

PANFISH: Bluegills active throughout delta waters

FROM PAGE 24

deeper water.”

Anglers can catch bluegills and shellcrackers just about anywhere in the delta. Fish the backwaters with less current. Most anglers use boats to fish the sprawling system, but people can fish off the bank at Live Oak Landing on the Tensaw River near Stockton and a few other places.

Another panfish that loves weedy delta waters, warmouth look somewhat like a black crappie and a bluegill hybrid. Also called goggle-eye, these thick, dark fish with red eyes love swamps, shallow lakes and sluggish streams with thick vegetation and soft, muddy bottoms. They often hit spinnerbaits, crankbaits and plastic worms used by bass anglers.

Anglers can also catch other panfish. Fliers look similar to crappie, but typically weigh less than half a pound. Like goggle-eyes, fliers prefer oxbow lakes and other weedy backwaters. Known for their long “ear flaps,” longear sunfish prefer streams with moderate flow as do colorful redbreast sunfish. With larger mouths, green sunfish look similar to goggle-eyes.

Most bream species eat almost anything. They particularly love minnows, worms, tiny shrimp and insects such as crickets. To catch bream, anglers typically use the old reliable float and bait rig dropped next to a weed patch, fallen log or drop-off. Bream also hit bottom baits.

“Crickets are good to use for bait, but my favorite bream bait is seed shrimp with red wiggler worms coming in second,” Green recommended. “I use a 12-inch diameter net to catch



Photo by John N. Felsher

Ruth Sykes shows off a bluegill she caught while fishing a swampy backwater.

seed shrimp. Run the net down to the bottom and then scoop it up through the grass. When we scoop, we either get none or a bunch of shrimp. It may take a while to find them, but if they are there, it doesn't take long to catch a bunch.”

When on the beds, bluegills vigorously defend their territories, making them good targets for fly fishermen. Bluegills and other panfish viciously strike flies, streamers, nymphs or similar creations that resemble insects or minnows. Floating plastic, cork or foam baits that mimic crickets, spiders or other creatures can provide explosive topwater action. Bream also hit beetle spinners, small crankbaits, crappie jigs and other tiny artificials.

Redears sometimes hit floating poppers, but more commonly feed near the bottom. Work beetle spinners slowly just over the bottom. Also, try little crankbaits that resemble crawfish, fish or insects.

Just about any sweet system in Alabama can produce good action from these feisty little scrappers that pull harder, ounce for ounce, than anything in fresh water.

THE KARAT PATCH *Jewelers*



*You caught your Fish in
the Sea; let us help her
stay Hooked on you*

800 Hillcrest Rd (Winthrop Square)

Mobile, AL

(251) 344-5614

<https://www.karatpatchmobile.com/>