Features

**Advanced Seasonal Structure: Stumps & Snags....4**
by Tim Huffman
Lakes with wood cover may be ripe for the picking right now. Here’s how to attack this seasonal structure.

**Hump Fishing for Summer Crappie.....8**
by Darl Black
Structures come and go but humps offer a great place to fish year after year.

**The Pontoon Platform for Crappie Catching....14**
by Terry Madewell
A pontoon offers fun fishing for several people. Check these tips for fishing fun.

**Rigging a Crappie Boat: Electronic Gadgets....20**
By Ron Presley
Some swear by electronic gadgets while others swear at them. They may not be magic solutions, but there are times they can help.

**ICAST Award Winners....28**
by Tim Huffman
Manufacturers from all over the world gather to showcase new fishing items. This issue includes an abbreviated list of the show winners.

Departments

**Crappie Basics....12**
**Crappie Q & A....13**
**Crappie Basics....19**
**Tip of the Month....25**
**Vern’s Cooking & Tidbits....26**

**Crappie Calendar....32**
**Crappie NOW How To Video....32**
**Crappie Clubs....33**
**Tournament Results....35**
**Photo Contest....36**
Opening Cast

The first half of the year will be remembered for floods and high water. And, it’s not over. Today in late July a strong front is dumping rain in much of the country…again. I crossed the Mississippi River yesterday to see an ugly, high river that is still out in fields. The fields should be green and beautiful with crops. Our fishing has been altered but that means nothing compared to the many farmers who are in serious trouble.

Hot weather has joined us with triple digit heat index numbers. Everyone should be cautious when heading out on the water because of reflected heat along with the direct, hot sunlight. Fluids and sun protection are critical.

CrappieNow was in attendance at Orlando, Florida, where the fishing industry gathered to display their latest products. Wholesalers and media attended for the purpose of seeing new products offered by companies. Our goals were to find items fishermen need and want. New products are always the highlight including the opportunity for vendors to compete for the best new products of the year. We have a winner highlight article this issue and will have more on new products in upcoming issues of CrappieNow.

Perks are a fun part of the writing business. A TTI-Blakemore and BnM Pole dinner allowed a few writers, television and radio media to dine with owners, pro staff and other guests. Bass professional Randy Howell, a few of the Duck Commanders, and Jimmy Houston were among those in attendance.

Stay safe, good fishin’ and God Bless,
Tim Huffman, Editor
Stump and snags…the love affair never ends for the fish or fishermen. Fish love the safety, ambush opportunities, and shadows offered by the wood. Fishermen love wood because they know it’s where crappie hide.

Jiggin’

There are many lakes and rivers that are full of trees, stumps and laydowns. Don Brooks fishes all over the country but Truman is his home water and he likes fishing there. He notes that waters vary from region to region but the vertical jigging he uses at Truman works in many of the other lakes with similar type covers.

“This time of year,” says Brooks, a team member of the 2013 Crappie Masters Angler Team of the Year. “Water temperatures are up and fish often move out to 8 to 10 feet of water but you have to check different depths to know for sure. The key is to fish fast from stump to stump and area to area. I’m looking for active fish so the more wood I fish the better the chances of catching more fish.”

Brooks keeps his equipment simple beginning with a 10-foot BnM Sam Heaton Super-Sensitive. The sensitivity helps when bites are very light and it’s light enough to hold all day long. Line is 10-pound test Spider Wire for strength, sensitivity and small diameter. He uses three different jigheads depending upon the mood of the fish. A 1/8-ounce is the typical jig for getting down quickly and giving good feel. He switches to a 1/16-ounce jig for a slow fall when fish are not aggressive. When just looking...
for a bite in an area, he’ll use a 1/4-ounce to draw a reaction bite.

Everything might look the same when gazing across the water at a group or field of stumps and snags. However, there are many differences including the sizes, types of woods and underwater depths and contours. Your job as a fisherman is to find the specific bottom depths, strike zone and type of wood that the crappie prefer.

“Presentation depends upon the wood and aggressiveness of the fish,” says Brooks. “Some trees have thick limbs. Drop straight down in thick stuff. Other might be old with fewer limbs so pitching the jig and letting it swing down to a stop can be good.”

“Fish will often use the outside edges, isolated wood, or a long narrow patch like an old fencerow. There will usually be some place that the crappie will gather in numbers. Once you find that you can stick to that pattern and catch more fish. No need to fish the wood that doesn’t have fish.”

Brooks still recommends using electronics. The deeper the fish the more important it is to have a good sonar to find drop-offs, underwater wood and fish.

**Slow Trolling**

There are a lot of stumps that allow trolling. Reelfoot Lake is one place a lot of trolling is done immediately over the top of the stumps. A few years ago the Crappie Masters Championship was won by slow trolling at Truman Lake. Snags and trees laying on bottom was the winning structure. Finding submerged wood is the key although it’s okay to have some of the wood sticking up.

Slow trolling puts more baits in the water and gives a wide area of coverage. Typical set-ups include long 12- or 14-foot poles with single jigs or double-hook rigs. Minnows are a
great summertime choice. Straight minnows on light-wire hooks with a ½-ounce sinker in between the hooks is a popular choice. Jig-minnow combinations are also a good pick when fish want a little color. Single hook rigs are easier to fish because of fewer hang-ups.

The most important part of slow trolling is boat control. Experts often go against the wind. This allows a very slow presentation and the trolling motor can be stopped when a bush is found or a fish caught. This stops the boat right on the spot. Strong winds call for going with the wind using chains, drift socks, Drift Paddles or some other device to slow the boat and keep it straight.

**Factors for Stumps & Snags**
- **Thick or Scattered:** Presentation will often determine the required technique. For example, thick standing timber calls for jigging. A field of submerged stumps might be best slow trolled. Anything in between has to be determined by the situation, conditions and the crappie’s preferred presentation for the spot.
- **Old vs. New Wood:** Old wood is easier to fish because only the larger limbs remain. It can still be outstanding for holding crappie. Live wood like a new laydown or fishing flooded shoreline wood can present tougher fishing but excellent results. The key is being in the right depth of water.
- **Clouds/Sun:** Sun is preferred because it pushes crappie tight to the cover for shade.
- **Water Color:** A stain or tint is preferred by jig fishermen. Less visibility allows a fisherman to get close without spooking the fish.
- **Wind:** A little ripple means better fishing because the fish are less spooky. The ripple

**The Right Stuff for Jigging**
- **Pole:** Sensitive-for feeling bites; lightweight-for less fatigue; rear reel seat-for balance; 10 to 12-foot for control yet keeping bait away from boat. Example: BnM 11-foot Sam Heaton.
- **Line:** 8-pound test mono- easy handling, versatile; or, 10- to 15-pound braid- for better sensitivity, fewer break-offs. Example: Power Pro; Vicious; Spiderwire.
- **Jigs:** Johnson Crappie Buster Shad Tail; Panfish Assassin Tiny Shad; Bobby Garland Slab Slayer; Muddy Water jig.
- **Jigheads:** Weedless 1/8-ounce; 1/16-oz- for slower presentation; 1/4-for quick fishing and reaction bites. Examples: standard ball head; Mo’Glo; Rockport Rattle (with sound beads built in).

**The Right Stuff for Slow Trolling**
- **Pole:** Sensitive- for seeing bites; strong- to handle light to medium weights; forward reel seat to fit holder. Example: 12 or 14 foot, BnM BGJP; Mr Crappie Troll Tech.
- **Line:** 8 to 12-pound test monofilament.
- **Rigs:** Single jig rigs 1/8- to 1/4-ounce. Double-hook minnow or jig/minnow combos.
- **Pole holders:** Driftmaster or Tite-Lok
breaks up the silhouette of the boat. Too much wind is a problem. Boat control becomes difficult whether jigging or slow trolling.

Current: Slow current is fine. Fast currents are bad. Presentations are more difficult and fish pull tight behind cover or go to areas with less current.

Fishing Pressure: Fishing pressure makes a difference. Most lakes have fewer fishermen in the summer.

Boating Traffic: Summer is a time when non-fishermen are playing on the lakes. Each lake is different but those with skiers, jet skis and other boating traffic can be a problem.

Single pole vertical jigging is a great tactic for fishermen wanting full control of the bait. A jig or minnow/jig combo can be dropped in and along good wood cover. The “thump”, setting the hook and pulling the fish into the boat is the reward.

New for 2015...

For info visit: www.crappieusa.com

2015 Schedule of Events

Lake Talquin, FL 01/16-17/15
Cresnt/Dead Lakes, FL 01/23-24/15
Oran.-Loch-Newn., FL 01/31/15
Weiss Lake, AL 02/28/15
Clark’s Hill, GA 03/06-07/15
Lake of Egypt, IL 03/13-14/15
Old Hickory, TN 03/21/15
Cherokee Lake, TN 03/27-28/15
Lake of Ozarks, MO 04/04/15
KY/Barkley, TN 04/10-11/15
Green River Lake, KY 04/17-18/15
Pickwick/Wilson, AL 04/24-25/15
Cave Run, KY 05/02/15
Miss.-Sal., IN 05/09/15
Lake Shelbyville, IL 05/16/15
Some anglers may call it a rise or submerged island. Regardless of the local colloquialism, a hump is merely a substantial elevation of the lake bottom that is surrounded by deeper water. While no criteria exist in terms of height of the rise, depth of the crest or size to identify a hump, you will know one when you see it. Some humps may be no larger than a living room, while others may cover more than an acre – you can easily find them with sonar. On the other hand, a “bump” is much smaller – let’s say not much larger than a bread box. A

Mid-lake humps are not equal. More so than the size of the hump, the rise must have cover on it to attract and hold crappies as they wait for passing baitfish schools. Cover may be natural – in the form of vegetation, stumps or rocks. Or cover may be man-added, such as brushpiles or cribs.
bump on a flat may hold a single bass, while a hump may hold a school of crappies. Of course, a hump may contain multiple bumps which certainly enhance its attractiveness to fish.

On man-made impoundments, humps are more prevalent on flatland reservoirs where water has flooded a rather uniform stretch of land with gradual depth change from the shoreline to the mid-section of the lake. On these impoundments, a hump may be attributed to natural contour of the land as well as man-made structures such as the rise around a house/barn foundation, elevation of a roadbed/railroad bed over a low area around a creek, rock spoil piles from mining/agriculture, etc. Regardless of the source of the rise, once it is flooded with water the hump becomes a beacon for fish.

Crappies in particular are attracted to humps during the summer. Mature crappies typically target young-of-year shad, emerald shiners, or other open-water preyfish species. But crappies also have an affinity for certain types of cover. Mid-lake humps with some type of cover (stumps, weeds, rock piles or man-made cribs) are the perfect summer home for crappies. With a feeling of security due to cover, crappies simply hold on the structure waiting for roaming forage fish schools to pay a visit.

Pymatuning Lake on the Ohio/Pennsylvania border is one of several impoundments in the immediate area with both humps and a strong population of crappies. During the spring, anglers fill the shallows to fish for crappies. But with the arrival of summer heat and a shift in forage source, crappies move offshore. Only a handful of anglers follow them.

“Hooker” Brakeman, a partner in Hills Country Store in Westfield, Ohio, is one fisherman who never gives up on crappies. “When it comes to summertime crappies, every day is Hump Day for me,” says Hooker. After nearly three decades of competing in regional and national bass tournament circuits, Hooker traded in his high-horsepower gelcoat bass boat for a used tin boat and a 20 HP motor. He fished for crappies as a kid, and after retiring from bass competition, decided it was time to return to his roots.

“He keeps color selection simple, but always includes chartreuse baits.
top off between 8 and 14 feet with deeper water around the perimeter. The depth change can be drastic or as subtle as a couple feet. If the hump has had cover such as a few stumps, a rock pile or old building foundation, I’m confident crappies will be handy – either snugged up to cover or suspended above cover, or possibly off to the side of the hump.”

When it comes to marking structure, Hooker is a bit old fashioned. When he finds a hump he tosses out a buoy marker for reference. Even though a mark can be electronically made on the sonar screen, he still prefers a physical floating marker in order to make every cast count.

Using his Motor Guide trolling motor, Hooker works around the area while fan casting a Bobby Garland bait on Gamma 2-pound test line. “I cast the entire area and water column from top to bottom until I find biting fish. On cloudy days, crappies could
be anywhere in the immediate vicinity of the hump. But on bright sunny days, crappies will generally be very close to cover and nearer the bottom.

Hooker will vary the weight of his jig from 1/64 to ¼-ounce depending on wind, depth and attitude of fish. Aggressive fish means he can fish faster with a slightly heavier jig, while crappies with lockjaw usually require a lighter, slower-falling jig.

Hooker says he has never found it necessary to run through 20 or more wild color combinations to catch crappies. “Color wise, I keep it simple with black, pearl, blue, chartreuse, and pink,” he adds. “Early in the summer, I have great success with Bobby Garland Baby Shad. But later in summer I switch to a larger profile Bobby Garland bait, such as the Swimming Minnow and Slab Dockt’R.”

When checking out a hump, Hooker generally has two rods in the water. With the first rod he is casting and retrieving a jig. The second rod has a 1/32-ounce jighead with a Baby Shad body. This rod is cast a short distance off the opposite side of the boat and then placed in a Driftmaster Rod Holder.

Hooker explains: “The lightweight jig on the second rod is simply trailing the boat as I work around a hump. The bait rises as I move the boat forward and then drifts slowly downward when the boat slows. The bait is floating in the water column just off the hump. The realistic Garland Baby Shad is something no crappie can pass up – even fish that are suspended and not really feeding. That second rod catches a lot of bonus fish, and it does not require me to anything except to glance at the rod tip now and then.”

Hooker says August is prime hump time for crappies on northern lakes. “You can catch summer crappies right now if you follow the above recommendations.

Hooker Brakeman prefers the Garland Slab Dockt’r for late summer when you shad have grown a bit.

- By Darl Black
Thermocline conditions are present right now in many lakes. The thermocline, shown as a straight line on the locator, will have fish above it in water with a better oxygen content.

“August in Illinois,” says Bill Dial, “can be a very tough time to fish. I’m usually fishing 11 to 14 feet deep just above the thermocline. I’ll be using one pole vertical jigging but I will likely be using minnows this time of year. If I’m using a jig, I’ll always have scent like Crappie Nibbles.”
Q: Q&A: What’s Your Best August Fishing Tip?

**Jason Dudley, Illinois** - “Most lakes have a thermocline in August. You can see it on your electronics. It will be a straight line and baitfish will be above it. The oxygen is better above the thermocline so that’s where the fish are going to be.”

**Joe Bacon, Missouri** - “Watch the color of the water and the shad. Water color that’s dark calls for darker baits while clearer water means lighter colors. Chase the shad. If you are in good shad just follow them around like the crappie do.”

**John Shannon, Missouri** - “Here on Truman Lake the hotter it gets the shallow the fish go. I’m guessing the shallow water becomes more important because of wave action putting more oxygen in the top layer of the water, but I’m not sure, I just know it works. No matter which lake you are on always fish above the thermocline.”

**Scott Remefer, Missouri** - “I love to fish any time of the year even in August. I fish tournament but I don’t consider any fishing trip to be competing against anyone because it’s a competition against Mother Nature. In August I’m jigging trees. My tip is if you get a bite on a jig it usually won’t hit it again, so follow it up immediately with a minnow.”
Crappie fishing boats come in all shapes, models and sizes in an attempt to fit the needs for every situation an angler encounters. When working open water areas many expert anglers and guides are beginning to discover the potential of the pontoon boat.

Guide Buster Rush, from Camden South Carolina, has been guiding clients to big crappie catches for 33 years and Rush has embraced the pontoon as his boat of choice for crappie fishing professionally since 1993.

“The simple fact is it works for me personally for fun and in my guiding business,” Rush said. “I guide on several different lakes in South Carolina, from the huge 160,000 acre Lake Marion as well as on Lake Wateree a 13,000 surface acre lake. I also guide on Fishing Creek Lake that’s less than 4,000 surface acres and Stumpy Pond, a small but highly productive 870-acre, stump infested, crappie-filled body of water. But my pontoon handles all of these unique situations exceptionally well year round.”

Rush (803-432-5010) said the pontoon works so well he has two. He keeps a 27-foot boat on Lake Marion and trailers a 24-foot pontoon to the other lakes. He said these stable platform boats have many advantages and a few downsides. He’s weighed the positives for his style of fishing and has found

Oh yeah, swinging in some crappie makes the day fun and enjoyable.
workarounds for the few downsides.

"Whether guiding or fishing with a few friends, the pontoons are roomy and comfortable," he said. "That’s important to a quality day of fishing and it’s also conducive to success in the fish-catching department. A comfortable angler will have better focus and they will see or feel the subtle bites of crappie. Plus it helps me stay focused on finding just the right spot.

“One thing many anglers don’t realize until they fish from a pontoon is these boats are quite maneuverable and respond well to the electric motor," Rush said." Some things I’ve learned the hard way, by experience. Because of the size of the boat and wind catching potential, I must have adequate power in the electric motor to produce the needed thrust. When fishing in windy conditions I always work into the wind or despite my best efforts the back of the boat will swing around. Unless the wind is real strong, I can hold over a specific spot and fish effectively when fishing into the wind.”

Rush trolls multiple rods with jigs during certain times of the year and his mobility is not impaired with the big rig.

“I’ll work along inundated creek channels, ledges around humps and over sunken woody cover,” he said. “I often utilize the big motor on the boat as my power source when trolling and by putting it in reverse and using drift socks, or multiple socks if needed, I can control the speed to within a tenth of a mile per hour. I prefer 0.7 to 1.1 miles per hour speed, varying with time of year, depth, time of day and water color. Plus with the motor running in reverse and using graphs, I can snake along just about any creek or ledge on these lakes. Many channels have twists and turns that I must negotiate to stay right on target. I do pay close attention to the graph and maneuvering the boat because I have much less room for error with a big rig, but it is very effective.”
Rush said another big plus is that by going in reverse, he can utilize the entire front and sides of the pontoon for multiple lines, enabling him to check different jig sizes, colors and potential depths quicker than using fewer rods in a smaller boat.

“We have no limit on the number of rods we can use in South Carolina so I’ll run three off each side and up to six out of the front, since we’re reverse trolling,” he said. “This way I maximize my search for a productive pattern and quickly get my rigs set for maximum efficiency. For me, more fish equals more fun.

“I do have to be careful when I need to make 180-degree turns,” Rush said. “That can lead to tangled lines if I try to turn tight so I make a gentle turn and I often reel in a few rigs. On normal twists and wiggles along my target path it works well because I vary the length of my rods so the inside lines won’t interfere or tangle with others. I keep the longest rods to the outside and have shorter rods progressing into toward the middle. The rods on the sides are 14, 12 and 10 feet long respectively and the ones directly behind the boat are eight-feet long. It’s a simple but effective system.

“When trolling I rely on Driftmaster Rodholders to secure my rods,” he said. “The pontoon rails make it easy to set up and have the rods set the way I want them. I can effectively cover up to about a 35-foot swath of water.”

Rush said the pontoon is the ideal boat for nocturnal fishing with lights. He said to use quality anchors and ensures a solid, tight-roped anchor set on both ends of the boat before fishing.

“All of my friends that fish for crappie at night have pontoon boats,” he said. “It’s just a logical choice with the room, comfort, ability to fish numerous rods and even snooze a bit when tired of catching fish. In addition, all the guides that I know using pontoons have also set up a private, enclosed area for a restroom. That’s handy anytime, but especially when...
I have families or couples fishing.”

“It’s also surprising to some how well the boat works in shallow water,” he said. “I can get into water as shallow as most “V” hull type boats and effectively fish,” Rush said. “What I can’t do is get into tight places where there’s close quarters standing timber or into swamps where cypress trees are clustered.”

He said tradeoffs are inevitable when selecting any boat over another. With the pontoon he can make long open water trips in comfort and reasonable speed that small boats suited for swamps and tight quarters cannot.

Rush said that very windy conditions will
also create more issues using the pontoon boat.

“Up to a point, I like the advantage of a stable platform in windy conditions that pontoons offer,” he said. “But the wind will occasionally reach a point where my boat control won’t be as precise as it often has to be and in those cases I fish sheltered water.”

Rush said that despite the limiting factors, the pontoon is his boat of choice to make his living.

“I guided part time for 11 years and used a small boat and it performed well,” Rush said. “But when I started full-time in 1993, I bought a pontoon and that’s all I’ve ever needed and now my son Russell also guides and he uses a pontoon. The pontoon excels in open water fishing and is very adaptable to other types of crappie fishing, up to a point. Like any boat it has positive features, but some drawbacks. If an angler has the right set of conditions the pontoon can be a great tool for crappie fishing. It’s more effective than many anglers realize.”

- By Terry Madewell

Buster Rush with two slabs anyone would be proud of catching.

SAY HELLO TO YOUR NEW CONFIDENCE BAIT
How many ways can YOU fish it?

Crappie.com
August fishing can be brutal. Air temperatures in most states are still peaking out and water temperatures are hot.

Tournament fisherman Donald Beckstrom from Kansas says, “Our Kansas lakes are 100 degrees in the Midwest where I fish. The typical patterns on my favorite lakes are trees in anywhere from 2 to 10 feet deep. Any nearby channel improves the spot. I’m single pole jigging the trees. One tip I recommend is that you and your partner fish different color jigs until you find the one that works.”
A friend of mine recently told me a story about his wise old grandmother. “I was looking at a new fangled fishing gadget that someone had put on the market and described it to my grandmother,” said my friend. “Her response was short and to the point. ‘Some things are made for fishing and some things are made for selling!’”

With all the gadgets, thingamabobs and doohickeys available to crappie anglers these days it is a good idea to consider them with caution. The phrase “Trust but verify,” comes to mind. Finding another angler who has used a gadget with success would be a good place to start.

I began my search for some valuable gadgets with pro crappie angler Dan Dannenmueller Sr. Dan is a well know angler on the Crappie Masters tournament trail. His fishing partner, Garrett Steele, describes Dan as very willing to try new things, new techniques, and new products. “He wants to have all the necessary and available tools to help catch more crappie and he loves sharing and teaching others about what he has learned through his experience.”

HydroWave

The HydroWave concept is very appealing to anglers. It is an electronic device that uses an underwater speaker to emit the natural sounds of baitfish and predatory fish in a feeding frenzy. The sounds are a set of recordings that have been made from real live shad. The whole idea is to draw other fish into the frenzy. Crappie can both feel the vibrations and hear the sounds emitted from the HydroWave and think there are shad around. The crappie’s natural feeding instincts are to go get in on the feed.

“If I’m on the boat with Dan, and conditions require it, the HydroWave is turned on,” reported Steele. “He relies on it most when the bite gets tough.”

“Most people want to go out and think of it as a cure all and start using it immediately,” says Dannenmueller. “That is not the best way to use the HydroWave.

HydroWave, Color C-Lector and Aqua-Vu Underwater Cameras

The HydroWave controls can be mounted on the bow near the other electronics for easy access.
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.
Suppose you are in an area that you know holds a lot of fish. You have been catching them and then they quit. Now is the time to turn the HydroWave on and start it at its lowest level. Keep an eye on the sonar as you work the area. If you are seeing fish but they are not biting, turn the intensity up. Keep this process going until you get a bite.

Dannenmueller gave an example of fishing over brush piles. “I have caught fish over brush piles and had them start going back inside the pile as the day goes on. I turn the HydroWave on and the shad come out to the sides of the brush piles. You can see them on sonar coming out. When the shad come out they pull the crappie out and you have a chance to catch them.”

You have to use the HydroWave properly according to Dannenmueller. “Be
sure you are over the brush pile and the speakers are transmitting over those fish. Be sure it is a brush pile that holds crappie. When the crappies are not on top of the brush piles or on the sides you know they have gone inside or left. You gotta’ get them out of there, if they are there, and I have used the HydroWave to do just that.”

**Color C-Lector**

Another gadget that Dannenmueller uses is the Color C-Lector from Spike-It. Bruce McElroy, Vice President for Operations and Sales describes it as a tool anglers can use to know what color the fish can see best under different conditions.

“The Color-C-Lector is merely a light meter,” said McElroy. “Dr. Loren Hill, University of Oklahoma, did a study to determine what colors fish could see best under different conditions. He created a chart to identify the colors anglers should use at different depths in different water conditions. The chart is where the science is. It will make a big difference in your fishing.”

Pro angler Harold Neeley is a long time user of the Color-C-Lector. Neeley says it all starts once fish have been located with sonar. “The unit has a 50-foot cable that is marked each foot so you can determine the depth of your reading. When I locate fish on my sonar, I drop the color selector probe down to the appropriate depth and take a reading. Then I determine what color of water I am dealing with. The chart on the Color C-lector is broken down by stained, clear and muddy conditions.”

“The upper end is all dark,” said Neeley, “except for the chartreuse which is universally good in any clarity of water. Earlier in the morning you use your darker baits. As the sun rises you gradually make
adjustments.” He explained that you don’t go from black to white, but gradually lighten your colors as indicated by the chart.

Making adjustments throughout the day is where the Color-C-Lector can help you be more productive. Modifications are necessary because one color does not normally catch fish all day long. “We start every fishing day using it,” explains Steele. “If we change areas and/or conditions change, we check the colors again.”

Noting the depth of fish on the sonar, anglers can take an hourly reading with the Color-C-Lector and match their baits to the most likely color to be seen by the fish. “There is no guarantee they will bite,” cautions Neeley, “but you can be sure they will see your bait.”

Aqua-Vu Underwater Camera
Sonar helps a lot, but what you see on an underwater camera is the real deal. Simply drop the camera down and you can see the type of structure, what kind of fish are on the structure and sometimes what kind of food they are eating so you can match the hatch.

Pro angler Tommy Skarlis considers his Aqua-Vu camera a time saver. “An Aqua-Vu underwater camera gives me the ability to identify what species of fish I am marking with side-vision or 2D sonar on my Raymarine units. This saves me time and effort and allows me to distinguish species and fish for crappies and not undesirable species. I can also look in places that a traditional sonar unit can’t, like high and far back areas of docks and otherwise un-viewable places.”

By eliminating unproductive areas anglers can concentrate more effort on the productive ones. If you see the fish there and you are not catching them you know to change colors, size or presentation until you find what they want that day.

Epilogue
Gadgets, thingamabobs and doohickeys are not cure-all, solve-all products. According to Dannenmueller you still have to use all your other known techniques for catching fish. “You need to have the right size and color bait, you need to be on the right side of the brush pile, you need to be at the right depth and all of that.” When electronic gadgets complement your style of fishing and help you catch more crappie they are a great investment in your fishing future.

- By Ron Presley
Tip of the Month: Fish Aggressively

by Richard Bowling

One thing I’ve noticed is some fishermen restrict their fishing by tying up to a tree. Sometimes that may work but to me it’s not the best way to fish. Tying up means you’re not moving. You might catch a few fish over time but if you keep moving you might find a tree 30 feet away with several crappie in it. More likely, fishing more trees means you find a fish or two at many more trees so by the end of the day you’ll catch more fish by moving quickly. This is especially true in August. There are a ton of fish out there to be caught.

Richard Bowling is a crappie and catfish guide on Truman Lake, MO. He also fishes local and national tournaments. Phone # 660-351-5361

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Crappie Masters 2015 Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tournament Lake</th>
<th>Nearest Bass Pro</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Late Fee Applies After</th>
<th>Late Registration &amp; Meeting</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark Twain</td>
<td>Columbia, MO</td>
<td>August 8</td>
<td>2nd Leg MO: State Championship</td>
<td>July 25</td>
<td>August 7</td>
<td>200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truman Lake</td>
<td>Springfield, MO</td>
<td>August 22</td>
<td>Final Leg MO: State Championship</td>
<td>August 9</td>
<td>August 21</td>
<td>200.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Championship</td>
<td>Nashville, TN</td>
<td>September 23-26</td>
<td>Championship</td>
<td>30 Days After Qualifying</td>
<td>Registration Sept. 23</td>
<td>325.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky Lake</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry County, Paris, TN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenada Lake</td>
<td>Memphis, TN</td>
<td>Oct. 30 &amp; 31</td>
<td>Early Bird 2 Day National Qualifier for 2019</td>
<td>Oct. 16</td>
<td>October 29</td>
<td>300.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pan-fried fish uses just a thin layer of hot oil in a skillet and a light flour and/or cornmeal coating on the fish instead of a batter. This is a little simpler, less messy and more healthful than deep-frying. Four servings requires 1 pound of fillets.

Rinse the fillets and pat dry with paper towels. In a shallow dish combine one beaten egg with 2 tablespoons water or milk. This wet mixture will help the coating stick to the fish.

In another shallow dish combine 2/3 cup cornmeal or fine dry bread crumbs with 1/2 teaspoon salt and a dash ground black pepper. I prefer to use cornmeal and flour in equal proportions. You may substitute 1-1/3 cups crushed potato chips or saltine crackers for the cornmeal, omitting the salt. This dry mixture creates a crunchy coating on the fish when pan-fried.

Preheat your oven to 300 degrees F. for keeping fillets warm while cooking the remainder of fillets. To a large heavy skillet add 1/4 inch vegetable oil or lard. Heat. Dip each fillet first into the egg mixture, coating each side. Next place each fillet in the cornmeal mixture and press gently to help the mixture adhere to the fish. Treat both sides of the fish.

Add fillets in a single layer to the hot oil. The oil should be hot enough that it sizzles when you add the fish. (I shoot for 350-375 degrees.) Fry the fish until golden on the bottom - about 3 to 4 minutes - flip the fish with a large spatula using a fork to steady the fillets. Cook the second side until golden and the fish begins to flake when tested with a fork (3 to 4 minutes more).

For deep-fried fish, dip pieces of fish in a beer batter or several coatings of egg and seasoned flour before frying to a crisp golden brown in a 3-quart heavy saucepan or deep-fat fryer. Heat 2 inches of vegetable oil to 375 degrees F.

In a shallow dish add 1/2 cup all-purpose flour and set it aside. For the batter, in a medium bowl add 1/2 cup all-purpose flour, 1/2 cup beer, one egg, and 1/4 teaspoon each of baking powder, salt, and ground black pepper. Use a whisk to beat the batter until smooth.

Dip fish pieces into the flour, turning to coat all sides, and shake off excess flour. The flour will help the batter to stick to the fish. Follow the above directions to fry the fish.

For a big money savings in oil (by re-using) use a Cajun Cooker by RV Works (Google rv works cajun fryers).

Pan-Fried Crappie with Peppers and Pecans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 pound crappie fillets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/3 cup all-purpose flour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/4 teaspoon salt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 tablespoons butter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 cup chopped pecans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 of red sweet pepper, cut in strips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tablespoon brown sugar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pan-Fried Crappie with Peppers and Pecans

1 pound crappie fillets
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup chopped pecans
1/2 of red sweet pepper, cut in strips
1 tablespoon brown sugar
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
Juice from one small lime  
Green onions, sliced (optional)

Use the directions for pan-fried fish (above) using use half the butter. After fish are cooked, wipe out your skillet. Melt remaining butter over medium heat in the skillet. Stir in brown sugar until dissolved. Stir in pecans, sweet pepper and cayenne. Cook and stir over medium heat for 3 to 4 minutes or until pecans are lightly toasted and pepper strips are just tender. Remove from heat. Stir in lime juice. Spoon pecan mixture over the warm crappie fillets. If desired, top with green onions. Yowza, that’s good eatin’!

**Buttermilk Batter Onion Rings** I always fry thinly sliced potatoes after cooking fish and I frequently cook up some onion rings too.

- 1 large onion (about a pound)
- 1 cup buttermilk pancake mix
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 egg
- Vegetable oil

Cut onion into one inch slices and separate into rings. Spread pancake mix on waxed paper or place in paper bag. In medium bowl, beat buttermilk and egg with fork until smooth. Dip in a few onion rings at a time into buttermilk mixture, then coat thoroughly with pancake mix. Let stand on rack until dry, about 2 hours.

In deep fryer or saucepan, heat oil (2 to 3 inches deep) to 375 degrees. Fry a few rings at a time, turning over one or two times, until golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes. Drain on paper towels.

**Southern Beans and Rice**

- 1 1/4 pounds dried pinto beans
- 7 cups water
- 1 small ham hock
- 1 chopped medium onion
- 2 minced cloves garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 thickly sliced pound ring smoked beef and pork sausage
- 10-ounce undrained can tomatoes with green chilies
- 1/2 cup uncooked regular rice

Sort and wash beans. Combine beans, water, ham hock, onion, garlic, and salt in a large Dutch oven. Bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to medium, and cook 45 minutes. Add sausage, tomatoes with green chilies, and rice. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Remove ham hock, shred ham from bone with a fork, and return ham to bean mixture.
ICAST is a convention where fishing industry manufacturers and associated companies meet to display their new and current products for 2016. Fishing retailers can make orders so they will have them by next year’s fishing season. Media gets a sneak preview, too.

This issue includes an abbreviated list of the show winners that may apply to your crappie fishing.

**Overall Best of Show** - Eddyline C-135 YakAttack Edition kayak. Eddyline is known for its high performance thermoformed kayaks. Geared for fishermen, this rig can get into places difficult or impossible to access with a big boat. Plus, it can be launched almost anywhere. 69-pounds. $2200.

**Boating Accessories**: Yeti Coolers, Yeti Hopper 20. A soft-sided cooler makes it easy to transport a dozen cans, or a mixture of products to a picnic or in the boat. It’s puncture-resistant, leakproof and sports an anti-microbial liner that resists mildew. Plus it keeps your beverages cold for days thanks to an inch of closed-cell foam insulation on the sides and 1.5 inches on the bottom. $300.
**Lifestyle Apparel:** Lifeshirt, Aegis Lifeshirt. Here is new item worth checking out. It looks like a conventional knit fishing shirt but hides an auto-inflating PFD. The shirt-lifejacket will make wearing your lifejacket an easy choice. $150.

**Footwear:** Simms Fishing Product, Current Shoes. Fishing environments can throw plenty of obstacles at your feet. New current shoe combines breathability with all day comfort and support. TPU welded construction for comfortable seams. Minimum slip soles and quick dry uppers. $100.

**Terminal Tackle:** Eagle Claw Fishing Tackle, Lazer Sharp Fillet Knife. The first fishing knife of its kind with 3CR14 stainless steel. TPR slip-resistant handle. Hard plastic sheath with sharpener and magnets to hold knife in place. $25
Giftware: Yolotek, PowerStick. This one was a show-stopper with great appeal. It’s a phone-charging product from a Kansas City based company. The PowerStick plugs into a boat’s navigation light port and allows boaters and anglers to securely charge their cell phones while on the water. $50.

Electronics: Humminbird Helix 7 SI. There was stiff competition in the electronics division. High-tech innovations were impressive. The Helix 7SI won the award with an ultra-bright screen that delivers a crisp, easy-to-see view even in the brightest sunlight...all at a more affordable price. The Helix has sonar, down imaging, side-imaging and mapping. $700.

Fishing Accessory: RinseKit. The RinseKit is a portable pressurized shower/clean up system that’s like having a hose on the go. Fill, attach the spray nozzle with the quick coupler, select the spray setting and spray. It provides 4 minutes of pressurized spray for portable convenience. Great for camping. $89.
**Tackle Management:** Eposeidon Outdoor Adventures, KastKing Rack’em Rod Racks. This rack is a cool man toy but also a practical system for storing rods. They are portable so you can take them with you to use at the shoreline or cabin. Cushioned in the right places with 6, 9, 12 and 24 rod units available. $77.

**Eyewear:** Costa, Rooster. Durable sunglasses with their side-cupped frames fight off the sun’s glare to let you focus on fighting the fish. They have a heavy frame, 100% UV for protection and 100% polarization to kill reflected glare. Comes with case and lifetime warranty. $169.

**Fishing Accessory:** FishSmart: Release Ruler. An excellent measure and weight ruler for measuring fish. Eco friendly. Coming in a crappie model soon. Prices vary, but estimate $15 for crappie ruler.

**Kids’ Tackle:** Steinhauser, Tangle-Free Combo. 41-inch, medium action inline fiberglass rod, adjustable seat EVA handle, engineered for standard and micro size reels. The best thing is that it is tangle-free because it feeds line through the shaft. Easy storage and travel. The Deluxe Tangle-Free is $36.
(Fishermen, check with club/association for exact dates, changes, cancellations and rules.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUG 8</td>
<td>CRAPPIE MASTERS</td>
<td>MARK TWAIN LAKE-MONROE CITY, MO</td>
<td>CLUB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUG 15</td>
<td>CAT TX</td>
<td>FORK LAKE</td>
<td>QUALIFIER</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUG 21</td>
<td>MIDDLE TENNESSEE</td>
<td>WOODS RESERVOIR-RAMP</td>
<td>NIGHT TOURNEY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUG 22</td>
<td>CRAPPIE MASTERS</td>
<td>TRUMAN LAKE-CLINTON, MO</td>
<td>CLUB</td>
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<td>AUG 22</td>
<td>SHOALS AREA</td>
<td>GUNTERSVILLE</td>
<td>OPEN</td>
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<td>SEPT 5</td>
<td>MIDDLE TENNESSEE</td>
<td>WOODS RESERVOIR</td>
<td>CLUB</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEPT 11-12</td>
<td>CAT TX</td>
<td>CEDAR CREEK</td>
<td>TX STATE CHAMPIONSHIP</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEPT 12</td>
<td>INDIANNA SLAB</td>
<td>MISSISSINEWA RESERVOIR</td>
<td>CLUB</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEPT 19</td>
<td>MIDDLE TENNESSEE</td>
<td>TIM’S FORD-DEVILS STEP RAMP</td>
<td>CLUB</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEPT 23-26</td>
<td>CRAPPIE MASTERS</td>
<td>LAKE HENRY COUNTY-PARIS, TN</td>
<td>NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP</td>
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<td>SEPT 26</td>
<td>SHOALS AREA</td>
<td>PICKWICK-ROSE TRAIL</td>
<td>CLUB</td>
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<td>SEPT 26</td>
<td>INDIANNA SLAB</td>
<td>MORSE LAKE</td>
<td>CLUB</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCT 7-10</td>
<td>CRAPPIE USA</td>
<td>PATOKA LAKE-JASPER, IN</td>
<td>CLASSIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCT 17</td>
<td>MIDDLE TENNESSEE</td>
<td>NORMANDY-BARTON SPRINGS RAMP</td>
<td>CLUB</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCT 17</td>
<td>SHOALS AREA</td>
<td>PICKWICK</td>
<td>CLASSIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCT 17-18</td>
<td>INDIANNA SLAB</td>
<td>CATARACT/RACCOON</td>
<td>2 DAY CLASSIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCT 30-31</td>
<td>CRAPPIE USA</td>
<td>LAKE CUMBERLAND-SOMERSET, KY</td>
<td>SUPER</td>
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<td>OCT 30-31</td>
<td>CRAPPIE MASTERS</td>
<td>GRANADA LAKE-MAMPHIS, TN</td>
<td>QUALIFIER</td>
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<td>NOV 7</td>
<td>MIDDLE TENNESSEE</td>
<td>WOODS RESERVOIR</td>
<td>CLUB</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEC 19</td>
<td>MIDDLE TENNESSEE</td>
<td>TIM’S FORD-DEVILS STEP RAMP</td>
<td>CLUB</td>
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(More events will be added throughout the year so check each Club often for new dates and places)
(Note that club news, results and schedules are taken from websites around the 10th of each month. Only those who provide information through their website or by email will have updated information and results included.) Fishermen, check with club/association for exact dates, changes, cancellations and rules.

Clubs/Regional Tournaments

MAGNOLIA CRAPPIE CLUB - MS
www.magnoliacrappieclub.com
Will be hosting its 1st Festival Bass Tournament on Brows Creek, Lake Guntersville Saturday April 11, 2015

CRAPPIE ANGLERS OF TEXAS (CAT)- TX
www.crappieanglersoftexas.com
Will be hosting its 2nd annual “Crappie Fest” on Lake Fork, Saturday April 11, 2015

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

INDIANA SLAB MASTERS- IN
www.indianaslambmasters.com

MIDDLE TENNESSEE CRAPPIE CLUB -TN
middletennesseeecrappieclub@gmail.com

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

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

SLAB MASTERS TOURNAMENT TRAIL -GA
www.slabmasterstournamenttrail.net

EASTERN MISSOURI CRAPPIE CLUB- MO
www.easternmocrappie.com

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

WILLIAM’S CREEK CRAPPIE CLUB- TX
www.williamscreekcrappieclub.com

WAPPAPELLO CRAPPIECLUB- MO
Facebook: Wappapello CrappieClub

GRAND LAKE CRAPPIE SERIES- OH
www.grandlakecrappieseries.comule.com
COOSA RIVER CRAPPIE CLUB
Paul Whorton 205-821-8373
Roger Absher 205-283-7638
(see facebook)

CRAPPIE BUCKS- TX
www.crappiebucks.com

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

CAPITAL CRAPPIE CLUB- MO
Mike 573-230-3058, Ben 573-694-3588
Marshall Albertson 573-690-2370

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

BUCKEYE CRAPPIE CHALLENGE -OH
www.buckeyecrappiechallenge.com

NORTHEAST OHIO CRAPPIE CLUB -OH
www.northeastohiocrappieclub.com

SPRINGFIELD CRAPPIE CLUB- IL
www.springfieldcrappieclub.com

CRAPPIENUTZ- MS
www.crappieguys.com

CAROLINA CRAPPIE ASSOCIATION
www.carolinacrappieassociation.com 704-792-5022 raeudy@ctc.net
### CRAPPIE USA

**JUNE 27**  
**CAVE RUN LAKE**

#### Amature Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Team Name</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Jeff Crouch/Ralph Crouch</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Eric Fenstenmaker/Jordy Fenstenmaker</td>
<td>5.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>James Compton/Barnes Compton</td>
<td>5.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Charles Saunders/David Johnson</td>
<td>4.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>David Miller/Steve Mittman</td>
<td>4.86</td>
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#### Semi-Pro Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Team Name</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ron Bilbrey/Damon Phillips</td>
<td>6.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Steve Ferguson/Joey Briggs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kris Mann/Terry Mann</td>
<td>6.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Tim Cleary/Reba Cleary</td>
<td>4.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Dee Simpkins/Randal Peck</td>
<td>4.95</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### BIG FISH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Team Name</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kris Mann/Terry Mann</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Eric Fenstenmaker/Jordy Fenstenmaker</td>
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### CAT TEXAS

**JULY 18**  
**LAKE PALESTINE RESORT**

#### DIVISION 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Team Name</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>AJ Matura/Carolyn Matura</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Paul O'bier/George Nelson</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>JayDon Reeve/Rhonda Reeve</td>
<td>11.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Chris Waters/Larry Middleton</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Bob McAffey/Freddie Dooly</td>
<td>11.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### BIG FISH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Team Name</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kirk Grounds/Craig Carpenter</td>
<td>1.99</td>
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#### DIVISION 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>BILL Mouw/Alec Dyer</td>
<td>11.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Clay Gann/Todd Froeb/Landson Froeb</td>
<td>11.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Todd Box/Richard James</td>
<td>9.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Tim Smith/Glen Roberts</td>
<td>9.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Johnny Merriman/Doug Broadway</td>
<td>7.97</td>
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#### BIG FISH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Team Name</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Clay Gann/Todd Froeb/Landson Froeb</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1st Place This Month!

John Weatherby
16.25 inches
South Jersey

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.
Show off your great catches in the Crappie Now e-magazine! Each monthly winner will receive a fantastic prize and be featured in Crappie Now!

**Honorable Mention**
Chris Bordenkircher
18in roughly 3 3/4 lb
Private Lake in Lima Ohio

**Honorable Mention**
John Walker
15 1/2 inch
Grave Hurst Ontario

**Honorable Mention**
Ryan Gunter
18 inches, 2.6lbs
Mobile-Tensaw delta

**Honorable Mention**
Chris Bordenkircher
18in roughly 3 3/4 lb
Private Lake in Lima Ohio
Good Bye and Good Fishing, from the CrappieNow Staff

photo by Darl Black