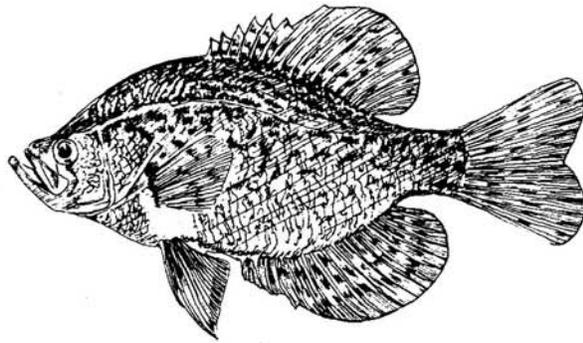


Habitat management for

CRAPPIE



In the State of Oregon

Both the white crappie (*Pomoxis annularis*) and the black crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*) are found in Oregon. The average size of this warm water game fish is about ten inches in length. Both species have similar habits, but the white crappie is more tolerant of silty, turbid waters. Crappies are difficult to manage in small ponds with stable water levels because they become too numerous for the food supply and quickly reach a size too large for bass to eat and too small for fishermen to use.

HABITAT NEEDS

Water. Fertile, nonturbid, significantly fluctuating waters are best for crappie production. Crappies spawn in late spring or early summer when the water temperature is 70°F to 80°F. Water temperatures over 70°F and up to 90°F are best for crappie growth.

Food. Crappies eat a wide variety of natural food, mainly small fish, insects, larvae, small crayfish, worms, etc. Crappies do not accept readily artificial foods; therefore, production is limited to the natural environment which can be improved through use of fertilizers.

MANAGEMENT

Stock crappies during August through February. If stock is obtained from wild populations or by seining ponds, be careful not to introduce unwanted species which will further complicate pond management. A suggested stocking rate is 25 crappies and 50 bass per surface acre.

Water levels should fluctuate significantly and the pond should be of larger size to provide good crappie fishing. The low summer water level and small surface area tend to hold down crappie numbers. When the water expands in the winter and spring, the crappies have room to grow well. Oregon's most spectacular example of this principle is Owyhee Reservoir in Malheur County.

Management problems include over-production and imbalance, especially in small, stable ponds. Aquatic weeds often cause problems, especially in stable waters. The use of crappies in small, stable ponds is not recommended.

See Technical Note No. 15 for information concerning needed state permits.