

CRAPPIE NOW! **DIGITAL MAGAZINE**

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Crappie.com

January 2019 - Issue #95



Catching January Crappie

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by John Neporadny

Boat graphs, or electronics, change monthly with new features and updates. Tim Blackley believes each brand offers unique, important features.



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PUBLISHER

Dan Dannenmueller

EDITOR/ SR. WRITER

Tim Huffman

IN MEMORIAM

T.J. Stallings

WRITERS

Darl Black

Vic Attardo

Ron Presley

Vernon Summerlin

John Phillips

Josh Gowan

Greg McCain

John Felsher

LAYOUT

Eric Lambert

VALUED READER

You

Contact us at:

info@crappienow.com

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Opening Cast

The competitive bass world was recently rocked by a new tournament trail called Major League Fishing (MLF). For several years, MLF has used a unique format, weighing and releasing every legal bass, and using only a handful of pros. MLF also created the number one watched TV fishing show by filming the fishermen in action from start to finish; and without a weigh-in. MLF made a major expansion and appears to be the biggest, most impressive bass trail for 2019. It pulled many of the top bass pros away from BASS and FLW. The older trails will be in rebuilding years for a while until they create their new superstars.



Crappie circuits come and go, too. Many are formed to bring bigger money to competitive crappie fishing while others are primarily a promotion platform for products. I've witnessed Crappiethon USA, US Crappie, NACA and CAST fade away. We get new trials, too. Two years ago the American Crappie Trail started and has continually grown.

Fortunately, competitive crappie fishermen are not restricted to one trail like the bass pros. There is not enough money in any one trail to make that happen. Nobody I know has made a full-time career from just crappie tournaments and sponsorships. However, there are several skilled crappie tournament fishermen, most with sponsors, who do make money fishing crappie tournaments.

The New Year is a time of hope for health and happiness. The older crowd knows the importance of good health to be able to do things, like go fishing. Happiness is a choice. Choose to be as happy as possible in good and bad situations, and that's what you'll become. Fishermen have wealth, too. Maybe or maybe not money, but memories of beautiful sunrises, fish being brought into the boat, eagles soaring, other wildlife, and just being a part of the outdoors... a wealth money can't buy.

Final thoughts: If you knew you would die in a month, which people and things would be a priority? There are no guarantees, so make those people and things your priority in 2019. Don't wait to start living or to get your life where you want it to be. You may not control how you die but you can control how you live.

Wishing you many good adventures in 2019,
May God Bless,
Tim Huffman, editor/senior writer

Cover Photo:
Ice fishing is enjoyed by
thousands of fishermen.
Vic Attardo photo

Electronic Smorgasbord

Story & photos by John Neporadny

featuring Tim Blackley



When I got into Tim Blackley's boat for a fishing trip on Kentucky Lake, I noticed he doesn't discriminate in his choice of electronics.

The crappie pro's boat featured two Lowrance units on the console and Lowrance, Humminbird and Garmin

Tim Blackley's boat console features two Lowrance units--one devoted strictly for side imaging and the other with split screens showing electronic mapping, down scanning and 2D sonar.
(Photo by Tim Blackley)



units on the front deck. Blackley noted he originally equipped his boat with the Lowrance units because those were the electronics he initially used when he started fishing tournaments. "I feel comfortable with the (Lowrance) menus and I feel like I get a better image on the down scan and side scan when I am at the console, so it is my scouting tool," Blackley said. He also has his waypoints stored in a console unit for finding marked spots and marking new spots on his electronic mapping.

Blackley added the Humminbird unit to take advantage of its 360 imaging and the Garmin model for the Panoptix LiveScope technology on the front deck.

The following tour of Blackley's boat describes the electronics he uses on the console and front deck and the purposes of each unit.

Console Mounts

Blackley runs a Lowrance HDS-10 Gen2 model and a Lowrance HDS-12

His array of electronics on the front deck of his boat gives Tim Blackley a big advantage when vertical jigging for crappie holding tight to cover.

Carbon unit on his console for scouting a general area he intends to fish. He dedicates the Gen2 model strictly to scanning right and left side imaging. The Carbon unit serves multiple purposes so Blackley usually splits its screens into mapping, down scanning and 2D sonar.

Using both down scanning and 2D sonar allows Blackley to make comparisons of what he is viewing beneath the boat. "It just gives me another perspective of what I am looking at," Blackley said. "The 2D sonar is what I had in the beginning. Sometimes I might see something that I don't see on the down scan so I just kind of compare back and forth on both of them."

When side scanning with his Gen2



unit, Blackley runs the contrast setting from 55 to 65 depending on the bottom composition. For rocky and hard bottoms Blackley sets his contrast as low as 55 but will dial it into the upper 60s for viewing mud bottoms. Blackley sets the unit's range for side scanning at three times of the depth the unit is showing (for example, if the screen shows a depth of 20 feet, Blackley sets the side scan range at 60 feet).

The Tennessee pro uses the same contrast settings for down scanning with his HDS-12 Carbon unit and mainly stays with the default settings for his 2D CHIRP sonar.

The screen color Blackley selects depends on what he wants to look for when viewing the side and down scans. He either opts for the amber, blue or black-and-white hues for looking at images on his screens. "Sometimes I feel like I get a better image on the blue if I am looking for cover," he said. "Now if I am looking for suspended fish on the down scan I will run the black-and-white." He chooses amber when viewing objects along a soft bottom and switches to blue for looking at targets on harder bottoms.

Blackley varies the electronic mapping on his chart plotter feature of the HDS-12 Carbon unit from the Lowrance maps to Navionics charts depending on which map chip is best for the lake he is fishing.

Front Deck Mounts

The front deck of Blackley's boat consists of a conglomeration of electronics and wiring that helps him pinpoint crappie and their hideouts.

A Lowrance HDS-9 fishfinder/chartplotter is networked with his Lowrance HDS-12 Carbon unit to allow Blackley to find his GPS waypoints while scouting the area with his trolling motor. He uses this unit strictly for mapping so no transducer is hooked to the HDS-9.



Five electronics units strategically mounted on his boat allows Tim Blackley to find crappie hot spots and stay on top of the fish. His results are good.

The next unit on his front deck is a Humminbird Solix 12 with a 360 imaging transducer attached to the trolling motor mount. When scanning with 360 imaging, Blackley sets the unit for front scanning only because he is just targeting the cover in front of him. "I get an idea of where I want to be (with the front view) and I have already scanned most of the other places at the console," he said. "So I already have marked what I am looking for to fish and I am

only concentrating on what is in front of the boat or what is within 180 degrees around the front of the boat.”

The tournament veteran usually relies on the factory settings for the contrast and sensitivity on his Solix unit. “I hardly ever vary that,” Blackley said. “Sometimes if I am on hard surface bottoms or muddy bottoms I will have to adjust the contrast and sensitivity to whatever the bottom contour is.” When scanning with the front view feature, Blackley sets the viewing range at 35 feet. He prefers viewing the Solix screen in the amber hue when using the front scan.

“You can see every fish in a brush pile or stake bed, which way they are swimming, how deep...”

The third unit on Blackley’s front deck is a Garmin echoMAP CHIRP 93sv model with a Panoptix LiveScope transducer mounted on the trolling motor shaft about 4 inches away from the Humminbird 360 transducer. “One of the issues I found that I have with the Garmin (Panoptix) is it is hooked to the trolling motor shaft or the barrel of the trolling motor so whichever way the trolling motor is pointing is which way you will see on your screen,” he said. “So it is easier for me to find the brush, stumps, stake beds or whatever cover I am fishing with the 360 because it is stationary and you know that the brush is either to the right or left of you.”

“Once I get zeroed in with the 360 and I get within 20 feet of (the cover), then I can kind of dial down with it with the Garmin Panoptix and know exactly where the fish are in the cover and I know where to position my bait,” Blackley said.

Blackley keeps his Garmin unit in the factory default settings when using the Panoptix LiveScope feature, which shows a live image on his screen. “You can see every fish in a brush pile or stake bed, which way they are swimming, how deep they are and when they are coming to bite your bait,” Blackley said.

His system of electronics comes in handy when spider rigging for suspended crappie. The console units direct him to the right area while the Humminbird 360 narrows down his search and the Panoptix allows him to stay right on top of the fish. “You can see them out there swimming (with the Panoptix) and you know what depth they are and which direction you need to go to try and catch them,” Blackley said.

Blackley’s array of electronics worked perfectly for us at Kentucky Lake in tough conditions with bluebird skies after the passage of a cold front. While others struggled to catch fish that day, Blackley pinpointed the cover with his console and front deck units. Once he dialed in the cover, we were able to catch crappie despite the unfavorable conditions by vertical jigging brush piles or stakebeds and watching the Panoptix LiveScope to see how fish reacted to our baits.

 - John Neporadny



Bobby Garland Factory Tour

by Tim Huffman

"The little package of crappie baits we pull off the peg at the bait shop is a more complicated process than most fishermen realize. A recent tour of the Gene Larew/Bobby Garland facilities in Tulsa, Oklahoma revealed an efficient factory with people who take pride in producing quality products, mainly for bass and crappie. The company is small-town friendly with a big-time, nation-wide impact." Tim Huffman, editor/senior writer CrappieNow



Chris Lindenberg, owner since October 2006, says, "In the beginning it was tough having to reestablish the name, product, quality and consistency,

Jeanne and Tim Huffman with owner/
president, Chris Lindenberg.





but over the years we have solved problems, created great customers and grown. I'm finally learning to relax and enjoy the ride.

"People probably think I'm just saying this but I mean it...my number one goal since buying the business has been to make a product that helps people catch fish," says Lindenberg. "That's our motivator, to get people on the water, using our baits and having a good time. In the long run, the results have been

Gary Dollahon and Jeanne Huffman display a stringer of fish; Oh wait, that's a pour of plastic baits after they come out of the mold.

return customers. A highlight for me is seeing photos and listening to people who have caught fish using our baits."

Colors

Every fisherman has a favorite

The machine where plastic, colors, mold, vacuum, pressure, heating and cooling all combine to form plastic baits.



jig color. Gary Dollahon, sales and marketing, says colors have evolved over time and are a direct result of input from fishermen. "The philosophy of adding a new color is different for me and Chris (Lindenberg). I love to add colors but our warehouse is full of different baits and colors so inventory is a nightmare for Chris. We have 91 colors of Baby Shad. Each year we have about three colors in mind to add but by the time we print our catalog we will have six or more. The colors are suggestions from our pro staff and customers, but sometimes when creating those colors for them we will come up with something different than what we expect but it looks great so we add it, too."

Dollahon continues, "We really haven't dropped colors in the Bobby Garland line because they all sell and if we drop a color we know fishermen would be ringing the phone off the wall. Our dealers don't like so many colors but they have trouble deciding which colors not to carry."

Lindenberg says, "Crappie are so much more color sensitive than bass, it's unbelievable. There is no doubt that crappie are more selective about which colors they'll hit."

Making Baits

The following are highlights from Lindenberg about the bait-making process.

One. Plastic arrives in drums in three grades: soft; medium and hard.

Two. Lure type is decided including whether it will be a solid color, laminate or a front-back color.

Three. For two-color baits, a gated mold is used to open the gate at the precise time to allow the two colors to run together for a front-back colored bait.

Four. The color recipe is loaded into the tank. Pressures and temperatures are checked. Plastic temperatures are set at 380 degrees.

Cool Facts

The Baby Shad mold creates 158 baits per pour.

It takes 36 hours to go from plastic in a barrel to packaged baits.

The #1 selling color for crappie is Monkey Milk.

All Bobby Garland plastics are made in the USA.

Key People

Chris Lindenberg, owner/president

Gary Dollahon, sales/marketing

George Toalson, plant mgr/lure designer

Eli Smith, office mgr/inside sales/product traffic

Contact Info

www.bobbygarlandcrappie.com

Five. The mold is poured with plastic. Crappie molds often produce over 100 baits per pour. The mold is chilled down to where the plastic can be handled, about 30 to 50 seconds.

Six. The plastic is pulled from the mold by hand. It's cooled and allowed to harden for 24 hours.

Seven. Each bait is individually picked (pulled off) the poured plastic.

Eight. Baits are packaged and shipped.

Other notes: Left-over plastics can be ground, re-melted and used; baits are quality controlled three times, when they

come out of the mold, when picked and when packaged; the company will be going from six machines to ten by the start of 2019.

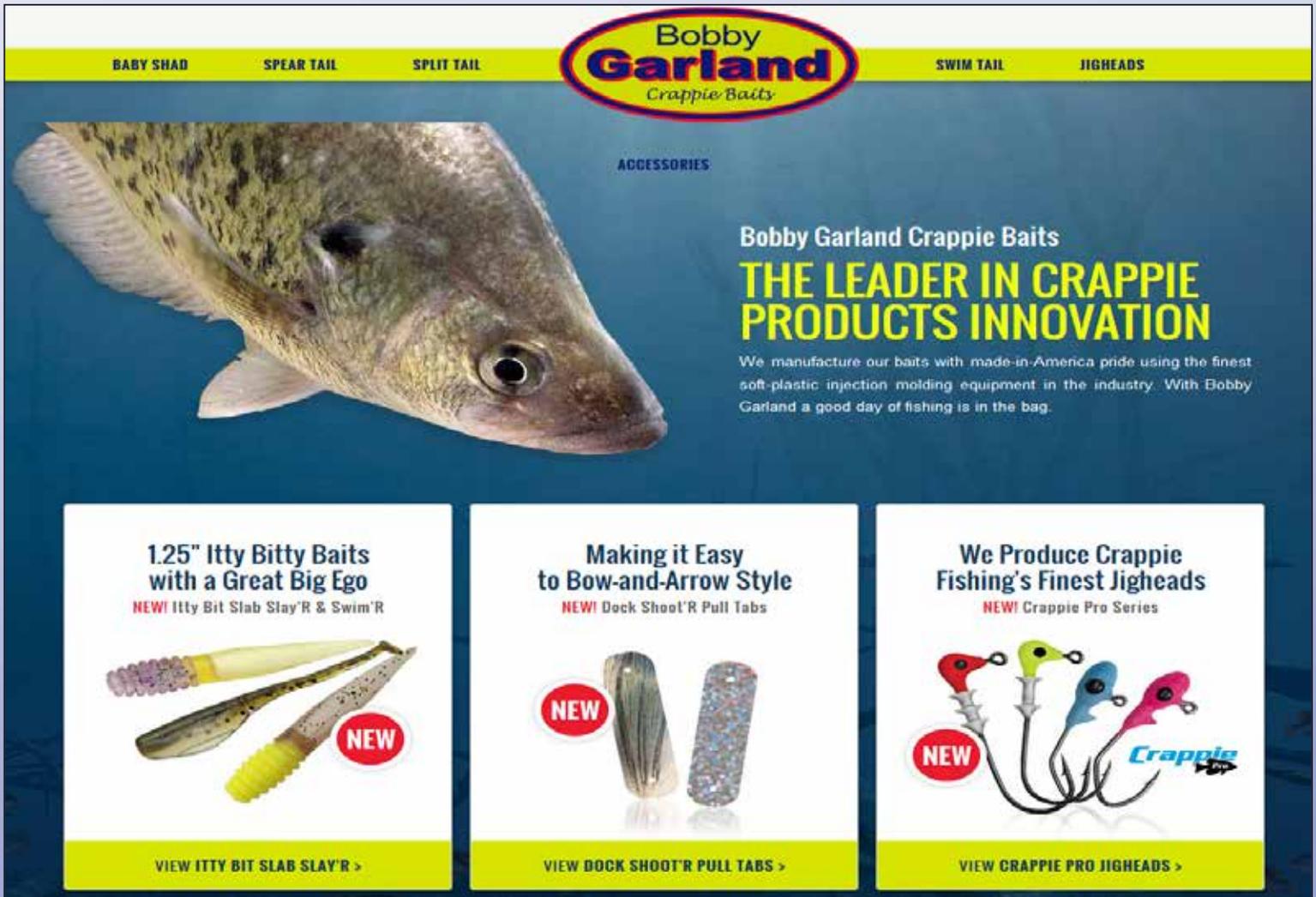
Their crappie bait lineup includes: Baby Shad; Baby Shad Swim'R; Little Bit Swim'R; Scent Wiggler; Crappie Shooter; Little Bit Slab Slay'R; 2" Slab Slay'R; 3" Slab Slay'R; Minnow Mind'R; Slab Doct'R; Split-Tail Minnow; Pile Diver; Slab Hunt'R; Stroll'R; Swimming Minnow. Jig heads include: Crappie Pro Head Doct'R; Mo'Glo; Overbite Sickle; and Bobby Garland Itty Bit. Accessories include: Crappie Rattles; Dock Shoot'R Pull Tab; Slab Ticklers; Mo'Glow Slab Jam.

Final Thoughts

"It's been fun watching the community of fishermen using our product," says Dollahon. "Its popularity continues to grow. We also are very supportive of kids fishing and believe in that."

Lindenberg says, "Fisherman can see the baits in the packaging before they buy them. The baits are aligned beside each other so the sizes and colors can be seen. We want our baits to be a good value, catch fish and give the fisherman a good experience."

 *Tim Huffman*



Bobby Garland
Crappie Baits

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NEW! Itty Bit Slab Slay'R & Swim'R

Making it Easy to Bow-and-Arrow Style
NEW! Dock Shoot'R Pull Tabs

We Produce Crappie Fishing's Finest Jigheads
NEW! Crappie Pro Series

VIEW ITTY BIT SLAB SLAY'R >

VIEW DOCK SHOOT'R PULL TABS >

VIEW CRAPPIE PRO JIGHEADS >



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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.

NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL ANGLERS ASSOCIATION

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

Crappie Basics #178

Invest in Fishing Memories

Everyone looks at money verses reward. Spending \$1500 for a couch and chair that will last several years seems reasonable and can be justified. You have tangible items in return for your money.

Spend \$1500 on a fishing trip with your family or buddies and that money is gone after a few days to a week. How do you justify the expense?

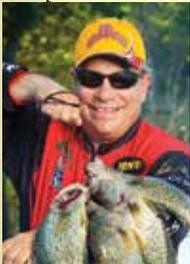
Fast Forward Seven Years...

Your couch and chair has been replaced. They are gone forever.

But the fishing trip remains in your memory. You and the others enjoyed the trip, enjoyed the memories for seven years and the memories will continue until the grave...the laughs, the fish, the beautiful sunrises and friendships. Use money wisely but don't pass up an occasional opportunity to invest in fishing memories. -TH

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MR. CRAPPIE Slab Shaker™

Jackhammering the Bottom for Iced Slabs

by Vic Attardo

I don't know how those workers who jackhammer cement, macadam or rock, manage to keep it up. Driving by a construction site where a lone guy stands over a pneumatic beater, legs braced for balance while his overlapping stomach and orange safety vest vibrate to the hammer's pounding rhythm, forces me to close my truck windows and rush away to avoid the noise and vibration. I say this with the background that as a kid, I worked in a finishing steel mill for two summers and there are very few things as deafening and dirty as a steel mill.

So when I told a friend about the need to repeatedly strike the bottom of a silted river with a tungsten jig to summon iced over crappie to my bait, I felt a little guilty calling it "jackhammering." If you work for a living with a jackhammer, forgive me, but I haven't come up with a better description of what has to be done to make this tactic work. And the tactic does work.

It was on the silted Connecticut River with my friend and guide, Jamie Vladyka, and a Vexilar between my snow-suited legs that I insisted it was necessary to pound the bottom to get the crappie's attention.

An early February morning had dawned bright and beautiful on a sidearm of the dual-state flow but the first fishing of the day was disappointing. Vladyka had caught a smaller crappie or two next to an island shoreline under 10-12 inches of ice

but these weren't the fish we were hoping for. With Vladyka covering the shallows, I decided to stay more to the middle of the channel. In the 60-yard wide gap between the main land and the island he was only over about four feet of water while my sonar read 6.7 feet.

The Vexilar's wide red band indicated a soft bottom while an occasionally "blip" passed suspended in the water column and above my jig, which I lightly danced a foot off the river floor.

When one blip -- in the form of a colored band -- went over my jig I aggressively brought it up to the fish's level, a big no-no because in the natural scheme of things natural baits do not chase the things that could eat them. Bothered by my own stupidity, I opened the bail on the spinning reel and the jig dropped to the bottom. With the sonar's gain set fairly high the red band on the Vexilar expanded upward. I had disturbed the soft bottom enough to puff the marl and get a fresh reading. Screw around with the sonar's gain enough and you might be able to receive North Korean radio -- if only the Vexi had a speaker.

Of course, crappie aren't supposed to "feed down" but this one blip rode down

Good crappie from the ice. Days like these prove that a proper presentation in the right spot can produce good fish,





the sonar scale and when I bounced the jig off the bottom, again splaying the marl, then raised the bait a foot up, the crappie took it hard.

It turned out to be a fine 14-inch fish. In the distance I actually heard a construction crew along the river with a bulldozer digging into the earth while someone was jackhammering on the road. Maybe that's why I thought of the technique as "jackhammering."

Catching the next big crappie wasn't easy, but it did entail the bottom-bouncing

A sonar should have the gain set high. The red band expanded upward when the soft bottom was disturbed to puff the marl and get a fresh reading.

technique.

Across the river's side channel, the crappie were not ganged up. They were in the channel and moving around but not grouped in packs. Though I worked the same hole for another ten minutes, to catch my next good fish I had to find



another divot.

This is not unusual in frozen crappie fishing. Sometimes another crappie is circulating a few yards away but simply will not come to where you're sitting. But plop a jig closer within the circle of its lair and it will rush to your bait like a lost puppy. This is precisely why you start the morning drilling a Swiss cheese of holes around your general area. You want to get the hole drilling done first thing so as not to disturb the scene when it's time to go "Hole Hopping."

Still listening to the nearby construction -- unmistakable across the empty frozen surface -- I dropped another tungsten jig to the bottom. My sonar was not showing anything exciting so I decided to slap the bottom lightly. From about six inches up -- as determined by my rod tip -- I slapped the bottom several times. On the back of my Clam Snow Drop jig was a pink micro plastic. Most

When a crappie comes out of the black do not change what you're doing. If jigging, continue to jig; if holding it still, remain still. Fish like this one will often take it.

times I like a tungsten jig because its size is appropriate for cold-water crappie yet it carries enough weight to reach the bottom quickly in deeper water. Of course, this water wasn't deep but the jig profile was still good and the weight proved to perfect for jackhammering.

Disturbing the bottom in this way seems to send a signal to fish and it might actually release macro invertebrates from the river floor. Check you're take-home crappie for larva such as midge worms. Midge worms are small but often red in color. This coloration makes them easy to identify.

I didn't jackhammer steadily but instead gave the tactic substantial pauses

between action. Pretty soon another fat blip, red at the core, green on the sides, approached the jig.

When a crappie comes out of the black do not change what you're doing. If you're jigging, continue to jig; if you're holding the jig steady continue to hold it steady and if you're occasionally pounding the bottom, take this action as well. The next crappie came to my jackhammering jig and engulfed it. Now I had my second 14-inch black crappie.

By this time Vladyka had moved out into deeper water in the channel and I'd told him about sending smoke signals over the bottom. I think he followed my suggestion but in any case he soon had two of his best crappie working a tungsten jig and pink soft plastic.

Other anglers had appeared on the sidearm of the river but they didn't get the quality crappie we bagged.

Rhythm is an important factor in the success of this winter technique; however no one rhythm is required. It's more important that when a crappie approaches -- as seen on your sonar screen -- you don't do anything too different.

For my regular rhythm I like to bounce the jig a few times from a drop of four to six inches and then hold the jig steady a foot or so above the bottom. Actually, it's not holding it too steady as I like to flick the jig with an ever-so-light palsy shake while keeping the jig at the same depth. The shake is designed to keep the micro plastic in motion yet not having it appear unnatural. Wiggle a plastic too hard and it looks false. I suggest you practice you're subtle jigging motion while watching the bait at the top of the ice hole.

I've taken this jackhammering technique with me into the frozen waters of New York, Vermont, Connecticut and Pennsylvania. In some places the addition of a small larva such as waxworms, mousies and spikes -- all are a cream or buff-colored soft-bodied worm -- is necessary to make it work. It's just darn incomprehensible why I can successful

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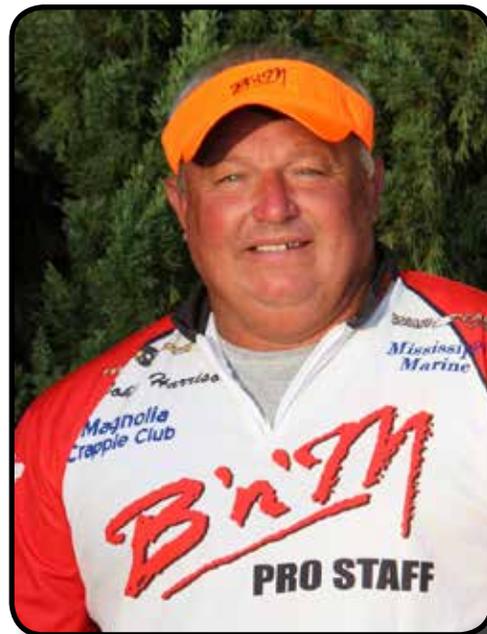
fish, time after time on one lake, with just a soft plastic trailer and yet on another lake, not far away, a piece of live bait is necessary. When I truly figure that out, I'll telegram the world.

The fact remains that disturbing the bottom, sending up a puff of marl, either as an attractor or a release of bottom life, is a tactic that works.

I call it jackhammering, you call it what you want.

 - Vic Attardo

“Patience is so important. So many fishermen are looking ahead with the “Grass is always greener” in their eyes. There are times you drop a jig in and the crappie slams it on the way down. A couple of those and you have a fast pattern. But the majority of the time it’s not like that. A barometric change you can see in the actions of quail, deer, fish and other animals. Or, the rains or wind can change the water color. During those times, dropping a jig down and pulling it out after a few seconds can lead to very few bites. I’ve guided for years and have learned slower is usually better when jig fishing.” John Harrison, BnM and War Eagle pro staff, JH Guide Service 662-983-5999.



2019 Crappie USA

Tournament Trail Schedule

Crappie USA

220 Mohawk Ave
Louisville KY 40209
502-384-5924



| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Barkley/Kentucky Lakes, Kuttawa, KY.... | 11/02/18 - 11/03/18 |
| 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 |

www.crappieusa.com

Tactics for

Story and photos by Troy Basso

Guntersville Crappie

When we hear about destination crappie lakes, it tends to be the fertile Mississippi lakes or some Texas reservoirs. What we don't hear is the Tennessee River system. However, it has some of the best crappie fishing in the southeast and rivals the so called top five lakes every day. The best of the Tennessee River lakes is Guntersville Lake in Alabama.

From the dam at Nickajack Lake to the dam at Guntersville is 75 miles of pristine lowland reservoir. It happens to be Alabama's largest lake with 69,000 acres of water, hundreds of bays, creeks and rivers. The average depth is 15 to 17 feet with drops to 60 feet in the main river channel. The lake was created as a part of the new deal project in 1939. Prior to that, the river was too shallow for any navigable traffic. As a result, it is a lake that consistently puts out 2 to 2.5-pound crappie. The black crappie are the "jewels" of this area because of the numbers and size.

I fished the lake recently with the Frogg Toggs pro team of Kevin McCarley and Stephen Haygood. They are very excited that their home lake is gaining national attention. In fact, for 2019, both the American Crappie Trail and Crappie USA are holding national qualifiers at the lake, February and March respectively. When pushed for what the team thought it would take to be competitive on this lake, the response was not surprising. They

both agreed that single day weights of 12 to 14 pounds should be the norm for the season, depending upon the current. Haygood says for things to get good you need some current in the main lake. McCarley agreed but added that when the current is nonexistent, they have found the multitude of docks and boat houses to still be productive.

I asked them exactly why this lake is so special, and the comments were very intriguing. The lake has so many variations of crappie habitat that any technique can be productive on this lake. McCarley said to be competitive on this reservoir, a fisherman needs to have an arsenal of techniques to use.

Since the lake was, at one-point, lowland forest, its full of stump fields and brush. It is a spider rigging dream lake. One of the best areas to catch fish spider rigging is the Browns Creek and South Sauty area. The sides of both channels are full of cover and structure. Perhaps one of the most overlooked areas to run spider rigs is in Raccoon creek. This creek has a small channel adjacent to some expansive stump fields.

The multitude of creek channels and small rivers flowing into Guntersville make

To catch fat crappie like these in cold weather, you must brave the elements and use your depth finder.



GUNTERSVILLE CRAPPIE

it very appealing to both long line trolling and the pulling of crankbaits. Pulling Cranks is not something you see a lot of anglers doing on this lake, so they feel that it's an advantage for a pro angler to be able to do this. Of course, as Haygood was speaking, we caught our best fish of the day pulling Jenko crankbaits in the mouth of South Sauty Creek. However, the main river channel has long ledges and shelves that hold lots of structure and of course, lots of crappie. Ledges in 20 to 25 feet of water seem to be the most productive. A word to the wise here, this lake is full of trophy class largemouth and they will smash a crappie crank bait.

The lake also has lots of bridges, a type of structure that's not on every lake. There are hundreds of bridge pilings throughout this lake and nearly all of them hold fish year-round. These bridge pilings are always more productive when they are pulling current or running the generators. All the bridges are not equal, says McCarley. The best bridges have lots of concrete and rebar sticking up around the pilings. These tend to hold more and better fish. Some of the best bridges are in North Sauty creek. We had our best hour while fishing a place that locals and regulars know very well, called the blown-out bridge. It's what's left of an old bridge was blown up. The remnants of the old bridge are now at the bottom of the creek channel and have turned into housing for big crappie.

The best bridges have lots of concrete and rebar sticking up around the pilings.

Guntersville is also one of the TVA lakes that has allowed some shoreline development. That development has created what is perhaps the south's best lake for dock shooting. McCarley says there



Stephen Haygood and Kevin McCarley says shooting docks is a great way to catch crappie at Guntersville, but many other techniques will work, too.

are boat docks and boat houses scattered along the shorelines and both fish well, but the docks are better to fish than the houses. Most of the docks have man made brush piles under them and these hold fish year-round. Roseberry Creek seems to be the number one choice for good docks.

Lastly is the 949 miles of shoreline that is littered with structure from rip-rap to entire trees. Tournaments have been won on this lake by simply casting jigs into the trees. The creek behind Goose Pond Marina is a great example of these, with trees in the water and scattered small stumps everywhere. We caught a lot of good fish just casting Charlie Brewers Sliders into these treetops.



Janice and Josh Stinson ending a great day on the lake. Long lining was their successful tactic.

Considering the daunting size of this lake, and the litany of small towns along its shores, it's tough to find a starting point. The answer is simply Scottsboro Alabama. Scottsboro is a quiet little fishing town in Jackson County. Its proximity to some of the lakes best fishing make it the perfect launch point for a fishing trip. A great place to stay is the cabins at Jackson County Park. If you're camping, consider Jackson County Park and the Goose Pond Colony. KC's BBQ and The Docks in Goose Pond Colony are very good spots to eat. A reservation may be required in the busy season.

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- Troy Basso



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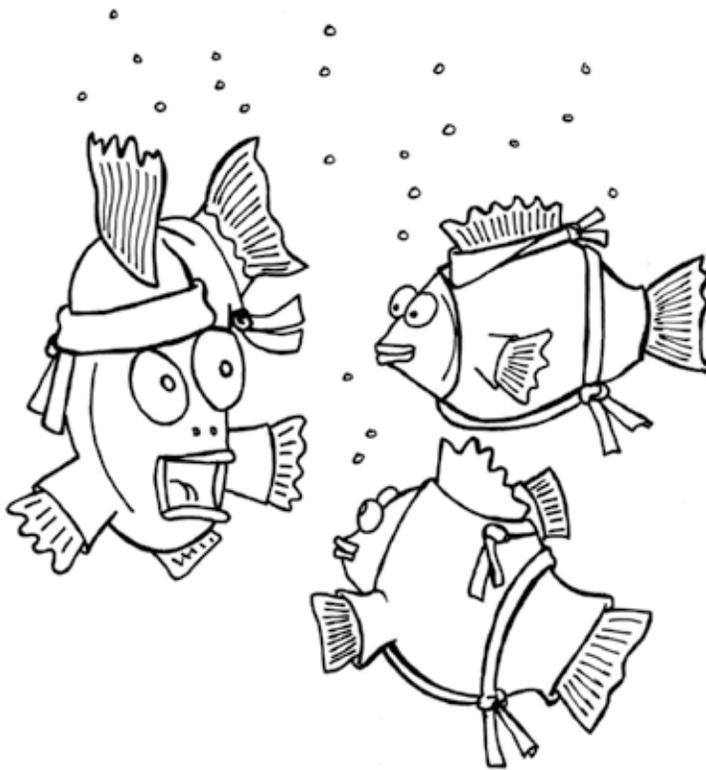
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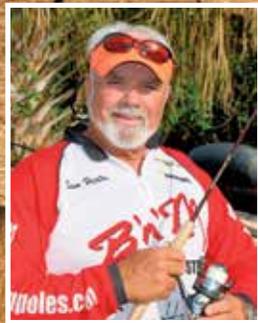
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Crappie Basics #179

Who Needs a Guide?

People have enjoyed the services of guides for many decades. The following are a few of the reasons and tips for using a guide.

(1) Fishermen with a boat going to a new lake. If a fisherman is spending three days or more at a lake there is already an investment of travel, motel or campsite and typical miscellaneous expenses. Hire a guide the first day to show you how to catch fish: the technique, presentation, baits/rigs and general areas. Spend the rest of your trip catching crappie instead of just fishing.

(2) People who fish only a few days a year. You don't have to worry about boat maintenance or gear. Just go out and catch fish.

(3) To learn a lake, technique or electronics. Hire a guide to teach you how to run electronics, spider rig or whatever you want to learn.

(4) Vacationing. It's often fun to throw in a day or two of fishing while traveling new destinations.

Guides cost money but their job is tough and they have a lot of expenses. Most are worth every dollar. Charges vary greatly with different regions, length of trip and other variables. But, the experience can be fantastic and worth the investment. -TH





Crappie Stir Fry

8-10 ounces crappie fillets, chopped
 3 tablespoons canola oil
 1 cup green onions, diced
 1 cup fresh mushrooms, diced
 1 cup fresh asparagus, diced
 1 cup green bell pepper, diced
 1/2 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning
 1 garlic clove, minced
 2 tablespoons teriyaki sauce
 Cooked rice or noodles (follow package directions)

Heat wok or skillet and canola oil. When hot add and stir all the ingredients except the rice/noodles. Stir fry until fish is done. Toss rice/noodles and serve with desired sauce (soy, chili etc).

Jambalaya Grits

2 tablespoons bacon grease
 2 tablespoons flour
 1/2 cup chopped onion
 1 chopped green pepper
 1/2 cup chopped celery
 1 cup quick grits crumbled
 1 cup peeled and chopped fresh tomatoes
 1 cup ground ham
 Cooked bacon

In a heavy skillet, heat bacon grease and gradually add flour, stirring constantly until roux becomes light brown. Add onion, green pepper and celery and cook 5 minutes. Cook grits according to package directions and add to roux. Add tomatoes and ham. Sprinkle with bacon and serve immediately.

Fish Cakes

This is a fast way to use leftover fish for a scrumptious breakfast or for snacks when fishing. For breakfast, I prefer honey, you may rather have ketchup. If you're on the water, just eat 'em – you don't have time for condiments.

1 cup of fish leftover fish (or put a few raw

pieces in the microwave to cook)
 1/2 cup mashed potatoes
 1/2 chopped onion
 Garlic salt to taste
 Cajun Seasoning
 Cornmeal
 Ketchup or honey optional

Mix fish, potatoes, and onion with some garlic salt and a little Red Fish Seasoning. Shape into patties, roll in cornmeal and fry. Serve with ketchups or honey.

Onion Soup

1/2 pound sliced white onions
 1/4 cup butter
 2 tablespoons corn oil
 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
 1 quart chicken broth
 1 quart beef broth
 8 slices French bread
 Shredded Swiss cheese
 Grated Parmesan

Sauté onions in butter and oil until onions are transparent, but not well browned. When tender, turn heat to lowest point and sprinkle with flour, stirring vigorously. Pour into Dutch oven and stir in broth. Heat thoroughly and divide among 8 oven-proof bowls. Float a slice of bread atop each serving. Mix equal parts of cheese to smooth paste and spread over bread. Place all bowls on oven rack 4 inches from broiler. Broil until cheese melts. Serve at once.

Honey-Baked Wild Christmas Turkey

The wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), native to North America, is the heaviest member of the galliformes (chicken, grouse, quail, pheasant). There are about 256 species worldwide. Turkeys, especially males, are known for their long, dark, fan-shaped tail and glossy bronze wings. The male is substantially larger than the female and his feathers have areas of red, green,

copper, bronze, and gold iridescence. Female feathers are duller overall, in shades of brown and gray.

Males typically have a beard consisting of modified feathers that stick out from the breast. Beards average nine inches long. In some populations, 10 to 20 percent of females have a beard (you aren't held responsible for shooting a hen in drag) and are usually shorter and thinner than the male. The average weight of the adult male is 18 pounds and the adult female is eight pounds. The record-sized adult male wild turkey is 30 pounds, whereas a big domestic turkey approaches 82 pounds.

Every hunter I've asked about cooking wild turkey drumsticks says they don't because there is so little meat there; just a lot of ligaments. The breast is all that reaches their tables.

- 10- to 12-pound wild turkey
- 6 tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon coarse black pepper
- Stuffing (see below)
- 3/4 cup chopped onion
- 2 cups white wine
- 1/2 cup chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon parsley flakes
- 1 stick melted butter
- 1 teaspoon Creole seasoning

Brush turkey with warm honey and then sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place on rack in large baking pan. Place stuffing in turkey. Mix onion, wine, broth, and parsley, and then add butter and Creole seasoning. Baste bird with mixture. Place in oven and roast at 325 degrees for 4 hours, basting, occasionally with wine mixture.

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- 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

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TWIN LAKES CRAPIE CLUB

TWIN LAKES/FISH ANYWHERE

| | |
|----------------------------------|------|
| 1. Danny Todd/Sammy Tidwell | 7.48 |
| 2. Michael McGregor/Jeff Outland | 6.37 |
| 3. John Feagen/Angie Feagen | 4.51 |

BIG FISH

| | |
|----------------------------------|------|
| 1. Michael McGregor/Jeff Outland | 1.48 |
|----------------------------------|------|

MIDDLE TENNESSEE CRAPPIE CLUB

TIM'S FORD

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| 1. Joey Davis | 8.91 |
| 2. Matt/Evan | 7.52 |
| 3. Robert/Larry | 6.91 |
| 4. Coby Edwards | 5.93 |
| 5. Toby I./Dwight B. | 5.82 |

BIG FISH

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| 1. Joey Davis | 1.37 |
| 2. Toby I./Dwight B. | 1.37 |

WAPPAPELLO CRAPPIE CLUB

WAPPAPELLO LAKE

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| 1. Maddox/McMillen | 7.36 |
| 2. Channell/Fowler | 6.87 |
| 3. Troph/Younger | 6.82 |
| 4. Chism/Chism | 6.72 |
| 5. Mayberry | 6.58 |

BIG FISH

| | |
|-------------|------|
| 1. Mayberry | 1.83 |
|-------------|------|

CENTRAL ILLINOIS CRAPPIE CLUB

LAKE SHELBYVILLE

| | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| 1. Frank Jr/Jeff Revell | 8.41 |
| 2. Rick Clifton/Bob Sarko | 8.15 |
| 3. Chase Painter/Mick Painter | 7.7 |
| 4. Brian Cleland/Dave Birch | 7.41 |
| 5. Josh Nast/Dustin Reynolds | 7.25 |

TWIN LAKES CRAPPIE CLUB

KENTUCKY/BARCLAY LAKES

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| DECEMBER 1st | |
| 1. Mitch Tidwell/Josh Lovett | 10.48 |
| 2. Austin Brown/Buddy Coy | 10.45 |
| 3. Mike Sheppard/Tony Sheppard | 10.26 |
| 4. Danny/Sammy | 9.68 |
| 5. Chris/James | 9.08 |

BIG FISH

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| 1. Mitch Tidwell/Josh Lovett | 2.35 |
|------------------------------|------|

CHATTANOOGA CRAPPIE CLUB

CHESTER FROST PARK

| | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| DECEMBER 8th | |
| 1. Mike Johnston/Michael Ray | 9.84 |
| 2. Bryan Ainslie/Gavin Ainslie | 7.77 |

BIG FISH

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| 1. Mike Johnston/Michael Ray | 1.68 |
|------------------------------|------|

FISH THE CAROLINAS

BADIN/TILLERY

| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| DECEMBER 8th | |
| 1. K Hawkins/B McGuirt | 12 |
| 2. J Landon/B Rayburn | 10.97 |
| 3. R Riley/D Fulton | 10.37 |
| 4. A Outlaw/J Outlaw | 10.09 |
| 5. T McGhee/S Suttle | 9.91 |

BIG FISH

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| 1. K Hawkins/B McGuirt | 1.92 |
|------------------------|------|

MAGNOLIA CRAPPIE CLUB

OKATIBBEE LAKE

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| DECEMBER 8th | |
| 1. Vick Finkley | 8.73 |
| 2. Bob Robinson/Elizabeth Robinson | 8.23 |
| 3. Lance Evans/John Harrison | 8.03 |
| 4. Rick Moody/Shane Moody | 7.77 |
| 5. Dale Abernathy/Eric Stover | 7.55 |

BIG FISH

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| 1. Bob Robinson/Elizabeth Robinson | 1.68 |
|------------------------------------|------|



EAST TN CRAPPIE CLUB

CHICKAMAUGA LAKE

DECEMBER 15th

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Neal Alvis/Scott Bunch | 10.16 |
| 2. Mike Johnston/Brian Howard | 8.73 |
| 3. Bryan Ainslie/Gavin Ainslie | 6.77 |
| 4. Darren Caughron/Matt Xenos | 6.76 |
| 5. Ricky Watts | 6.23 |

BIG FISH

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| 1. Neal Alvis/Scott Bunch | 1.68 |
|---------------------------|------|

FLORIDA CRAPPIE CLUB

CRESCENT LAKE

DECEMBER 15th

| | |
|-----------------|-------|
| 1. Mike/Jackie | 10.23 |
| 2. Darryl/Teri | 9.99 |
| 3. Dave/Ken | 9.86 |
| 4. Fred/Charles | 9.5 |
| 5. John Young | 9.02 |

BIG FISH

| | |
|----------------|------|
| 1. Mike/Jackie | 2.39 |
|----------------|------|

MIDDLE TENNESSEE CRAPPIE CLUB

TIM'S FORD

DECEMBER 15th

| | |
|---------------|-------|
| 1. Joey Davis | 10.57 |
| 2. JW Jackson | 6.53 |

BIG FISH

| | |
|---------------|------|
| 1. Joey Davis | 1.81 |
|---------------|------|

WAPPAPELLO

WAPPAPELLO LAKE

DECEMBER 16th

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| 1. Troph/Younger | 8.8 |
| 2. Chism/Chism | 8.29 |
| 3. Guiling/Conner | 8.05 |
| 4. Fowler/Chennell | 7.65 |
| 5. Roper/Stearns | 6.84 |

BIG FISH

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Troph/Younger | 2.1 |
|------------------|-----|

| | | | | |
|-----|-----------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| JAN | 6th | CHATTANOOGA CRAPPIE CLUB | CHESTER FROST PARK | CLUB |
| JAN | 12th | FISH THE CAROLINAS | GREENWOOD LAKE | CLUB |
| JAN | 12th | FLORIDA CRAPPIE CLUB | HARRIS CHAIN | CLUB |
| JAN | 12th | PEACH STATE CRAPPIE CLUB | LAKE OCONEE | CLUB |
| JAN | 19th | BEAVER LAKE CRAPPIE ASSOCIATION | BEAVER LAKE | CLUB |
| JAN | 19th | CRAPPIE ANGLERS OF TEXAS | LAKE O' THE PINES | QUALIFIER |
| JAN | 19th | EAST TN CRAPPIE CLUB | WATTS BAR LAKE | CLUB |
| JAN | 19th | MIDDLE TENNESSEE | NORMANDY | CLUB |
| JAN | 19th | PEACH STATE CRAPPIE CLUB | CRESENT LAKE | CLUB |
| JAN | 19th | SOUTH CAROLINA CRAPPIE ASSOC | WYLIE | CLUB |
| JAN | 19th | WAPPALLO | WAPPAPELLO LAKE | CLUB |
| JAN | 26TH | FLORIDA CRAPPIE CLUB | ST JOHNS RIVER/LAKE GEORGE | CLUB |
| JAN | 26th | LAKE OKEECHOBEE CRAPPIE SERIES | LAKE OKEECHOBEE | 4th QUALIFIER |
| FEB | 1st - 2nd | CRAPPIE MASTERS | ST JOHNS RIVER | 1st LEG FL STATE CHAMP |
| FEB | 2nd | BEAVER LAKE CRAPPIE ASSOCIATION | BEAVER LAKE | CLUB |
| FEB | 2nd | FISH THE CAROLINAS | LAKE NORMAN | CLUB |
| FEB | 2nd | MAGNOLIA CRAPPIE CLUB | LAKW WASHINGTON | CLUB |



Photo Contest



1st Place This Month!

Adam Hammonds
14 inch and 15 inch white crappie caught October 30th
2018 Jackson lake island Alabama river.

Photo Contest



Honorable Mention
Cheyenne Strametz
Calero Reservoir - San Jose
12" Black Crappie

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 for more details.

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| Club | Contact | Link |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
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| BEAVER LAKE CRAPPIE CLUB | PAYTON USERY | FACEBOOK |
| CAPITOL CRAPPIE CLUB | AUSTIN KNEESKERN | FACEBOOK |
| CAROLINA CRAPPIE ASSOCIATION | RICK EUDY | FACEBOOK |
| CENTRAL ALABAMA CRAPPIE CLUB | DAN DANNANMUELLER/JONATHAN PHILLIPS | FACEBOOK |
| CENTRAL ARKANSAS CRAPPIE CLUB | JASON WESTERBERG | FACEBOOK |
| CENTRAL ILLINOIS CRAPPIE CLUB | JOE SCHRADER/GREG FOLEY | FACEBOOK |
| CHATTANOOGA CRAPPIE CLUB | MIKE JOHNSTON/JIM EDMISTER | FACEBOOK |
| CRAPPIE ANGLERS OF TEXAS | JAY REVE | FACEBOOK |
| CRAPPIE MASTERS | MIKE VALENTINE | FACEBOOK |
| CRAPPIE USA | DARRELL VAN VACTOR | FACEBOOK |
| CRAPPIENUTZ MS | ROBERT SMITH/JOE FAIRCLOTH | FACEBOOK |
| EAST TENNESSEE CRAPPIE CLUB | MATT | FACEBOOK |
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| GRAND LAKE CRAPPIE SERIES OH | JEFF | WEBSITE |
| HOI CRAPPIE CLUB | CHAD ANDERSON | FACEBOOK |
| INDIANNA SLAB MASTERS | JOE LONG/DAMON PHILLIPS | FACEBOOK |
| KANSAS CRAPPIE CLUB | JOE BRAGG/FRANK HAIDUSEK | FACEBOOK |
| MAGNOLIA CRAPPIE CLUB | MICHAEL NOWELL/ROGER WOMACK | FACEBOOK |
| MIDDLE TENNESSEE CRAPPIE CLUB | TOBY IVEY | FACEBOOK |
| NORTHEAST GEORGIA CRAPPIE | KEVIN STRONG | FACEBOOK |
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| SOUTHWEST MISSOURI CRAPPIE | KERRY YATES | FACEBOOK |
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Shooter baits.**

Tim Huffman photo