

Catching 'Elephants' at Lake Washington

By Bernard Williams, Magnolia Crappie Club

If I could call up to God and have him dial up the perfect Crappie fishing day then this would have been my dream day. The weather was perfect from beginning to end, morning temperature around 48 degrees, a light breeze from the northwest was a welcome change from the 20+ days of winter. Welcome to winter crappie fishing on one of the top trophy lakes in the country. Lake Washington located about 20 miles southwest of Greenville MS, is oxbow lake outside the MS River Levee.



MCC team Mike & Paula Nowell set a club record at Lake Washington last Feb. 2013 with a 3.49# slab. As a matter of fact we weighed 9 or 10 over 2.75#'s. That's like catching a bunch of 15lb Bass. The other tournament circuits know it; CrappieMasters is having the World Championship there in the fall of 2014. So if you're looking for a trophy then this is lake should be at or near the top of your bucket list.

My partner (Don Terry of Jackson, MS) and I arrived at the lake just as day was breaking. We unloaded the boat and proceeded out into the lake. Since we were pre-fishing for a Magnolia Crappie Club the following week, this would be a scouting trip. We had fished the lake many times before during the same time and our club had some of its highest weights of the year (excluding Grenada during the spring). We quickly noticed several in our group fishing the south end of the lake, on an 8' to 10' flat. The tournament the following year was won on this end, so we could not overlook this area.

I said Don, "Let's start here". Our technique for pre-fishing is primarily long-line trolling. The lake was about average as far as water, so that was not an issue, so we decided to fish the flats in 7' to 8' of water. I noticed the shad on the depth-finder as soon as we left the bank, so this should be a good area to start. When fishing areas this shallow you must use light-weight jigs. I decided on 1/48th and 1/32nd Road-Runners with Bobby Garland's Stroll-R's and Baby Shads.

This proved to be an excellent combination, having put out only two of our ten rods, before seeing one of the two 16' BGJP jig-poles bent double with what we call a Lake Washington Elephant. Yes, I said elephant, I know of no other word to describe this football size crappie. We landed one of the over 30+ two-pound crappie. Since we were pre-fishing, we only kept male fish to eat. No need of taking those big sows out of the lake before they spawn. And yes they were ripe with eggs.

Our setup consisted of the following (10) B'n'M Poles with Shimano Sienna 2500 Reels spooled with 6# Vicious Hi-Vis monofilament line:

- (2) 16' BGJP Poles
- (2) 12' BGJP Poles
- (2) 10' Rodger Gant Poles
- (4) 9' Rodger Gant Poles