

# **CRAPPIE** ***NOW!*** *DIGITAL MAGAZINE*

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December 2018 - Issue #94



# ***Christmas Crappie***



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by John N. Felsher

Cooler water means active crappie and lots of action.



### Christmas Tree Crappie...10

by Brent Frazee

Turning the family Christmas tree into fish habitat is a good tradition to help the fish and fisherman.



### Advanced Manmade Cover...16

by Tim Huffman

The secret to catching crappie, especially for the weekend fisherman, is to know where to fish. Manmade cover can provide that advantage.



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# Opening Cast

Can you believe a whole year has almost passed by again! In a recent sports radio show, I was asked two things. First, what I've seen changing in media techniques to reach the crappie angler. And two, is our crappie fishing sport growing? The following are a few of my thoughts.



Concerning the media, it is changing as rapidly as our cell phones. We are running to reach not only the savvy, seasoned crappie pro but also the novice of all age groups. This means many varying methods of communication but follows what we at CrappieNow envisioned when we started the ezine.

While we continue to publish an online monthly ezine on the web, we also publish via social media on all platforms. To say that this stretches our resources is an understatement. Every social media platform reaches a different demographic and many times multiple demographics within each platform.

What we post to each and when is just as important. We want you to have relevant how-to material, no infomercials. Our videos, pictures, articles, etc. are trying to show all crappie fishermen, women and children how to effectively catch crappie.

Secondly, the sport is growing leaps and bounds by every standard. Dollars spent, product developed, shows, tournament availability at national and regional levels, content developed, hours fished, etc. New products are now developed with the crappie fisherman in mind. This includes the seasoned crappie companies like Bobby Garland, BnM Poles along with big companies including Garmin, Yamaha and Ranger Boats. New companies like Jenko, H&H, Foxy Fishing, Rod Sox, Pro Built and many more are moving major products to crappie fishermen.

Tournament participation numbers are up. State DNRs are recording more hours spent fishing for crappie. TV crappie shows are more prominent. Social media videos, live feeds, blogs, etc. are expanding and pushing content to you, the viewer and reader.

We at CrappieNow want to give you just-in-time targeted content via all methods. Please support our efforts by liking and sharing our social media posts and log in FREE to read our monthly magazine at [www.crappienow.com](http://www.crappienow.com)

Merry Christmas and God Bless you and your family,  
Dan Dannenmueller, Publisher

Cover Photo:  
Christmas can be watching a sunrise on the water or the ornaments over the fireplace.  
Tim Huffman photo

# Millers Ferry Hot Action in Cool Water

Story & photos by John N. Felsher



**F**rom where the Tallapoosa and Coosa rivers merge to form the Alabama River near Wetumpka, Alabama, the stream flows 318 miles until it joins the Tombigbee River near Mount Vernon, to form the Mobile River. Between Wetumpka and Mount Vernon, dams divide the Alabama into three sections. The entire system can produce excellent crappie numbers and many big fish.

“The Alabama system is a river, but it’s also a series of lakes with a lot of different tributaries and backwaters,” explained Gerald Overstreet, Jr., with Overstreet’s Guide Service (251-589-3225) in Gainestown, AL. “The entire Alabama River system is full of shad and

Joe Dunn shows off a couple crappie he caught while fishing on Millers Ferry Reservoir near Millers Ferry, AL.

other bait, so crappie don’t have to go far to eat.”

Although often overshadowed by other famed nearby crappie waters, some of the best action on the Alabama River occurs in William “Bill” Dannelly Reservoir, better known as Millers Ferry Lake. The second and largest of the three major pools, the Millers Ferry section runs about 105 miles between the Millers Ferry Lock and Dam near Camden and the Claiborne Dam in Monroe County.

“Millers Ferry Lake is one of the best crappie fishing destinations in southern Alabama,” proclaimed Dave Armstrong, an Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources biologist. “The lake generally produces good numbers per angler trip. In surveys we’ve done, about 15 percent of the crappie we collect are 12 inches long or longer with some in the 15- to 16-inch range.”

The long and skinny impoundment retains much of its riverine characteristics. Many creek mouths, brush piles, standing timber, drop-offs, fallen trees, stump fields and more than 500 shoreline miles provide outstanding crappie habitat throughout the lake.

***Anglers might not even feel the strike, just a little heaviness on the line.***

“Millers Ferry is a good crappie lake,” advised Joe Dunn of Dunn’s Sports (334-636-0850) in Thomasville, AL. “We catch some 1.5- to 2-pound crappie just about every time we go. Occasionally people catch some 3-pounders.”

With any capricious river system, fishing success depends upon water levels and conditions. Generally, rivers reach their lowest and clearest levels in the fall and stay that way until the spring floods arrive. With stable water, comes excellent fishing. Anglers frequently catch the biggest crappie during the coldest months.

“Starting in October and all the way until late February, crappie stay in the main river channel,” Dunn detailed. “During cooler weather, the better fishing typically occurs along the rock walls and ledges from the Millers Ferry Marina to Mill Creek. The Rock Wall by Alligator Slough in the Cotton House area is always a good place to fish.”



Joe Dunn shows how he rigs a double rig for crappie with two jigs, each tipped with a minnow for fishing on Millers Ferry Reservoir near Millers Ferry, AL.

When temperatures drop, crappie commonly congregate in deeper holes and stay there until the spring. Anglers who find a hot winter honey hole might pull large fish from it for weeks. Some holes in



## HOT ACTION IN COOL WATER

the old river channel drop to more than 70 feet deep. Since water must move faster outside a turn than inside to cover more space in the same time, powerful currents scour holes in river bends. These currents might also wash logs, branches and other objects into these holes, creating additional excellent crappie cover.

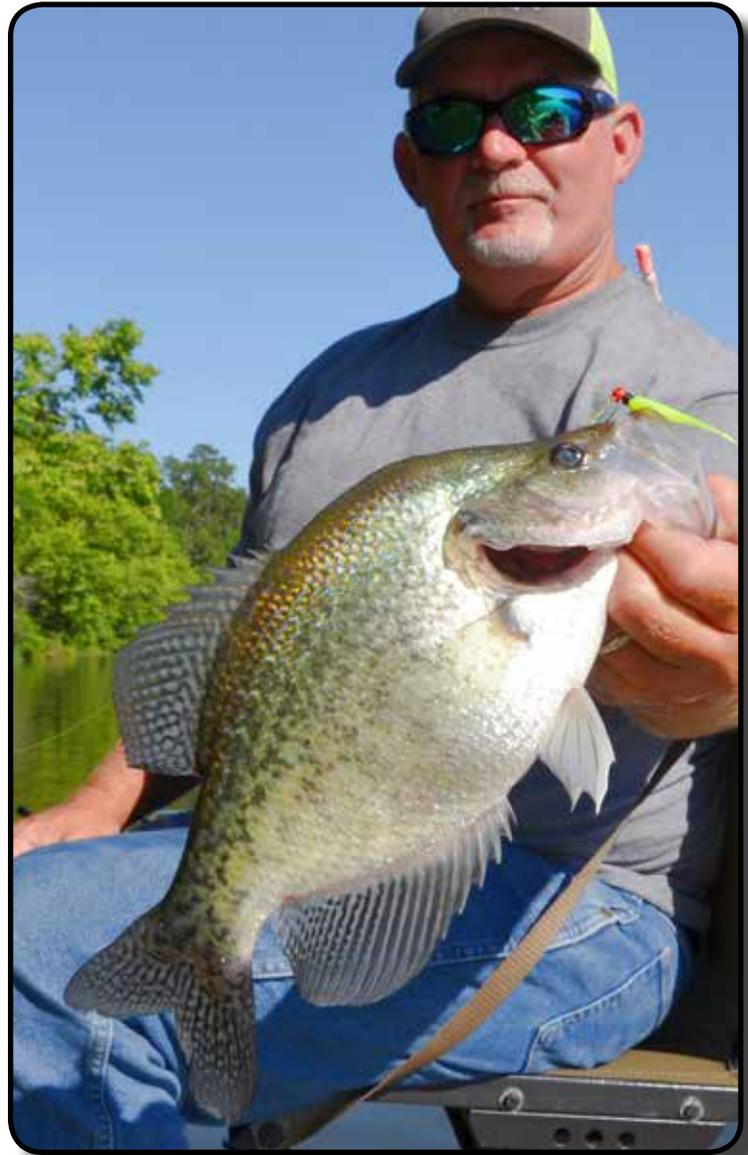
“Electronics plays a big part in finding crappie in cold water,” Dunn said. “People need to find structure and get down in it. We catch some of the biggest crappie by bottom bouncing structure. I like to fish submerged tops about 16 to 25 feet deep. I just idle down a bank using my depth finder to look for stuff before I even start fishing. When I find something, I throw out a buoy. If we bounce in structure two or three times and don’t get a bite, we move elsewhere.”

Drop a bait all the way down, but big crappie don’t always hover right near the bottom. Experiment with different depths. If nothing bites at the bottom, crank the reel handle two or three times to try a different depth. Keep trying different depths to locate actively feeding fish. Also, don’t add much action to jigs when fishing for lethargic fish that might want more subtle movement. Just the natural rocking of the boat might provide enough tantalizing enticement to make a fish bite a jig.

When water flows through the dam, it creates current. At those times, look for any visible or submerged structures that break the current, like standing timber or trees that fall off the banks into the river. In chilly water, crappie typically hold tight to such structures and face into the current to ambush any bait that flows toward them.

“Big trees that fall into the river can make great places to find crappie,” Overstreet recommended. “On Millers Ferry Lake, Mill Creek is always a good place to fish. It has some shallow, mid-depth and deeper water with some standing timber in it. Foster’s Creek is another good creek.”

To probe these crappie lairs, many anglers prefer to use a single pole



Gerald Overstreet shows off a crappie he caught on a feather jig while fishing on the Alabama River.

technique, or perhaps one in each hand. When using a single pole with a lone jig, anglers can drop a temptation down through the cover with better accuracy and less snagging. Drop the jig as close to cover as possible. Always work a bait completely around and through the trees, brush or other cover to find fish. For whatever reason, crappie might stack up on one side or the other.

“If a tree is still really bushy, the fish are tight to the cover or the cover is really thick, we use a single pole with a jig

tipped with a plastic trailer,” Overstreet described. “We’ll single pole jig around thick cover because we can get the bait all the way down into the cover better. We can work a single bait through really thick stuff and also pull hooked fish out easier. The head weight depends upon the current. For jigging, I like a 1/16- to 1/8-ounce weedless crappie jig so I can get it down where the fish are without snagging. If the current is really strong, I go up to a 1/4-ounce jig to hold the bait down in the strike zone.”

In cold water, many people also use either live bait or jigs sweetened with live minnows. Tie a 1-ounce sinker at the bottom of the line. About 18 inches up from the sinker, tie a jig or Number 2 Aberdeen hook. Some people tie a second hook or jig on a loop coming off the main line about 18 inches higher than the bottom hook. When fishing for finicky fish, many anglers add a little extra enticement by attaching scent pellets to their hooks.

“I like to use both jigs and minnows,” Dunn said. “Color helps too. I play around with different colors to see what fish want, but I like blue with some chartreuse or electric chicken when the water is clear. Popsicle is another hot color. It’s a bluish purple with some pink.”

Crappie in frosty waters tend to bite very softly. Anglers might not even feel the strike, just a little heaviness on the line. If in doubt, set the hook!

Since the Alabama River and its associated streams, lakes and creeks drain 63 percent of the land acreage in the Cotton State, most Alabama anglers should find a good place to fish close to home. Visitors can make inquiries and should have no problem finding fishable water. In the right spot, anglers could find some hot action on cold days.



- John N. Felsher



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# Crappie Basics #176

# Channel Brush

John Godwin of Duck Dynasty wears a grey beard and big smile. He loves the outdoors including crappie fishing. And, he is very good at loading a livewell with good fish.



“In December we fish the channel at D’Arbonne, Louisiana. There are some deep brushtops in the channel. Fish aren’t everywhere, but when you hit a few brushpiles and find the right one, fishing can be pretty good. I’ll have three or four poles out but I’m not moving much. It works best when the baits are held still in the same place.”

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# Christmas Tree Crappie

by Brent Frazee

I have a different view of Christmas trees than most people. Sure, I love to see my family gathered around the tree, glowing with strings of lights, ornaments and tinsel, during the holidays. But I also envision crappies gathered around my tree on the bottom of lake once New Year's Day has passed.

The holidays are all about tradition. And as a fisherman, turning several Christmas trees into brush piles is a tradition of mine.

I'll start by buying concrete blocks and heavy gauge wire from the hardware store. Then I'll drag several Christmas trees to the boat dock on my home lake in Missouri. I'll run the wire through the concrete block and the limbs of each tree and wrap it several times. Then I'll slide the block off the dock and into a boat stall and watch the tree slowly sink.

Instant cover. Instant fishing spot.

I'm amazed at how quickly those Christmas trees that only a few days earlier had proudly carried Christmas tradition can attract crappies. I have come back the next day with my Aqua Vu to see what the trees look like on the bottom in our clear-water subdivision lake, and I've been surprised to see a school of good-sized crappies already suspended around the limbs of the new cover.

The fish seldom are buried deep in the horizontal cover, because the needles are still too thick to allow for them to gain much access. But as the trees start to deteriorate, the skeleton, sans needles, becomes a fish magnet.

It sets up a food chain. Algae grows on the branches, microorganisms are attracted to the algae, baitfish move in to feed on the plankton, and gamefish such as crappies are drawn to the baitfish.

All of this from the centerpiece of many Christmas celebrations.

## Easy, Available but Not the Best

Before we go much farther, I have to toss out a caveat: Christmas trees are far from being the ideal wood for making a brush pile. The holiday trees deteriorate much more quickly than hardwoods. They are only at their prime for a couple years. Then they break down and offer little cover for the fish.

The Missouri Department of Conservation has confirmed as much through scuba studies on Table Rock Lake. Even in places where teams of workers sank clusters of Christmas trees, they found only the decaying skeleton of the trees and the concrete blocks used to sink them five to six years after they were put in.

That's why many fisheries departments now go to hardwoods such as shingle oaks or hedge for the construction of brush piles. They last much longer than Christmas trees, provide more room for fish to concentrate in their limbs and are easier to fish.

But Christmas trees, for all their shortcomings, still have their place. First, they are accessible and easy to lift as opposed to hardwoods that have to be cut down and hauled to a trailer or boat. Second, they can be effective if you "freshen" a spot each year where trees have been sunk before.

Brent Frazee catch crappies year-round from Christmas trees he and friends sink.



That's what our fishing club does each winter. We set up a Christmas tree dump site at our marina and advertise it to our neighborhood. We also haul trees from other dump sites and end up with more than 100 trees,

We arrange a work day, and groups of fishermen in several boats head out with as many as eight trees per boat to sink trees. We have as many as 10 large brush piles on the 130-acre lake. That's not counting the marina, where there is brush in practically every other stall.

That, in large part, has brought our fishing back. We once had a clear body of water that was rich in weed growth. You could catch bass and crappies along many weed edges. But the fishing suffered when the vegetation mysteriously disappeared.

We've had many fisheries biologists and other experts out to look at our situation, and no one can pinpoint a reason. All they can offer is that "it's possibly a cycle." Meanwhile, they have recommended that we put brush in the lake to attract fish and produce good spawning, nursery, ambush and resting cover. So far, it has worked.

## Location, Location, Location

For a brush pile to be effective, you have to sink it in the right neighborhood. You can't just randomly pick a location and expect fish to swim across the lake to find it.

Instead, choose an area that fish already are using – main-lake and secondary points, humps, drop-offs, the mouths of coves, along road beds, along gravel spawning banks, etc. Remember, your purpose is to get fish to concentrate in an area that already is attractive to them.

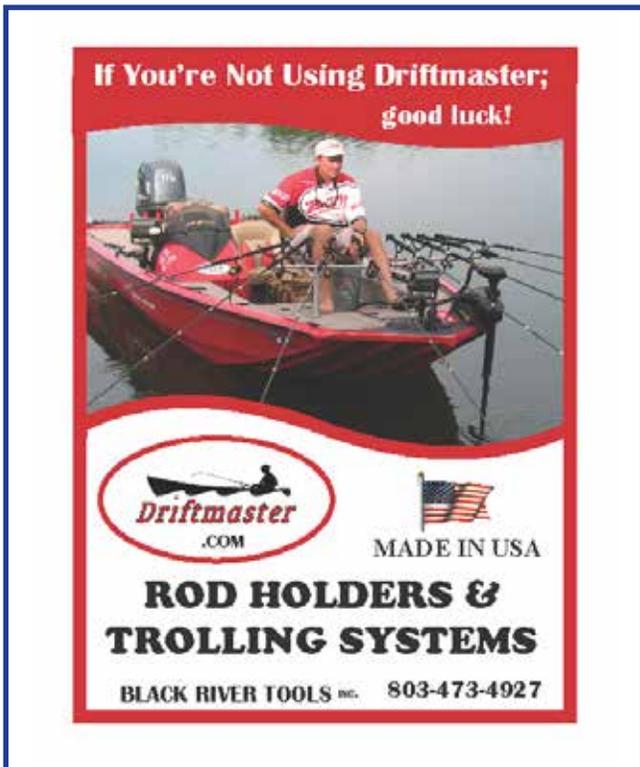
If you're serious about it, sink brush in a variety of water depths to meet seasonal fishing patterns. Drop trees along river or creek channels for winter fishing, in the shallows or just off spawning banks in coves for the spring, off main-lake points and mid-lake structure for the summer, and in the middle of creek arms for the fall.

We will drop as many as 25 Christmas trees in some prime locations such as main-lake points, and they have developed into great fishing spots. But again, they have to be freshened up every two years for them to be effective.

One strategy I have used is to create a fish highway out of brush. I and my friends will drop bundles of Christmas trees from the bank to 20 feet deep, covering a variety of the fish's needs. For example, there is spawning cover in the shallows, but there also is brush to hold them in 10 to 15 feet of water when a cold front interrupts the spawn and they temporarily drop out to deeper climes.

On public water, make sure you check regulations and requirements before sinking trees. Some U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reservoirs, for example, require fishermen to get permits before sinking brush.

Once you have completed sinking brush, it is public property. In other words, if another fisherman locates it, he or she has every right to fish it. With the advance of modern fish finders, that has become increasingly common.



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That's why some fishermen use stealth when dropping brush. Once they have placed the cover in a likely looking spot, They punch in coordinates in their GPS units to plot a course back.

What if a fisherman does not have all of those modern devices? He or she can still sink brush and find it on return trips. The first tip is to avoid obvious landmarks, such as a laydown, the tallest tree on the bank or an odd-colored boulder on shore. Those are dead giveaways to others that there is brush in the area.

Instead, use obscure landmarks and tri-angulate them to find your way back to brush. One friend of mine uses a clothesline in back of a lakeside cabin, the end of a dock and a point as indications that he is in the right spot. No sonar needed. He can go right to his "honey hole" and catch fish in a place that many wouldn't think twice of fishing.

Fishermen also can use Christmas trees to provide valuable cover in farm ponds. They often slide tree bundles and concrete blocks onto the ice, and wait for the spring thaw to sink them.

## Christmas Tree Fishing

Even in spots where you have sunken multiple Christmas trees, there are "hot spots." I follow my electronics to find places where the crappies are suspended in or above the brush, then fish according to the season. In the spring, I like to cast and slowly retrieve a twister-tail jig over the top of the shallow brush. In the summer, I often tight-line with a minnow on a light jig head (often as small as 1/32nd ounce).

I try to pick off the crappies on the edge of the brush first so I don't disturb the fish in the heart of the cover. Then I move in to try to catch the crappies buried in the cover.

If this sounds easy, it isn't. Sometimes I will mark fish and they refuse to hit. I generally give that brush pile about 15 minutes, then move onto another one.

And then there are the brush piles that seldom produce for some reason. I and

my friends have sunk Christmas trees in seemingly ideal spots – the edge of a drop-off, the mouth of a cove where we've caught fish before, the deep water off a point –yet seldom have caught crappies.

The point? Not all brush piles are created equal. You have to experiment with locations and hope you get it right. But when you do, it can result in a full live well or stringer.

 - Brent Frazee



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## Crappie Basics #177

## Slow and Light

Russ Bailey, host of BrushPile Fishing TV show says winter is a time for some finesse.

“Downsizing is something that you need to consider any time you’re not getting many bites no matter where or what time of year. In cold water, the fish are not as aggressive so a dropshot rig with a slow, vertical presentation is the way to go especially for bigger fish. Move along with a bottom bounce rig, or dropshot, but move really slow. Bump it on bottom then hold it for a long period of time. Then, lift it up and set it back down. On a dropshot rig, you can leave the bait on bottom or lift it up a little. The bites can be slow light you can barely feel them, so a sensitive pole and line is important. It gets better as the water keeps getting colder.



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Lake Wylie, Belmont, NC.....	03/01/19 - 03/02/19
Lakes Marion & Moultrie, Santee, SC.....	03/15/19 - 03/16/19
KY & Barkley Lakes, Paris, TN.....	03/22/19 - 03/23/19
Lake Cumberland, Somerset, KY.....	04/05/19 - 04/06/19
Lake Barkley, Cadiz, KY.....	04/12/19 - 04/13/19
Green River Lake, Columbia, KY.....	04/19/19 - 04/20/19
Grand Lake/St. Marys, St. Marys, OH.....	04/26/19 - 04/27/19

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# Seasonal Structure

by  
Tim  
Huffman



**A**

A is a "fence row" of brush built from shallow water to deep. The purpose is to have some depth where the crappie will be holding.

B is a small tree or limbs in 8 to 14 feet of water. This will be a good spring/fall spot and could produce all year long.

C is a shallow, short stake bed built primarily for spring when fish go shallow. It could be a fall spot, too.

D is a pallet stake bed in 14 to 18 feet of water, a great depth for almost any season.

E is deep brush placed for summer and winter.

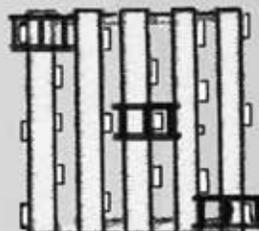


**B**

**C**



**D**



**E**

**4**

**8**

**12**

**16**

**20**

**25**

**30**



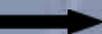
**P**lacing cover for crappie is nothing new. Stake bed, crappie condo, crappie bed, brushpile, structure and cover are a few of the names fishermen use for these beds. Professional guides, tournament fishermen and serious recreational fishermen have long used the beds to enhance fishing.

The key purpose for manmade beds is to position crappie where they are easier to catch. It might include putting a bed where other cover doesn't exist. Or, by placing it in areas where there are different types of cover like trees and snags providing something different for the crappie.

Unfortunately, there are no 100-percent

A homemade PVC bed can yield good results with a very modest investment of time and money.

rules that guarantee success. Where they are placed is the key to success but spots that should be excellent may not work and oddball spots that shouldn't work do work. The following are a few tips and guidelines from experts I've interviewed, but each one will tell you that placing cover is not a science with some beds being great producers and others not.



## Bed Material

Lakes and rivers have laws pertaining to beds. Some are liberal while others are very restrictive and requiring permits. Some waters allow no structure at all to be placed. The first thing is to learn the laws pertaining to placing cover and the type covers allowed.

Bed material has four primary factors to consider. One is cost. Two is availability and work required to place. Three is longevity of the bed. And four is fishability, or ease of fishing.

Cost can be from very inexpensive by using small trees and large limbs from the bank areas. The added advantage is that the wood will often be near where you want it placed. The primary tools will be wire, concrete blocks or other weight, saw and a strong back.

Cost on the opposite end of the scale is a manufactured PVC bed. These can be very expensive but provide a permanent structure and are very safe and easy to place. Many fishermen build their own PVC condos with pipe, a bucket and quickset concrete.

Availability is important. Having access to scrap plastic pipe, wood or other material can save hundreds of dollars in costs. Also, wood from the bank is free but sometimes prohibited so the brush may not be available at all. Each type of cover requires some work. The plastic is easiest to assemble and drop. Small trees and large limbs can be awkward and heavy making them a dangerous on the water. Driven stake beds are labor intensive with a few tools and a lot of work involved. Dropping a pallet-style stake bed is very popular but again, requires work to drop. Safety should always be a primary consideration when dropping cover.

The longevity of beds is very important because of the work involved to place them. Brent Frazee's article on Christmas Trees discusses the short life of evergreens. Softwoods do not last as long as hardwoods so that should be a

major choice when building. PVC beds will last forever providing currents or floating logs don't take them out.

Fishability of cover is important. The beauty of both plastic beds and vertical wooden stakebeds is fewer hang-ups. That's good for the fisherman but very important if taking a kid or inexperienced fisherman. Brushpiles are a top pick for success but placing them can be difficult and getting a bait down deep in them requires a vertical presentation.

## Where to Place

The million-dollar question is "where"? The bottom line is that you can pick a high-percentage spot but only time will prove if it will hold crappie, how many and what size.

No matter which type bed you use, pick a spot to place the bed ahead of time. For example, you might pick a point where you've caught fish but there is little cover there. Use your GPS or use visual landmarks to triangulate the spot.

Carry your bed to the spot and position the boat where correctly. Tossing a marker buoy is good to ensure you'll get the exact spot triangulated and GPS marked for dropping and returning.

The following are tips from experts on picking a spot.

(1) Put beds in areas where you have caught fish. Putting them in areas where there are no fish, seldom lures them in.

(2) It's okay to put beds where there is other cover. Truman Lake experts often put beds between trees, stumps and along tree edge lines. Fish will usually be on one or the other.

Another trick is to put cover a boat length away from a group of trees. It's unlikely that fishermen concentrating on the trees will notice the stakebed.

(3) The more stakes or beds, the more fish it will hold. However, the larger the bed, the more likely you'll have more fishermen using it.

(4) The more beds you have, the more spots you have to fish.

(5) When placing cover, put them at different locations where you can have a windbreak no matter which direction the wind is blowing.

(6) Vertical stakes are easiest to fish and are best in shallow water. However, deep beds with horizontal pieces are usually good.

(7) What you use isn't as important as getting it out and putting it in a good spot. Anything, a chair or car fender, dropped into the water will hold fish if it's in the right spot. (I was making a point, not suggesting you throw chairs in the lake.)

(8) Bed depth will often determine which seasons it will produce. For example, a bed in ten feet of water will likely be good in spring and fall. A bed at 20 feet is likely a summer and winter spot.

(9) Don't forget flats. Mid-depth flats

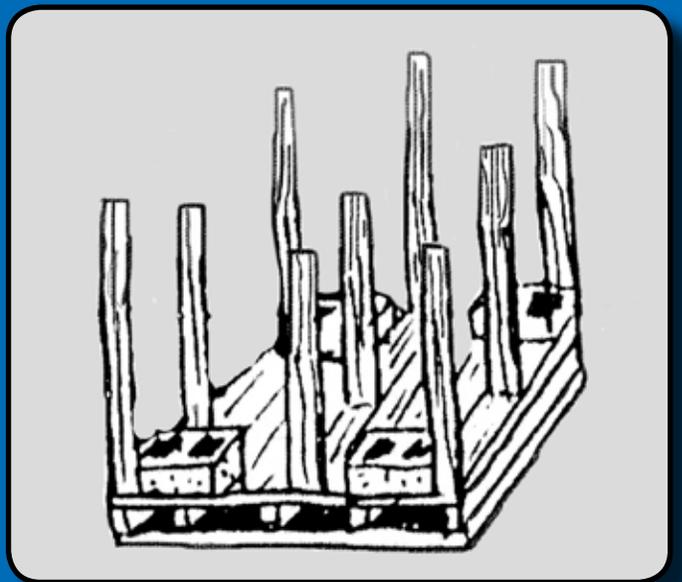
can be excellent fishing and prime spots for beds.

Along with follow the laws, be sure to place beds where they won't be a danger to boaters and skiers. If the lake is drawn down each year during the winter, make sure your beds will still be underwater during a drawdown.

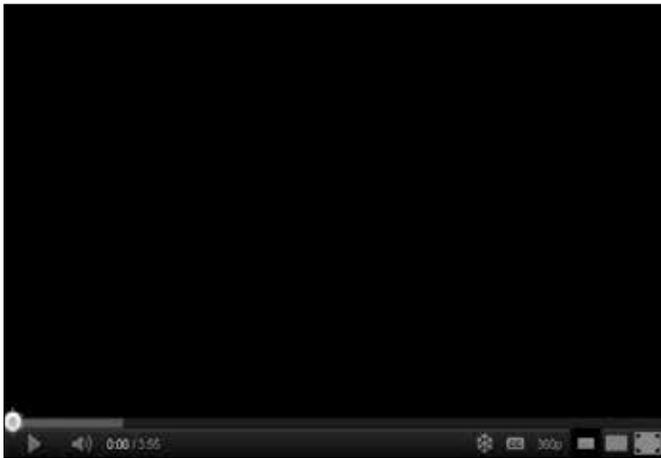
Keeping beds a secret is impossible. Today's electronics are too good. Even if other fishermen don't see you fishing it, some will find the beds with electronics.

 - Tim Huffman

Stake beds are a good choice. Stakes can be driven but more likely they'll be made on a pallet and hauled to the drop spot. Stake height can be adjusted with depth, with deeper beds getting the longer stakes. The width between stakes is debated but 8 to 12 inch gaps are common. The overall size of beds varies, too. A pallet size is normal. However, many good fishermen prefer beds 2.5 to 3 feet wide because they are easier to carry in the boat and less likely to be found by other fishermen. If a big bed is preferred, several beds can be placed together. Smaller beds are often made by sticking stakes into a five-gallon bucket and adding concrete.

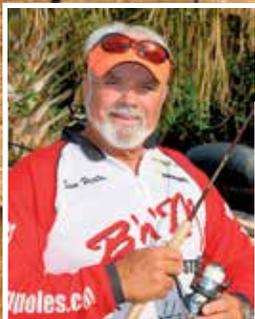


A pallet stake bed is economical and a good way to build a bed. Blacks can be placed over the corner stakes or wired to the pallet.



Crappie NOW How To  
New Crappie Rod Prep Basics

## Go Fishing With The B'n'M Pros.



### Sam Heaton's 7-Foot Super-Sensitive

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.



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by Mike Sheppard

In December, the fish will be in the mouths of the creeks. Water temperatures in November here on Kentucky Lake but in December they'll be cooler. Different parts of the country will cool at different times. But when it does, the fish will head back to the ledges and creeks headed ot to deeper water.

Minnow and jigs both work. A double-hook rig is a good choice because fish are feeding up for the winter and are aggressive. They are schooling back together.

It's important to go slow. Slowing down will usually get you more bites and catch more fish."



Mike Sheppard is an avid tournament fisherman and is a Jenko Fishing team member.

# 2019 AMERICAN CRAPPIE TRAIL



PROVIDER OF PREMIER CRAPPIE TOURNAMENTS WITH THE HIGHEST GUARANTEED PAYOUT IN THE INDUSTRY.

## TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

Lake Guntersville, AL .....	Feb 15-16, 2019
<b>2018 Championship</b>	
Lake D'Arbonne, LA .....	March 28-30, 2019
Ross Barnett, MS .....	April 26-27, 2019
Grenada, MS .....	May 17-18, 2019
Kentucky Lake, TN .....	June 21-22, 2019
Truman, MO .....	July 27-28, 2019
Ouachita River, LA .....	Sept 13-14, 2019
2019 National Championship .....	TBA

[americancrappietrail.com](http://americancrappietrail.com)

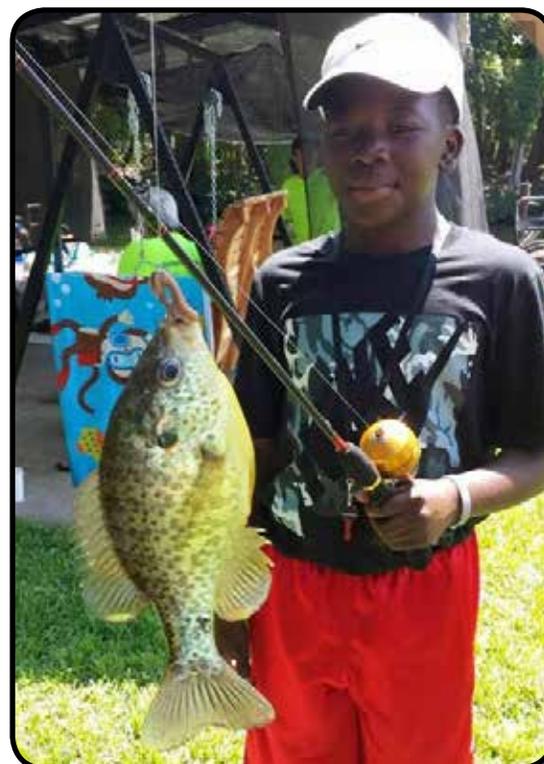
“We are very excited to be working with Trinity Oaks, as we truly support and believe in the work of the organization to help people in need,” said Mike Nischalke, vice-president and owner, Hunter Outdoor Communication. “Trinity Oaks works with families of children and with terminal illnesses and disabilities, disadvantaged children from the inner cities and surrounding communities. As a Marine Corps veteran, I was immediately drawn to this organization by the help and respect it provides to combat veterans suffering from both emotional and physical wounds.”

In 2007, San Antonio native Tom Snyder founded Trinity Oaks. The organization’s mission is to use hunting, fishing and outdoor activities to make a meaningful difference in lives. It offers at least 50 events at no expense to those who can benefit from once-in-a-lifetime hunting or fishing experience.

Dream Trips has become a hallmark of Trinity Oaks, and the organization honors Purple Heart recipients and combat veterans with hunting or fishing bucket-list trips to create lasting memories while providing emotional healing. It also honors the caretakers of our wounded vets with an annual Holiday Unsung Heroes Retreat.

Trinity Oaks operates with a 98-percent volunteer base and two paid employees—a part-time executive director and a full-time mean processor. All events and fishing and hunting trips are made possible by donations.

For more information on Trinity Oaks, visit [www.trinityoaks.org](http://www.trinityoaks.org) or call 830-928-3085.



Be the **VOICE** of sportfishing!

Help the sportfishing community know what is important to you by participating at [AnglerSurvey.com](http://AnglerSurvey.com).



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**SA SOUTHWICK ASSOCIATES**  
FISH AND WILDLIFE ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS

**S**outhwick Associates are leaders in angler, hunter and shooter surveys. They say recreational anglers cite a lot of reasons for choosing their favorite locations to fish, but one thing, it better be close to home.

**60% proximity close to home**  
**47% past fishing success**  
**45% having a quiet place to fish**  
**44% availability of fish**

Other factors with lower percentages include water quality, friend or family recommendation, how much it costs to fish there, available parking, non-boat access, and size of the body of water.

“Fishing is an activity that can be enjoyed for an hour or two before or after work or school or when there is

a little down time in a person’s life, so convenience and the ability to run out, fish and get back home are first and foremost in many angler’s minds,” says Rob Southwick, president of Southwick Associates, which designs and conducts the surveys. Efforts on behalf of the fishing community to bring fishing opportunities and access into suburban and urban neighborhoods may be a critical part of efforts to maintain fishing’s future.”

Fishermen can visit [AnglerSurvey.com](http://AnglerSurvey.com) to participate in the bi-monthly surveys.

**AnglerSurvey.com**



## Hot Peppered Pickled Crappie

**P**ickling began about 4,000 years ago. The process was developed to preserve foods including veggies, fruit, fish and meats. Pickled foods, especially cucumbers, are made and eaten because of the wonderfully complex mouth-puckering tastes. Pickling may also improve the nutritional value of food by the B vitamins that bacteria produce.

The process of preserving foods is by anaerobic fermentation in brine or vinegar. The resulting food, be it a cucumber or crappie, is called a pickle. This method gives the food a salty or sour taste. Pickled foods have a pH less than 4.6 (very acidic), sufficient to kill most bacteria and preserve perishable foods for months. If the food contains sufficient moisture, pickling brine may be produced simply by adding dry salt; sauerkraut and kimchi are two examples made from cabbage.

Unlike canning, pickling includes fermentation and does not require that the food be completely sterile before it is sealed. The acidity or salinity of the solution, the temperature of fermentation and the exclusion of oxygen determine which microorganisms dominate, and determine the flavor of the end product.

3 1/2 pounds of crappie fillets (4 to 6 oz. each), skin removed  
1 medium onion, thinly sliced  
5-8 small whole dried hot chilies (to taste)  
2 cups distilled white vinegar  
1 cup sugar  
3/4 cup rose' wine  
1/4 cup canning or pickling salt  
1 tablespoon mixed pickling spices

Freeze fish 48 hours at zero degrees F. Defrost. Cut into 1- to 2-inch pieces. Loosely layer fish, onion and chilies in two 1-quart jars and one 1-pint jar. Cover

and chill. In 2-quart saucepan, combine remaining ingredients. Bring mixture to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat. Cool entirely. Pour pickling liquid over fish to cover. Seal jars, using two-part sealing lids. Refrigerate 10 days before serving. Store in refrigerator no longer than 4 weeks.

### Hot Fish Stew with Tomatoes and Asparagus

2-3 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil  
Large red onion, chopped  
2-3 cloves garlic, minced  
2 tablespoons Italian seasoning  
Large red bell pepper, seeded and diced  
Bunch fresh asparagus, ends trimmed, cut into 1 1/2-inch pieces  
Two 28-oz. cans diced tomatoes  
16 ounces firm freshwater fillets (catfish, crappie, bass, etc. cut into 2-3-inch chunks  
3 cups V-8 Hot & Spicy Low Sodium vegetable juice  
1 tablespoon crushed red pepper (add enough to make you sweat – or not)  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Shredded parmesan

Over medium heat, sauté onions and garlic in olive oil until tender in large saucepan. Add Italian seasoning and sauté for about a minute. Add bell pepper and asparagus. Continue sautéing for several minutes until tender crisp. Add diced tomatoes with juices and pour in enough V-8 juice to make the mixture like a broth (almost covering vegetable mixture or about 3 cups).

Cover and simmer for about 10 minutes. Stir in fish chunks and a tablespoon or two of crushed red pepper. Cover and simmer until fish is cooked through and vegetables are tender, about 10-15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and serve

topped with shredded parmesan.

## Fish Camp Apple Pancake

1/2 stick butter  
3 apples (Gala, Granny Smith, etc.),  
peeled, cored and thinly sliced  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice  
1/2 cup brown sugar  
1 cup whole milk  
2 teaspoons vanilla  
3 eggs  
1 cup all purpose flour  
2 teaspoons granulated sugar  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoon butter

## Maple syrup

Melt butter in large frying pan and sauté apples until soft. Add cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice and brown sugar and stir until mixture begins to caramelize.

In a bowl: mix flour, granulated sugar and salt with slightly beaten eggs, vanilla and milk.

Pour batter into pan on top of apple mixture and drag spoon through apple mixture to push some swirls of it into the batter. Cook until bubbles start to appear at edges of batter, then gently loosen edges of pancake with a spatula and put 2 teaspoons butter equally divided around the edges and under the pancake to prevent sticking. Then cover frying pan with a tightly fitting lid (or aluminum foil) and pull pan away from center of fire grate to bake for 12-15 minutes to finish

cooking the pancake. Slice pancake and serve with butter and maple syrup.

## Tennessee Turtle Soup

3 pounds turtle meat  
4 quarts water  
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
2 tablespoons shortening  
2 chopped medium onions  
3 ground sticks celery  
6 pods ground garlic  
1 ground large green pepper  
2 thinly sliced lemons  
4 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce  
Seasoned-salt to taste (Tony's Creole Seasoning)  
McCormick Season salt  
3 heaping tablespoons whole allspice (tied in thin cloth)  
1 tablespoon sherry per serving (optional)  
4 hard-boiled eggs  
Parsley

Boil turtle meat in water until tender. Remove scum with spoon. Make roux using shortening and flour. Add onions, celery, garlic and green pepper. Remove turtle meat from stock, strain stock and add roux. Bones may be removed from turtle meat. Add meat to stock along with lemons, Worcestershire sauce and seasoned-salts to taste. Place bag of allspice in soup and simmer for one hour. Add 1 tablespoon sherry per serving shortly before serving, if desired. Garnish with sliced hard-boiled eggs and parsley.



# Fishing Funny's



*Another bird's nest?*



<b>Club</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Link</b>
AMERICAN CRAPPIE TRAIL	Matt Morgan	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
BAYOU STATE CRAPPIE ASSOCIATION	Brandon Jennings	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
BEAVER LAKE CRAPPIE ASSOC.	Peyton Usery	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
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CENTRAL ARKANSAS CRAPPIE CLUB	Jason Westerberg	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
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COOSA RIVER CRAPPIE CLUB	J CULBERSON	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
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CRAPPIE MASTERS	Mike Valentine	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
CRAPPIE USA	Darrell Van Vactor	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
CRAPPIENUTZ MS	Robert Smith/Joe Faircloth	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
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EASTERN MISSOURI CRAPPIE CLUB	Steve Perotto	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
FISH THE CAROLINAS	Nate Quan	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
FLORIDA CRAPPIE CLUB	Darrell Cole	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
GRAND LAKE CRAPPIE SERIES OH	Jeff	<a href="#">WEBSITE</a>
HOI CRAPPIE CLUB	Chad Anderson	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
INDIANNA SLAB MASTERS	Joe Long/Damon Phillips	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
KANSAS CRAPPIE CLUB	Hoe Bragg/Frank Haidusek	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
LAKE OKEECHOBEE CRAPPIE SERIES	Derrick Moore 954-650-0456	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
MAGNOLIA CRAPPIE CLUB	Michael Nowell/Roger Womack	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
MIDDLE TENNESSEE CRAPPIE CLUB	Toby Ivey	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
NORTHEAST GEORGIA CRAPPIE	Kevin Strong	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
NORTHEAST OHIO CRAPPIE CLUB	Dan Elko/Robert Elko	<a href="#">Website</a>
OKLAHOMA CRAPPIE TRAIL	Darrell and Brian	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
PEACH STATE CRAPPIE CLUB	Robert Smith	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
SHOALS AREA CRAPPIE ASSOCIATION	Keith Dodd	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
SOUTH CAROLINA CRAPPIE ASSOC	Jerry Bundrick	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
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TRUMAN LAKE TOURNAMENT SERIES	Roger Mann 913-963-6350/ANGLERS PORT MARINE	<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
TWIN LAKES CRAPPIE CLUB		<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
ULTIMATE PANFISH LEAGUE/UPL		<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>
WAPPAPELLO CRAPPIE CLUB MO		<a href="#">FACEBOOK</a>

## CENTRAL ILLINOIS CRAPPIE CLUB

DECATUR LAKE

### OCTOBER 20th

1. Brian Cleveland/Chad Napier	8.74
2. Jett Lapin	8.08
3. Brian Plank/Eli Plank	7.82
4. Gabe Fairfield/Greg Lindsley	7.8

### BIG FISH

1. Jett Lapin	1.8
---------------	-----

## CRAPPIE MASTERS

CARLYLE LAKE

### OCTOBER 20th

1. Anthony Kannal/Mike Fields	11.27
2. Charlie Bunting/Travis Bunting	10.67
3. Jim Dant/Donny Zufall	10.01
4. Paul Turner/Elizabeth Turner	9.99
5. Andrew Gildehaus/Tonnie Brooks	9.51

### BIG FISH

1. Anthony Kannal/Mike Fields	2.85
-------------------------------	------

### MALE/FEMALE

1. Jackie Linton/Holly Linton	7.99
-------------------------------	------

## EAST TENNESSEE CRAPPIE CLUB

TELLICO

### OCTOBER 20th

1. Scott Baines/Cory Gerlach	6.43
2. Darren Caughron/Tracy Caughron	6.41
3. Matt Xenos/Don Speer	6.24
4. Neal Alvis/Scott Bunch	5.84
5. Tim Irwin/Jim Huber	5.12

## MIDDLE TENNESSEE CRAPPIE CLUB

NORMANDY

### OCTOBER 20th

1. Jamey Johnson/Roger Johnson	11.04
2. Toby Ivey/Matthew Nash	8.91
3. Terry Spray/Tyler Spray	8.84
4. Dave Odell	8.01
5. Larry/Robert	7.97

### BIG FISH

1. Toby Ivey/Matthew Nash	2.03
---------------------------	------

## SOUTH CAROLINA CRAPPIE ASSOC.

SANTEE

OCTOBER 20th

1. Matt Outlaw/Matthew Tapp	12.63
2. Mike Huffstetler/Stalia Huffstetler	11.47
3. Tommy Slice/Will Hinson	11.31
4. Brad Soper/Todd Frick	10.67
5. David Kingsmore/Joey Hilton	10.45

## BIG FISH

1. Mike Huffstetler/Stalia Huffstetler	2.41
--	------

## INDIANA SLAB MASTERS

FREEMAN/SHAFFER

OCTOBER 20th

1. Ron Bilbrey/Tom Hankins	12.82
2. Brett Cunningham/Keith Lucas	12.1
3. Jason Shingler/Mike Arnold	12.05
4. Larry Yates/Doug Allen	11
5. Charlie Hildreth/Laurel Hildreth	10.7

## BIG FISH

1. Jason Shingler/Mike Arnold	1.4
-------------------------------	-----



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Wally Marshall™



### Mr. Crappie Premium Line

- Low memory; high abrasion resistance
- Special softeners for superb performance
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- Thin, compact gear box
- Pre-spooled with Mr. Crappie HiVis line
- Graphite composite rods with split grip handle



**MR. CRAPPIE** Slab Shaker™

www.mrcrappie.com

## WAPPAPELLO CRAPPIE CLUB

WAPPAPELLO LAKE

<b>OCTOBER 21st</b>	
1. Botsch/Botsch	7.32
2. Walker/Walker	7
3. Chism/Chism	6.96
4. Boschier/Achins	6.18
5. Roper/Garner	6.05
<b>BIG FISH</b>	
1. Chism/Chism	1.38

## NORTHEAST OHIO CRAPPIE CLUB

WEST HARBOR

<b>OCTOBER 27th</b>	
1. Wes/Colby	9.88
2. Luke/Matt	8.1
3. Ray	7.14
4. Tony/Robert	7.11
5. Steve/John	7.11
<b>BIG FISH</b>	
1. Wes/Colby	2.6

## BEAVER LAKE CRAPPIE ASSOC.

BEAVER LAKE

<b>OCTOBER 27th - 28th</b>	
1. Seth Eden	16.66
2. Hunter Bourke/Blake Berry	15.95
3. Cameron White/Ron Walker	14.42
4. Matt Phillips	14.16
5. Clay Johnson	12.81
<b>BIG FISH</b>	
1. Clay Johnson	1.92

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**SPRINGFIELD CRAPPIE CLUB**

MARK TWAIN

**OCTOBER 27th - 28th**

1. Ken Barlow/Dan Alwelt	11.8
2. Danny Runkle	11.56
3. Jerry Jallas/Carlo Catalano	11.05
4. Dale Smith/Andrea Smith	10.71

**BIG FISH**

1. Dale Smith/Andrea Smith	1.2
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**CRAPPIE USA**

BARCLAY/KENTUCKY LAKES

**NOVEMBER 2nd - 3rd****AMATEUR DIVISION**

1. Heath Martin/Jason Rigdon	19.64
2. Jay Harris/Robert Teeter	15.91
3. Davin Williams/Cory Williams	12.41
4. Ricky Baker/David Gibson	10.67
5. Darren Isbell/TJ Grooms	10.3

**PRO DIVISION**

1. Dan Lutchka/Steve Hess	21.01
2. Tony Shephard/Mike Shephard	20.79
3. Paul Turner/Liz Turner	20.24
4. Austin Brown/Charles Coy	19.97
5. Keis Mann/Terry Mann	19.58

**BIG FISH**

1. Tony Shephard/Mike Shephard	2
--------------------------------	---

**CENTRAL ILLINOIS CRAPPIE CLUB**

CLINTON LAKE

**NOVEMBER 3rd**

1. John Nash/Dustin Reynolds	5.67
2. Steve Zehr/Dave Nugget	5.03
3. Joe Schrader/Jeff Schrader	4.84
4. Bud Your/Andy Roberts	4.75
5. Steve Peck/Jenni Price	4.68

**BIG FISH**

1. John Nash/Dustin Reynolds	1.12
------------------------------	------



## FISH THE CAROLINAS

WATEREE

### NOVEMBER 3rd

1. D Hinson/D Grow	10.15
2. K Hawkins/B McGuirt	10.07
3. M Danque/D Willard	9.93
4. T Robertson/N Robertson	9.65
5. J Perrel/P Perrel	9.39

### BIG FISH

1. M Danque/D Willard	1.97
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## CHATTANOOGA CRAPPIE CLUB

CHESTER FROST PARK

### NOVEMBER 4th

1. Mike Johnston/Michael Ray	6.76
2. Fred Shoenfeld/Sherri Shoenfeld	5.61
3. David Cornell	5.35

### BIG FISH

1. Mike Johnston/Michael Ray	1.33
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## SPRINGFIELD CRAPPIE CLUB

LAKE SPRINGFIELD

### NOVEMBER 4th

1. Zach Pierce/Sammy Wright	6.53
2. Brian Buchanan	6.37
3. Arick Clark/Kyle Gehrs	6.28
4. Brandon Wagner/Brian Bentley	6.24

### BIG FISH

1. Brian Buchanan	1.48
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## PEACH STATE CRAPPIE CLUB

SINCLAIR

### NOVEMBER 10th

1. Richard Malcom/Joe Patenza	9.66
2. Scott Williams/Jacob Sapp	7.51
3. Chance Kelly/Joey Clark	7.27
4. Tommy Sellars/Rickey Burgamy	7.21
5. Jason Little/Craig Chapman	7.2

### BIG FISH

1. Richard Malcom/Joe Patenza	1.71
-------------------------------	------

**MAGNOLIA CRAPPIE CLUB**

ENID LAKE

**NOVEMBER 10th**

1. John Harrison/Lance Evans	11.86
2. Kody Hamilton/Randi Hamilton	11.35
3. Nick Hudson/Ryan Legge	11.25
4. A E Smith/Dan Presley	10.99
5. Jeremy Aldridge/Clint Egbert	10.5

**BIG FISH**

1. John Harrison/Lance Evans	2.43
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**SPRINGFIELD CRAPPIE CLUB**

DECATUR LAKE

**NOVEMBER 10th**

1. Scott Boston/Dave Radack	8.2
-----------------------------	-----

**BIG FISH**

1.62

**FLORIDA CRAPPIE CLUB**

SANTE FE

**NOVEMBER 10th**

1. Jack/John	10.14
2. Tim/George	10.1
3. Dave Troester	8.98

**BIG FISH**

1. Jack/John	1.13
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**KANSAS CRAPPIE CLUB**

MILFORD LAKE

**NOVEMBER 11th**

1. Harmon/Morstorf	6.3
2. Hobbs/Springer	5.84
3. Morgan/Roberts	5.75

**BIG FISH**

1. Harmon/Morstorf	1.18
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## CENTRAL ILLINOIS CRAPPIE CLUB

LAKE SHELBYVILLE

### NOVEMBER 11th

1. Lee Buehnerkemper/Greg Niebrugge	7.73
2. Sean Shelby/Mike Hopkins	7.46
3. Rick Clifton/Bob Sarko	7.38
4. Josh Nast/Dustin Reynolds	7.36
5. Frank Revell Jr/Jeff Revell	7.18

### BIG FISH

1. Steve Peck/Jenni Price	1.69
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## EAST TENNESSEE CRAPIE CLUB

CHEROKEE LAKE

### NOVEMBER 17th

1. Scott Bunch/Neal Alvis	10.86
2. Brian Guy/Jason Bridwell	9.42
3. Tim Fletcher/Mike Ferguson	8.44
4. Darren Caughron/Matt Xenos	7.17
5. Dustin Davis/Jason Davis	6.48

### BIG FISH

1. Brian Guy/Jason Bridwell	2.1
-----------------------------	-----

## LAKE OKEECHOBEE CRAPPIE SERIES

LAKE OKEECHOBEE

### NOVEMBER 17th

1. George Parker/Tim Eberly	9.61
2. Brad Gibson/Allen Smith	8
3. Capp Williams/John Dunlap	7.45
4. Mark Hoon/Chase Carter	5.68
5. Tommie Harper	5.01

### BIG FISH

1. George Parker/Tim Eberly	1.81
-----------------------------	------

## MIDDLE TENNESSEE CRAPPIE CLUB

WOODS RESERVOIR

### NOVEMBER 17th

1. Tyler Spray/Terry Spray	9.53
2. Rodney Edwards/Coby Edwards	8.67
3. Mathew Nash/Toby Ivey	8.42
4. Mark Quimby/Scott Quimby	7.64
5. Joey Davis	6.32

### BIG FISH

1. Jamie Johnson/Roger Johnson	2.15
--------------------------------	------

## SOUTH CAROLINA CRAPPIE ASSOC.

WATEREE

## NOVEMBER 17th

1. Chip Knight/Charles Knight	11.69
2. Roland Addy/Bob Addy	4.93
3. David Hinson/Dan Drow	2.26

## BIG FISH

1. Chip Knight/Charles Knight	1.84
-------------------------------	------

## CRAPPIE CALENDAR

DEC 1st	FLORIDA CRAPPIE CLUB	OKEECHOBEE	CLUB
DEC 1st	KANSAS CRAPPIE CLUB	CLINTON LAKE	TOY DRIVE
DEC 1st	TWIN LAKES	FISH ANYWHERE	CLASSIC
DEC 8th	BEAVER LAKE CRAPPIE ASSOC.	BEAVER LAKE	Big Crappie Challenge
DEC 8th	CHATTANOOGA CRAPPIE CLUB	CHESTER FROST PARK	CLUB
DEC 8th	FISH THE CAROLINAS	BADIN/TILLERY 2 LAKE EVENT	CLUB
DEC 8th	MAGNOLIA CRAPPIE CLUB	OKATIBBEE LAKE	CLUB
DEC 8th	PEACH STATE CRAPPIE CLUB	WEST POINT LAKE	CLUB
DEC 15th	EAST TN CRAPPIE CLUB	CHICKAMAUGA	CLUB
DEC 15th	FLORIDA CRAPPIE CLUB	CRESCENT LAKE	CLASSIC
DEC 15th	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	TIMS FORD	CLUB
DEC 16th	WAPPAPELLO	WAPPAPELLO LAKE	CLUB



# Photo Contest



## 1st Place This Month!

Juli Strametz - Calero Reservoir San Jose CA.  
( First Crappie from a float tube)  
10" Crappie on a pink/white tube, 2lb test ultralight set  
up. Caddis Float Tube. Nov. 4th

**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.

Check out [www.crappienow.com](http://www.crappienow.com) for more details.

# Photo Contest



## Honorable Mention

Jeff Strametz  
Fall Calero Reservoir Crappie.  
14" on Bobby Garland Baby Shad  
Monkey Milk. San Jose Ca



## Honorable Mention

KJ Smith  
Two crappies, one sixteen and one  
fifteen, from Shenango lake in Pa.  
Caught by my friend Valerie.

***Merry Christmas  
from Crappie NOW!***

