

Power Trolling – “The New Fashion Way”

By Bernard Williams, Magnolia Crappie Club

Certain times of the year call for changing your approach to crappie fishing. The period after the spawn and before the summer pattern sets in is one of those times most crappie fishermen avoid. The fish are lethargic; in other words lazy, tired and sluggish. Who could blame them, they've been on a serious date for two and a half months; busy doing what comes natural, trying to reproduce. Now it's over, they've lost considerable weight; it's time to regroup and gain back some of that weight. So they start their eating binge. Their favorite food the shad has also did the same thing, spawned. Large schools of baby shad are now about 1" in size. This causes some crappie enthusiast to miss out on catching fish like they did during the spawn. They just don't match the hatch.

My partner and I were fishing Enid Lake in North Center Mississippi during this time of the year; last of May thru the first of June. We tried minnows for an hour or so to no avail. From my side-scanning I found very few fish in schools. Most were scattered and spooky. I noticed large schools of baby shad that would scatter every now and then. This must be the food source. I had to make some adjustments; our minnows were too large for these fish. We ordered the smallest minnows available.

My modification came in the fashion of pushing jigs out of the front of the boat. Y'all call it power-trolling. My setup consists of 16' B'n'M ProStaff Trolling Poles with 2-ounce modified Capps-and-Coleman Minnow Rigs with 1/8 ounce Bonehead Tackle Small Rock Dancer Jigs. I set the jigs about 18" apart. I selected Wedgetail Crappie Minnow in Pearl & Black Chartreuse Tail and made by Egret Baits as my bait of choice.

My speed for this endeavor would be 1-1.2 mph. I targeted fish in 12' – 15' feet of water around 8' – 10' feet deep. Long line trolling is my favorite technique during this time of the year, however the fish were holding tight to ditches and creeks. In order to be successful we had to follow the contours very closely. I set my MinnKota 112 I-Pilot Link and away we went. After an hour of no success with minnows we were amazed at our achievement power trolling jigs. Enid & Sardis Lakes are known for power trolling. I think they invented this method years ago. It's common to see pontoon boats pushing cane poles with 5 ounce weight and multiple baits attached.

We landed 6 keepers within 10 minutes along with 8 to 10 short fish. Pushing jigs allowed us to cover nearly as much water as long line trolling. Some fishermen have a problem with not having minnows, not here. I love not having to bait up. The weight of the egg sinker and the jig heads kept our lines almost straight down. We didn't need to pay much attention to the poles; when a fish is on the pole dips down into the water. You don't have to set the hook because of your speed. During the summer months you can mount a patio umbrella on the front for comfort from the summer heat. This makes fishing a pleasant way to fish on those hot summer days.

I must warn you about the rough fish, stripers, catfish and gar. I chose to use a good braided line on my line counter reels. This allowed us to control the rough fish better than with spinning reels, with little or no retying. This is why I recommend the B'n'M Pro Staff Trolling Poles, BoneHead B-Power Braided Line in 12#, BoneHead Jig Heads with the sickle hook for their sharpness.

There is no reason this technique will not work on your favorite lake. Find an area with stumps and brush piles in a mid-range depth area. Scan the area first; make sure there's fish before you start. Mark the stumps and brush piles before you begin. Setup your power trolling poles and baits and follow your marked waypoints. You want to troll your jigs 6"-12" above the marked fish. Your bite will be more of a reaction strike similar to a crankbait bite. I've tried this on the Corps Lakes and the oxbows. All I can tell you is "It Works".

Baits and Equipment Selected:



Bonehead Premium Round Ball Jig heads in 1/8oz with 1/0 sickle hooks



2 inch Wedgetail Crappie Minnow

Nothing mimics a live minnow better than the 2 inch Wedgetail Crappie Minnow. Its patented vortex tail vibrates as you swim the minnow. When it falls the tail generates an injured minnow distress pattern.



B'n'M' Pro Staff Trolling Rod – 16'

The Pro Staff Trolling Rod series has Dyna-Flow guides! They're made of extremely durable alloy with smooth, stainless inserts that will never pop out while spider rigging aggressively or pulling crankbaits. But, they're still the most sensitive trolling rod out there. These rods can support up to 5 ounces of weight and still hold their sensitivity.



Minn Kota® Terrova™ 112 60" US2 Trolling Motor with i-Pilot Link

The Terrova 112 trolling motor is engineered so you can focus on fishing instead of your motor. Digitally controlled AutoPilot™ keeps your heading. Set a course, activate AutoPilot and the motor makes steering adjustments for unparalleled heading accuracy. Steering, speed, on/off and AutoPilot all can be controlled with the pedal using the included 18-ft. cord. The i-Pilot® Link™ enables your Minn Kota trolling motor and Humminbird® fish finder to talk to each other. The i-Pilot Link delivers automatic boat control and the power to find, store and revisit your most productive fishing spots.



Humminbird® 999ci HD SI Sonar Combo

Enjoy the simplicity of having your sonar and GPS devices together in one powerful, fish-finding unit with the Humminbird 999ci HD SI Combo. A 8" high-definition screen, displays both sonar and GPS images in full color with 480V x 800H-pixel clarity. Side Imaging reveals a full 240-ft. section from either side of your boat with clear, accurate detail. Quickly identify cover and structure with Down Imaging®, while using SwitchFire™ sonar to locate and target fish down to 1,500 ft. Internal GPS lets you program in up to 2,500 waypoints and 45 routes. The 16:9 LCD screen delivers crystal-clear viewing, even in harsh sunlight. 8,000-watt peak-to-peak power output. Ethernet port shares sonar and GPS data between two units. Works with LakeMaster®, Navionics® Gold and C-Map software. Compatible with 360° imaging, iPilot® trolling systems, autopilot and radar.



The BoneHead B-Power Braided Line was designed with a low-diameter, super-high tensile strength and near zero stretch. Your pitching and casting distances increase with such a small diameter, and the extreme sensitivity will give you great feel and powerful hook sets. We chose the 12# test as our line of choice.