

## TOURNAMENT TRAIL

2003 & Updated for 2014

By the Rabbit



Grenada Reservoir is a flood control impoundment and heavy rains affect it drastically. It is not unusual to have this reservoir rise several feet in a short period of time because the Corps of Engineers will not release water if the Mighty Mississippi is close to flood stage. Be prepared for crappie to move with changing water levels, so as a general rule, fish go shallow toward the bank on a rise and retreat to deeper water on a fall.

Our tournament is scheduled **March 15** and just maybe we can catch this old impoundment in a spawn mode with the Big Mama extremely shallow. Naturally that will depend on Mother Nature to furnish us several days of warm 80 degree days & 60 degree nights in a row. Some females may be shallow on an early spawn run because crappie don't all do it at the same time.

Trollers and drift fishermen with 6 poles & 2 hook sets fishing in deeper water most always catch the winning weights, but jiggers still have a chance when the spawn is on.

Hopefully a big four pound (*it's a whale*) mama will give us a run for our money. *One-of-these-days* somebody will catch a truly monster wall hanger in a tournament.

Grenada has three water levels that are very important. First is the Conservation (Winter) Pool 193 feet, Recreation (Summer) Pool 215 feet, and Flood Level 231 feet. In 2002's tournament on **March 30** Grenada was at flood stage. Guess what the crappie were doing? Yep, right next to the bank trying to spawn. Expect male crappie to be in about two feet of water or shallower. If the water temperature is below 65 degrees don't look for males to have turned black but they may still be spawning. Turning

black is a metamorphous the male crappie go through during the spawn when water temperature warms.

What is going to be our best bet at winning the Grenada Tournament? Say it is at a pool level of **204 ft.** (which is my favorite level) you can still tell where the creek banks are and Grenada crappie love to spawn up-the-creeks. If levels are about **215 ft.** then things change drastically and crappie will be harder to find. Search very shallow water around brush, grass, stake beds, and cedar tops. Try your luck on the banks close to the creeks just as long as you find structure.

If it's flood time (**231 ft.**) get as close to the bank as possible and don't worry about brush because it is plentiful-a-plenty. I have a saying about Grenada crappie spawning shallow. "*They get so shallow if they tried to get any shallower they'd be on the bank.*" During the spawn I don't worry about lure color or finesse fishing at all. Spawning crappie will hit anything that moves (*just like a frog*).

### TOURNAMENT TIP

It would be wise to carry a short 9 or 10 foot **B'n'M Jig pole** for fishing under trees and in heavy brush if Grenada is close to flood stage. In muddy water it's not that important to get your bait very far from the boat.

When jig fishing use a durable hair jig or glue on your rubber skirts. When fishing with only 2 foot of line out it's a pain in the rear to straighten up your rubber skirt every few minutes.

Also when jigging in shallow water (during the spawn) adding a minnow or nibblet is not only troublesome but usually a complete waste of time.

Use 8 or 10 pound test colored line (especially-us-old-folks) because when jigging it's very important that you can see your line.

## 2002 WINNERS

March 30th

The winning team of Shields and Renfro from Glen Allen (Lake Washington) were no strangers to Grenada Reservoir. They were raised in that neck-of-the-woods and have a cabin on Enid. They said, "*The fish we'd been catching all week were constantly moving because of the rising water. We were lucky to find them out from Torrance Landing about 2 hours before the tournament was over. Man, it was fast and furious, What-a-Rush!*"

**Winning Weight:**  
**10 fish 17.35 lbs. (all males) caught in 2 feet of water in the grass.**

Grenada was rising all week from heavy rains and was extremely muddy and at peak flood stage (**231 ft.**) on tournament day.

#### Note:

Drift fishermen have made significant improvements since 2002 finding and catching the bigger females (even under similar difficult conditions).

**"Good Luck!"**