

## The Crappie Are Coming – Are You Ready? Joseph Rusdell

I am in the DFW (Dallas/Ft Worth) area and the crappie fishing is picking up already. I have heard that some have eggs, which is a good sign that the spawn is on schedule. Remember to check with your state dept. of wildlife for length and bag limits and be sure to purchase that FISHING LICENSE. The license helps to maintain the sport and the fines are not usually cheap.

Let's go over the gear you should pre-stock:

2 spools of new fishing line 6 – lb test

2 light to medium light rods with crappie reels

Plenty of Crappie hooks ranging in size from 8 – 4

Plenty of jig heads ranging from 1/16th to 3/16ths oz, mainly 1/16th and 1/8th

An array of plastics in varying colors

A minnow bucket with aerator

With these simple supplies you are all set to fill your basket during the Crappie run. What you say? Don't know what to select? The pro shops have you confused by their enormous stock? I see. Well lets break some of these items down.

Fishing line does not last forever and should be changed more frequently than most of us do. That said, you do not need to get the most expensive line. Remember we are Crappie fishing, not cat fishing or off shore fishing. Go with the brand you know and trust and keep the test down. 6-8lb will be fine in most cases. I know many DFW crappie fishing buddies who wont use anything over 4lb. I personally like the extra assurance of 8lb just in case you get the occasional bass or catfish hit your minnow/jig.

Your rods are your choice. What is comfortable? I have used a little Zebco 202 with little to no problems and only put me out \$9 at Wally World. If you check the pro shops, you will find rods priced mainly \$20 -\$200 and more. I have come across the store brand "Bass Pro" or "Cabelas" rods on sale for \$9, no reel included. If you are new to Crappie fishing, I would recommend keeping the purchases on the cheap. Find a reasonable price rod that feels comfortable and do not worry about the reel. We are going to get some cheap Crappie fishing reels. They start out at about \$5, they can not cast, but they your immediate needs when catching Crappie. You could always skip the reel entirely and get you a couple of \$5 bamboo cane poles, but I am not gonna use one if we meet on the water.

Crappie hooks are self explanatory so get a variety of sizes from a brand you trust. These will be used only when fishing with minnows.

Jig heads. Technology has given us some interesting choices here. You can get lead jig heads or lead free Tungsten or Brass. Go with your budget and your level eco-friendliness. You will mainly be using 1/16 and 1/8 oz jigs. Flat head, round head, painted, not painted are all up to the angler. I use pre-painted with eyes in varying colors. Black, White, Pink, Blue are my main color jig heads.

Plastics come in every color and some that are ridiculous. Stock up on “Crappie Stinger”, “Bass Assassin”, “Grubs with curly tail” and “Mini tubes”. If you are a beginner, most of the pro shops have kits filled to the brim with Crappie plastics. If you want to select your own colors and styles then go with color combinations like, white/red, blue/silver, avocado/chartreuses. I use mainly a color referred to as Limetreuss. It is a solid one color bass assassin that appears a dayglo, yellow with a bit of green. They love it. I also use the avocado/chartreuses a lot.

If you are going to be Crappie fishing, then you need a minnow bucket preferably with an aerator. It is true that you can put the bucket in the water, but you run the risk of shocking the minnows and killing a good deal of bait. I buy my minnows by the pound. When ever it is a slow day, minnows come in handy. You can sit back, relax and wait for the fish to come to you. Jigging is great, but if it is a slow day jigging can become tedious after a while.

Well I am headed out to hit some of the DFW crappie fishing spots. Good Luck on the water and have fun during 2008 Crappie fishing.

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