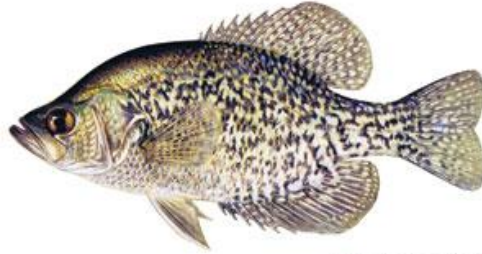


Talking points- Crappie Management Fact Sheet

for the Grand Rapids Fisheries Area. Winter 2011/2012.



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Need for Management

- *Crappie are the 2nd most harvested fish in MN – about 7 million are harvested per year.*
- *Documented declines in quality-sized fish have led to increased interest from anglers in maintaining or improving quality populations.*

Black Crappie importance and biology

- *Black crappie are the most widespread MN crappie.*
- *6 million are harvested/year.*
- *Black crappie may live 10 years or more.*
- *Their schooling nature makes them susceptible to overfishing.*
- *They spawn when water temps reach 66 to 68 degrees.*
- *Males build and guard nests in colonies and are easily harvested because they stay at the nest until the fry hatch.*

Population dynamics

- *Most lakes produce extremely variable crappie populations because crappie may only produce a good year class every few years, resulting in big gaps between year classes. This is why many crappie in a lake are the same size.*
- *Variable reproduction results in shifting and unstable size structures.*
- *Variable reproduction also results in “boom and bust” angling cycles as a year class matures and is then harvested.*

Harvest effects

- *When a year class matures and reaches an acceptable size, usually around 8 or 9 inches, fishing pressure often increases dramatically. These fish are often 4 to 5 yrs old.*
- *Good fishing may last for a short period of time as many crappies from the dominant year class are harvested within a year or two.*
- *The population may decline rapidly and it may take several years before the next year class matures and reaches an acceptable size.*

Quality Populations in the Grand Rapids Area

- *Several populations in the Grand Rapids Area would likely benefit from quality crappie management. These populations appear to have inconsistent reproduction, resulting in boom and bust angling cycles.*
- *Habitat information and other data suggest that these lakes have the potential to support and produce good numbers of large crappies.*
- *Reports from anglers and Conservation Officers suggest high harvest occurs on many lakes and fishing pressure has increased in recent years.*

MN DNR Fisheries Management Actions

- ***Monitoring-*** *Spring special assessments will collect information on abundance, size, growth, and age distribution.*
- ***Regulations-*** *Reduced bag limits may be the best management tool for maintaining quality black crappie populations but depend on public support.*
- *Public input in 2011 indicated interest and support for a five crappie bag limit on Split Hand Lake. This regulation will go in effect in March of 2012 and is expected to maintain quality crappie fishing for longer time periods. The MN DNR Grand Rapids Area Fisheries staff will regularly evaluate the population.*
- ***Outreach-*** *Anglers are encouraged to voluntarily limit their harvest on other area lakes with quality crappie populations. Anglers can help maintain quality populations by reducing harvest, releasing large crappie, and practicing catch and release.*



For more information about quality panfish management, contact the MN DNR Grand Rapids Area Fisheries at 218-327-4430.

