

North Carolina Sport Fish Profiles



Black Crappie

Scientific Name:

Pomoxis nigromaculatus

Other Common Names:

speckled perch, calico bass, papermouth

Identification:

With a compressed body, small head and arched back, the black crappie is silvery-green to yellowish, with large dorsal and anal fins of almost identical shape and size. It has a large mouth with an upper jaw extending under the eye. It has many dark spots on its sides and fins, which become more mottled toward the back. To differentiate between a black crappie and a white crappie, count the dorsal spines. The black crappie has seven to eight dorsal spines, while the white crappie has only five to six.



Illustration by Duane Raver

Habitats and Habits:

Black crappie are thought to be native to North Carolina and have been widely stocked across the state. They thrive in clear ponds, natural lakes and reservoirs with moderate vegetation. Black crappie are also common in large, slow-moving rivers in the Coastal Plain but will avoid areas that are turbid or murky.

Young black crappie prey on insects, plankton and larval fishes. Adult black crappie eat mainly fish, but they will also eat aquatic organisms and terrestrial insects.

Fishing Techniques:

Effective bait and lures are small jigs, minnows, silver spoons, flies and spinners fished along shorelines, around submerged brush piles and near fallen trees. Fishing vertically is effective when black crappie are deep enough to tolerate a boat directly overhead. Drifting or trolling with jigs works well when crappie are roaming open waters. To attract black crappie, anglers will often sink fish hides or "hurdles" consisting of Christmas trees and other woody debris.

Good Places to Fish:

Chowan River, Roanoke River, Cashie River, Lake Mattamuskeet, Lake Gaston, Falls of the Neuse Reservoir, Shearon Harris Reservoir, Jordan Reservoir, High Rock Lake, Badin Lake, Lake Tillery, Blewett Falls Lake, Lake Rhodhiss, Lake Norman, Lake Wylie, Neuse River (downstream of Pelican Landing), Tar River (from Greenville downstream to Washington)

Other Information:

NCARP Minimum Requirements: 2 pounds or 16 inches

State Record: 4 pounds, 15 ounces from Asheboro City Lake #4 , April 27, 1980