

Shoreline Tips for Year Round Crappie Action

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Another article by

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When crappie fishing from shore, there is no substitute for being at the right place at the right time. The seasonal movements of crappie are widely known, from shallow water during spring spawn and early fall, to deep-water structure during summer and winter. Despite their tendency to travel, crappie in any lake can be surprisingly predictable. Any crappie angler who eliminates areas where fish aren't likely to be can greatly increase his/her odds for success.

SPRING SPAWN

For shoreline anglers, there's no better time to target crappie than during the spring spawn. Look for them in shallow water between 1 and 8 feet deep when water temperatures rise above 55 degrees. Favorite spawning structures include standing timber, brush piles, ripraps, docks, and bridge pilings. One of the most effective ways to fish these structures is with a minnow fished below a bobbers because spawning crappie hold tightly to structures. You can also use 1/32 and 1/64 ounce Creme jigs because of its slow fall and staying in the strike zone. They rise quickly on retrieves, and their descent along structure is slower and lifelike. A stop-and-go method of fishing is ideal when fishing visible structures like trees, docks, and bridge pilings. When fishing a riprap, a steady retrieve can be used to cover water quickly and to keep lure in the strike zone longer.

BRIDGE THE GAP IN SUMMER AND WINTER

Summer and winter present the greatest challenges for shoreline anglers. Once the spawn ends, crappie move deeper as water warms and often suspend in deeper channels, then move to shallows to feed at dawn and dusk. Bridges have been a favorite spot for anglers during this time. A bridge crossing the main river channel is a crappie magnet during the hot and cold months, because they suspend along the channel during the day and feed on the shallower pilings at night. The bridges also provide access to deep water and shade in the summer. When fishing bridges, concentrate your fishing on the down-current side. Crappie usually feed where wind and current washes minnows and other food to shore from pilings. Also, fish on the shady side during the day.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FLOODS

Flooding at any time of year often disrupt crappie from deeper water and move to shallows within reach of shoreline anglers. They move toward shore to escape from currents and follow baitfish to flooded brush. Techniques used during spring spawning will work equally well during periods of floods, but the presence of crappie is less predictable. If you find fish, make the most of the opportunity, because flooding conditions often subside quickly.

SMALL LAKES AND PONDS

Small lakes and ponds with cattails along shore offers great crappie fishing during the spawn and the cool fall months. Crappie spawn among cattail reefs in 1 to 2 feet of water. Fish with a 1/16 ounce white or yellow marabou jig. If you see a slight quivering cattail, its a sign of a crappie. Drop a jig using a long pole to reach next to the reed and hold on!

In the summer, look for weeds that lines between shallow and deep water. Crappie hangs out in weeds for shade, oxygen, and waiting for baitfish to swim by. Try fishing with a spinner such as a white or orange/chartreuse Mepps Rooster Tail. Cast parallel to the weeds and retrieve just fast enough for the spinner to spin.

One thing a shoreline angler may want to consider, is purchasing a Humminbird SmartCast. Its a wire-less fishfinder that lets you find fish, structures, and bottom depths from shore. Simply attach a floating transducer to your line, cast, and view the world below on a display unit. You can check this product out by clicking on the Bass Pro Shops Link below Confidence is the great factor in successful shore fishing for crappie. Learning the patterns in any lake takes time, but with little effort anyone can catch crappie consistently without a boat. In fact, the vast majority of boat anglers spend their time fishing within casting distance from shorelines anyway.

Buy a Smartcast Through Crappie.com SmartCast® RF30 Wireless Fishfinder RF30 - SMARTCAST RF30 WIRELESS FISHFINDER

