

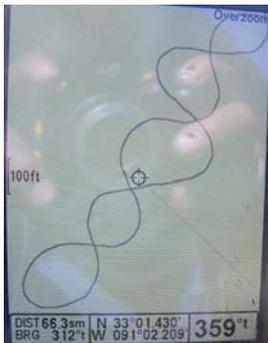
Wildcat Trolling

By Bernard Williams, Magnolia Crappie Club

I love to troll; I think any other type of fishing is boring unless you are tearing them up. I started pulling crankbaits and long lining jigs a few years ago and found this to be a very effective way to catch fish. This method works best when water temperature is above 50 degrees.

The method works with any type of trolling, from spider-rigging, long lining jigs to pulling crankbaits. The expert trollers will never tell this so listen closely. My method involves making large looping turns that crisscross each other. What happens when you make turns is the outside baits pick up and the inside baits fall and vice-versa.

Since crappie are predator fish, they will attack anything that tries to get away or looks crippled. It's the same principle as a bully uses, if you run you get beat up. It's the same concept with crappie. When they see that jig or crankbait slow down or speed up their basic instinct is to attack. So there you have it, the turns are the key.



The wildcat method got its name from me looking back at the GPS route and seeing that I had made a bunch of turns, my partner said that looks **wild**, and there you have it. Football has its wildcat, why not crappie fishing. This works so well because you can do this on a river channel or a flat. The key to this method is to overlap your turns when working a certain area.

We use the wildcat very effective on the River Lakes, Barnett, Grenada, and Sardis, during the pre-spawn, spawn, summer, and fall. We use this technique during the spawn for no other reason than to just fine the location of the big sows, and then spider-rig them.

Speed is another critical factor; sometimes we simply turn the trolling motor off for a few seconds and back on or speeds up and slow back down. I'll try anything to give that jig or crankbait an erratic move. This triggers what we call "**Reaction Strikes**". The crappie might not be feeding but something coming alone and stop or speed up in front of them they can't resist.

Tip:

- I use a Minn-Kota trolling motor with the I-Pilot. While most fishermen use the remote control for boat control, I use the foot

control to control my speed. I have more control over the speed with the foot control than I do with the remote. Don't get me wrong, I always attach the I-Pilot remote control to my belt for the times when I need it in a hurry to turn the boat, but for my speed adjustments, I use the roller control on the foot control. It is truly variable control. I can go from 30% to 100% and back to 20% much faster with the roller than the remote.

- Boat owners should invest in a battery load tester. A load tester will signal you when a battery is not producing the proper voltage when placed under a load. Dead cell batteries can destroy the main board in your trolling motor. The Terrova and Power-Drive motors are designed to draw a certain amount of amperage and voltage, if a bad battery is in the mix, the low-voltage will cause the board to burn up. I know from 1st hand experience, the boards are costly and will ruin a fishing trip.

This technique can be used with any method of trolling, from spider-rigging to long-lining to cranking. It can be utilized any season of the year. The key to making it productive is to let the fish tell you the speed they prefer.

For more information contact me:
Bernard Williams,
Central MS Guide Service
(601) 454-0196
bwilliams27@comcast.net

