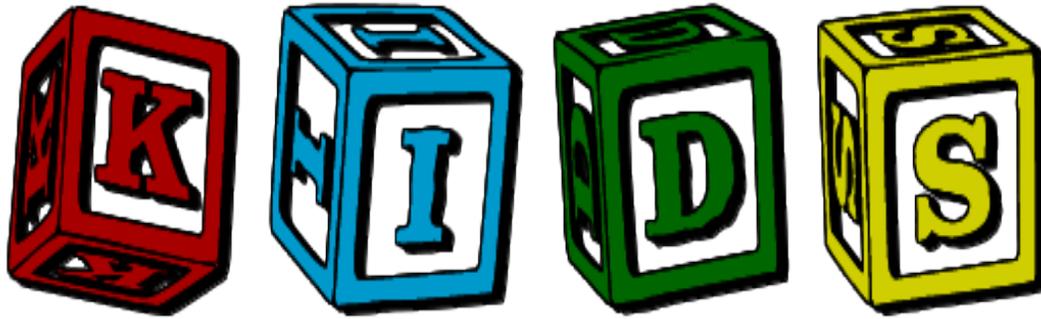
That's a tactical thing that makes iced-in crappie a different fish. All these differences noted, there is one thing that is deadly equal between wet-water crappie fishing and iced crappie. I'm talking about setting the hook.

When giving them the point, there's no need to hesitate, or go slow. Iced-in crappie can expel a bait as fast as any spring or summer fish. When a winter crappie strikes -- when you see the sonar's bait line engulfed by another color -- you don't hesitate.

With iced-in crappie: Strike hard! Strike fast! And in the meantime, keep your hands warm!

 - Vic Attardo

CRAPPIE



“Together helping our children catch their dreams”



Kids Fishing and Education announced Emily Stocking as the new Managing Director. Her parents owned Everhart’s Tackle and Sporting Goods most of her childhood so she grew up in the outdoor industry. “I have fond memories of hearing fish stories, stocking shelves and bagging jigs. The smell of garlic still takes me back.

Stocking has helped with the kids program for several years. “I have been excited to watch it grow. Kids will remember

time in the outdoors with adults far more than toys they were given or the video games they’ve played. And when we connect that time with prizes and scholarships, it’s even more rewarding.”

The events are offered at no cost to the kids, so donors are needed to support the mission. Individuals and businesses are encouraged to help this 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Contact Emily Stocking at: kidsfishingandeducation@gmail.com or 660-351-1189.

2018 Crappie USA Trail



Schedule of Events

Logan Martin, AL	02/17/18
Weiss Lake, AL	02/24/18
Lake Wylie, NC	03/03/18
TennTom, MS	03/03/18
Lake Guntersville, AL	03/10/18
Lake of Egypt, IL	03/16-17/18
Old Hickory, TN	03/23-24/18
Pickwick Wilson, AL	03/31/18
Lk Cumberland, KY	04/07/18
Barkley-Ky Lakes, KY	04/13-14/18
Green River Lake, KY	04/20-21/18
Gmd Lk St Marys, OH	04/27-28/18
Cave Run, KY	05/04-05/18
Miss. Sal., IN	05/12/18
Monroe, IN	05/19/18
Carlyle, IL	09/22/18
2018 Early Bird @ Barkley-KY Lakes, KY	11/02-03/18

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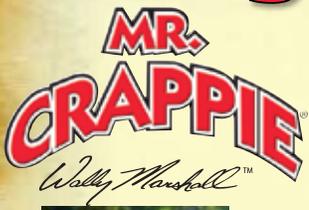
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by Charles Bunting

In February, if my home lake, Ozarks in Missouri, has ice off of it, I'll be shooting docks. Sunshine on docks will cause the water to warm around the floatation. The dock may be in 20 feet of water with fish at one or two feet from the surface.

I'll shoot a 1/32-ounce jig with a 2- to 2.5-inch bait, probably a Muddy Water. That size jig will give a slow fall. The trick with the presentation is slow down and slow down some more. The bite may be aggressive but the fish want the presentation very slow.

Another structure is chunk rock in three to five feet of water. The crappie will move up shallow to the warmer water due to the solar heating of the rocks. I'll pitch a freefall jig or use a slip-float. The slip-float forces me to slow down because the line will pull up through the float is anything more than a slow hop is used. The float is still more than being hopped or pulled.

Charles and Travis Bunting won the 2017 American Crappie Trial Classic and they have Crappie USA and Crappie Masters Classic wins. Some of their sponsors include Power Pole, Humminbird, Ranger Boats, Missouri Gold Fish, and many others.



THE OR12 IS USED BY MORE CHAMPIONSHIP CRAPPIE ANGLERS THAN ANY OTHER BOARD!

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An advertisement for Off Shore Tackle. It features a yellow background with a large yellow board (the OR12) and several red flags on poles. The text is bold and black. There are social media icons for YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. The website URL is at the bottom.

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A person in a red boat is shown using Driftmaster equipment. The boat is on a body of water.

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An advertisement for Driftmaster. It features a red boat on a body of water with a person in a red shirt. The text is bold and black. There is a logo for Driftmaster and an American flag. The company name and phone number are at the bottom.



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The SHSS72n is a spinning rod with the same sensitivity and feel of the jig pole series. Improvements include Dyna-Flo guides for smooth line retrieval, and a cork knob handle for outstanding balance and feel. Historically one of the most popular rods on the water, the SHSS72n is still supple, strong and sensitive.



Whitey Outlaw DOUBLE DUTY

Get back to "Fishing The Basics" with Whitey Outlaw. This Medium-Action rod is for big heavy hybrid bream, monster shellcrackers & any size crappie. It's perfectly balanced with a comfortable foam handle for all-day fishing - no reel needed! It features a tough & lightweight Graphite Blank, and one tip eyelet, with one reinforced Tie Down Guide.



B'n'M
FISHING

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Crappie Basics #156**Fishing the Stems and Cypress**

“Beginning sometime in February and going until mid-March when the lily pads top out, a fisherman can cast at Reelfoot. The stems are great. It’s a good time to catch big crappie. Probably my personal best on the lake was a limit doing this and it included five over two pounds. I rank Reelfoot high because you can catch fish there year round.

“Later, you can pitch a slip-cork, live minnow and small split shot close to the roots of a cypress tree. The right depth is just under the roots of the bell.” –Ronnie Capps





Crappie-n-Grits

The word "grits" derives from the Old English word "grytt," meaning coarse meal that originated in the Southern United States but now is available world-wide. Grits are made from boiled coarsely ground corn. Grits are usually served as a breakfast dish but are popular as a dinner entrée, crappie and grits, shrimp and grits. Hominy grits are a type of grits made from corn with the germ removed and treated with an alkali in a process called nixtamalization. Hominy is popular in recipes ranging from soups to casseroles.

Grits

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup grits
- 2 1/4 cups whole milk
- 2 cups water
- Salt and pepper

Melt 1 tablespoon butter in medium saucepan over medium heat. Add grits and cook, stirring often for about 3 minutes. Add milk, water and 3/4 teaspoon salt. Increase heat to medium-high and bring to boil. Reduce heat to low, cover, simmer, whisking often until thick and creamy. Remove from heat, stir in remaining 2 tablespoons butter and add salt and pepper to taste. Cover and keep warm.

Crappie

- 1 1/2 pounds of 2-inch chunks of fillets
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 2 1/4 cups water
- 3 slices bacon, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Salt and pepper
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon hot sauce, plus extra for serving
- 4 scallions, sliced thin

Melt 1 tablespoon butter in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat. Stir in tomato paste and cook for 30 seconds. Add water and bring to boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Save tomato stock. Wipe out skillet with paper towels, place bacon in the skillet and cook over medium-low heat until crisp. Increase heat to medium-high and stir in crappie chunks, garlic, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper. Cook until crappie nearly cooked through, about 2 minutes. Transfer fish mixture to bowl. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in now-empty skillet over medium-high heat. Whisk in flour and cook for 1 minute. Slowly whisk tomato stock until incorporated. Bring to boil, reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until thickened slightly. Stir in crappie mixture, cover and cook until fish are cooked through. Take off heat, stir in lemon juice, hot sauce and remaining 1 tablespoon butter. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve over grits, sprinkled with scallions and add extra shot of hot sauce to taste.

Pepped-Up Shredded Hash Browns

About potatoes: there are nearly 4,000 varieties of potatoes. Potatoes have been bred into many varieties and each has its own particular agricultural and/or culinary attributes. Varieties are categorized into a few main groups; russets, reds, whites, yellows (also called Yukons) and purples. These are based on common characteristics.

For culinary purposes, varieties are often differentiated by their waxiness. Floury or mealy (baking) potatoes have more starch than waxy (boiling) potatoes. The distinction may also arise from variation in the comparative ratio of two potato starch compounds.

I've grown a number of varieties in my garden over a couple of decades and I prefer Yukon Gold, which is the potato called for in this month's recipe.

- 4 teaspoons salt
- 2 1/2 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and shredded
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 dashes of cayenne pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup canola oil

Use shredding disk in your food processor or you can use the large holes of a box grater prep shred potatoes. Spray vegetable oil in 8-inch round cake pan. In large bowl add salt and whisk 2 cups water until salt dissolves. Place potatoes in salt water to coat. Drain in colander and place 2 1/2 cups of potatoes in center of clean dish towel. Gather towel ends and twist tightly to wring out excess moisture. Transfer dried potatoes to large bowl. Mix black and cayenne peppers and coat potatoes. Microwave potatoes until very hot and slightly softened, about 5 minutes. Place remaining potatoes in towel and wring out excess moisture. Add to microwaved potatoes and toss with two forks until mostly combined (potatoes may not combine completely, that's OK). Continue to microwave, stir at 3 minutes and continue microwaving until potatoes are hot and form a cohesive potato cake when pressed with spatula, about 6 minutes. Transfer potatoes into a cake pan and let cool about 5 minutes (until no longer steaming). Lightly oil your hands and press contents firmly into the cake pan making a smooth disk. Refrigerate about 25 minutes or until cool. If you refrigerate longer than 30 minutes or overnight, wrap the pan in plastic after the potatoes have cooled. To cook: heat 2 tablespoons oil in 10-inch skillet over medium heat. When oil is hot, flip the potato cake onto a plate and slide into pan. Swirl pan occasionally while cooking to evenly distribute the oil, preventing sticking. Bottom of potatoes should become brown and crispy in about 6 to 8 minutes. If not browning after 3 minutes, turn heat up a little. If browning too quickly, reduce heat. Slide potatoes on to large plate, then invert onto a second plate after heating the remaining 2 tablespoons oil. Slide brown side of potato cake up into skillet. Cook as before, occasionally swirling pan distributing the oil. The bottom of cake should be brown and crispy in 5 to 6 minutes. Slide hash browns onto a plate and invert onto serving plate. Cut to serve in wedges.

TIP: The quick-pickle. Whisk a little salt and sugar into some white vinegar. Pour over thinly sliced raw vegetables. Wait 20 minutes to eat.

EAST TENNESSEE CRAPIE CLUB

DOUGLAS LAKE

DECEMBER 16th

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| 1. Scott Bunch/Neil Alvis | 7.93 |
| 2. Mike Willard | 6.99 |
| 3. Jim Huber/Tim Irwin | 6.53 |
| 4. Darren Caughron/Tracy Caughron | 5.78 |
| 5. Tim King | 5.54 |

BIG FISH

- | | |
|-----------------|------|
| 1. Mike Willard | 1.92 |
|-----------------|------|

MIDDLE TENNESSEE CRAPPIE CLUB

NORMANDY

DECEMBER 16th

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Larry/Robert | 10.84 |
| 2. Rodney Edwards/Coby Edwards | 6.51 |
| 3. Joey Davis | 5.32 |
| 4. Toby/Matt | 4.97 |
| 5. Terry Spray/Tyler Spray | 4.38 |

BIG FISH

- | | |
|----------------------------|------|
| 1. Terry Spray/Tyler Spray | 2.43 |
|----------------------------|------|

SOUTHWEST MISSOURI

LAKE OF THE OZARKS

DECEMBER 16th

- | | |
|--------------------|------|
| 1. Frederick/Ash | 9.41 |
| 2. Wiethop/Wiethop | 9.35 |
| 3. Yates/Stoner | 8.14 |
| 4. Stoner/White | 8.02 |
| 5. Surface/Helton | 7.92 |

BIG FISH

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Frederick/Ash | 1.8 |
|------------------|-----|



PEACH STATE CRAPPIE CLUB

LAKE SINCLAIR

DECEMBER 16th

1. Scott Williams/Jacob Sapp	9.78
2. Ricky Willis/Troy Thiel	7.26
3. Chance Kelley/Joey Clark	6.37

BIG FISH

1. Scott Williams/Jacob Sapp	1.83
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CAROLINA CRAPPIE ASSOCIATION

LAKE WYLIE

JANUARY 13th

1. Potts/Shore	11.56
2. Hawkins/McGuirt	11.07
3. Duke/Huffstetler	9.95
4. Cannon/Cannon	9.59
5. Sprouse/Wilson	9.43

BIG FISH

1. Hawkins/McGuirt	2.29
2. Robertson/Jackson	2.28

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MAGNOLIA CRAPPIE CLUB

OKATIBEE LAKE

JANUARY 13th

1. Vic Finkley/Kim Kennedy	7.11
2. Shane Moody/Rick Moody	6.04
3. Clint Egbert/Jeremy Alsrige	4.98
4. Kody Hamilton/Randi Hamilton	4.91

BIG FISH

1. Vic Finkley/Kim Kennedy	1.67
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BEAVER LAKE CRAPIE ASSOC.

BEAVER LAKE

JANUARY 20th

1. Matt Phillips	5.53
2. Ron Walker/Cody Smith	4.71
3. Jeff Eden/Seth Eden	3.9

BIG FISH

1. Matt Phillips	1.4
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CRAPPIE ANGLERS OF TEXAS

SANDLIN/CYPRESS SPRINGS

JANUARY 20th

1. Tommy Ezell/Richard James	13.72
2. Todd Froebe/Clay Gann	13.27
3. Rhonda Reeve/Jay Don Reeve	12.94
4. Todd Box/Travis Ainsworth	11.88
5. Dustin Junell/Larry Junell	10.86

BIG FISH

1. Tommy Ezell/Richard James	2.38
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FEB	2nd - 3rd	CRAPPIE MASTERS	LAKE TAIQUIN	Championship
FEB	3rd	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	WOODS RESERVOIR	CLUB
FEB	10th	CAROLINA CRAPPIE ASSOC.	HIGH ROCK/TBA	CLUB
FEB	10th	CENTRAL ALABAMA CRAPPIE CLUB	LAKE MARTIN/WIND CREEK	CLUB
FEB	10th	CRAPPIE NUTZ	WEST POINT	OPEN
FEB	10th	MAGNOLIA	WOLF LAKE	CLUB
FEB	11th	CHATTANOOGA	CHESTER FROST PARK	CLUB
FEB	17th	BEAVER LAKE CRAPPIE ASSOC.	BEAVER LAKE	CLUB
FEB	17th	CRAPPIE ANGLERS OF TEXAS	LAKE LEWISVILLE	QUALIFIER
FEB	17th	CRAPPIE USA	LOGAN MARTIN	CLUB
FEB	17th	EAST TN CRAPPIE CLUB	FT LOUDON LAKE	CLUB
FEB	17th	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	TIMS FORD	CLUB
FEB	17th	SHOALS CRAPPIE	GUNTERSVILLE LAKE	
FEB	17th	WAPPAPELLO	WAPPAPELLO LAKE	CLUB
FEB	23rd - 24th	CRAPPIE MASTERS	LAKE D'ARBONNE	Championship
FEB	24th	CRAPPIE USA	WEISS LAKE	CLUB
FEB	24th	MAGNOLIA	EAGLE LAKE/CHOTARD	CLUB
MAR	3rd	CRAPPIE MASTERS	WEISS LAKE	Championship
MAR	3rd	CRAPPIE USA	LAKW WYLIE & TENN-TOM	CLUB
MAR	3rd	HOI CRAPPIE CLUB	SANGCHRIS LAKE	CLUB
MAR	4th	CHATTANOOGA	CHESTER FROST PARK	CLASSIC
MAR	10th	CENTRAL ALABAMA CRAPPIE CLUB	LAKE JORDAN/BONNERS POINT	CLUB
MAR	10th	CRAPPIE MASTERS	LAKES WASH,LEE PARADISE FERG. WHITT.	Championship
MAR	10th	CRAPPIE NUTZ	BLACK SHEAR	OPEN
MAR	10th	CRAPPIE USA	LAKE GUNTERSVILLE	CLUB
MAR	16th - 17th	AMERICAN CRAPPIE TRAIL	NEELY HENRY	CLUB
MAR	16th - 17th	CRAPPIE USA	LAKE OF EGYPT	SUPER EVENT
MAR	17th	BEAVER LAKE CRAPPIE ASSOC.	BEAVER LAKE	CLUB
MAR	17th	CRAPPIE ANGLERS OF TEXAS	LAKE MILLWOOD	QUALIFIER
MAR	17th	EAST TN CRAPPIE CLUB	WATTS BAR LAKE	CLUB
MAR	17th	MAGNOLIA	GRENADA	CLUB
MAR	17th	SHOALS CRAPPIE	WHEELER LAKE	CLUB
MAR	17th	WAPPAPELLO	WAPPAPELLO LAKE	CLASSIC
MAR	17th - 18th	EASTERN MO CRAPPIE CLUB	LAKE OF THE OZARKS	CLUB
MAR	23rd - 24th	CAROLINA CRAPPIE ASSOC	TBA	CLASSIC
MAR	23rd - 24th	CRAPPIE MASTERS	GRENADA LAKE	Championship
MAR	23rd - 24th	CRAPPIE USA	OLD HICKORY LAKE	SUPER EVENT
MAR	31st	CRAPPIE ANGLERS OF TEXAS	LAKE FORK/CRAPPIEFEST	INDIVIDUAL
MAR	31st	CRAPPIE USA	PICKWICK/WILSON	CLUB
MAR	31st	INDIANA SLAB MASTERS	PATOKA	CLUB

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OKLAHOMA CRAPPIE TRAIL	DARRELL AND BRIAN	FACEBOOK
PEACH STATE CRAPPIE CLUB	ROBERT SMITH	FACEBOOK
SHOALS AREA CRAPPIE ASSOCIATION	KEITH DODD	FACEBOOK
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS CRAPPIE	CHAD HAMSON	FACEBOOK
SOUTHWEST MISSOURI CRAPPIE	KERRY YATES	FACEBOOK
GA SLABMASTERS TOURNAMENT TRAIL	JAMIE MOORE/DAN SIDLE	FACEBOOK
SPRINGFIELD CRAPPIE CLUB IL	JERRY JALLAS/RICK MONTTOOTH	FACEBOOK
TWIN LAKES CRAPPIE CLUB		FACEBOOK
WAPPAPELLO CRAPPIE CLUB MO		FaceBook



**Goodbye until next issue.
Good Fishing to you!!**



**Vic Attardo
photo**