

CRAPPIE: They often go on feeding frenzy in the fall

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“If a person fishes one day, then not for several days, those fish probably aren’t in the same place any longer,” Overstreet advised. “They moved up the creek. When nights turn cooler, the best thing to do first is move toward shallower water in the back of the creeks. If we have some really cold nights early on, that will push crappie back deeper. As long as the water temperature holds steady or just declines gradually over time, the shad will migrate a good bit back into the creeks.”

When spider rigging, anglers can vertically fish multiple lure or bait combinations at different depths simultaneous and plow huge swaths through the water. Some anglers use several jigs on each line to check various color combinations and depths. Many anglers tip their jigs with live minnows for extra action and flavor.

Anglers can also try “long-line trolling.” Similar to spider rigging, but from the back of the boat, long-lining involves pulling several lines behind the boat. Anglers can still fish multiple rods each with different attractants to



Photo by John N. Felsher

Road Runners make excellent crappie lures. Many anglers in the fall troll them to cover large tracts of water to find scattered fish.

see what works best that day.

“When fish scatter and chase shad in the fall, my ‘go-to’ technique is to troll white or chartreuse Road Runners with willow-leaf blades,” Overstreet revealed. “A willow-leaf blade doesn’t create as much vibration, but it gives off a lot of flash. Fish home in on that

flash in the fall. I tip them with live minnows. I usually run six to eight 16-foot B’n’M Pro Staff Trolling Rods behind the boat. With that, I can cover a lot of water. I move the boat fairly fast to put the baits in front of as many fish as possible when they are running shad. If that’s not working, I might try a plain jig or just a straight minnow.”

Fish often use creek channels as underwater highways. They follow the drop-off edges up the streams. Without a spider rig, some anglers hold a long pole in each hand. They bait each line with two or three different temptations and watch their electronics to follow the bottom contours, keeping one line on the deep side of the drop-off and the other line on the high side.

Regardless of technique, when a fish hits, pay attention to the depth in which it struck, color or bait combination of the enticement, type of bottom and other factors. Based upon multiple variables, try to put together patterns of where fish want to stay and what they want to hit. Then, find something that duplicates those patterns and keep going over that hot area.

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