



CONSERVATION & CRAPPIE



If you love crappie fishing, it's time to let your lake know it!

Protecting our lakes and fisheries is a responsibility we all share, and they need our help more than ever! The fish we love to catch are connected to the waters they inhabit.



Clean water = good fishing!

It's not difficult to find the connection between clean water and good fishing. One does not exist without the other. Minnesota has a legendary fishing legacy to uphold. Our lakes and rivers have historically been some of the cleanest on the planet! Our fisheries require a certain level of care if we hope to carry on our legacy.

Threats to Minnesota lakes.

The primary threats to our fish, by way of the lake, is elevated levels of phosphorus caused by contaminated runoff, erosion, and sediment from over-developed land use. This includes lakeshore over-development, the loss of forests and native vegetation. Improper agricultural or industrial practices near our waters can also add phosphorus and contaminants.

Some lakes are also polluted with chloride, which comes from road salt and water softeners.

Still other lakes are infested with Aquatic Invasive Species, (AIS) such as zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil, stony stonewort, and Asian carp. Non-native aquatic plants and animals cause economic and environmental damage to our lakes. AIS have taken hold in many Minnesota lakes.

What Crappies like...

Crappie are one of Minnesota's most popular fish. In fact, a recent study determined that only the walleye surpasses the crappie as the state's favorite fish to catch. We like catching our "slabs"! But what do they like?

Black crappies prefer deeper lakes with cool, clear water. Crappie are primarily minnow eaters... so to find schools of crappies, look for minnow hideouts like fallen trees, bushes, old piers, and submerged weed beds.

What Crappies don't like...

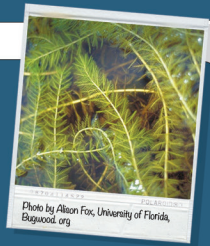
Crappie are not found in dirty, warm, shallow, weed-choked waters. They do not thrive in waters impaired with aquatic invasive species, (AIS) or in waters that are overgrown with algae blooms caused by excess loads of phosphorus in the water.

AIS, what can be done?

- 1 Drain everything!**
Drain water from boats, motors, live wells, even bait buckets before leaving the lake.
- 2 Clean your watercraft & trailer of all foreign matter.**
Remove plants, mud, and other debris from your watercraft and trailer. Don't allow any natural matter to be transported to other bodies of water. Remember... watercraft does not just mean boats. Kayaks, canoes, paddle boards, jet skis, etc... they all are capable of transporting AIS.
- 3 Dry it out. It's the law!**
Any dock equipment moved from one lake to another must be dried on land for at least 21 days before it is placed in new lake. This includes docks, boat lifts and swim platforms.
- 4 Observe & report.**
If you think you might have spotted an aquatic invasive species... report it! Early detection is the key to limiting the spread.

Milfoil Madness!

Eurasian watermilfoil is a feathery submerged aquatic plant that can quickly form thick mats that interfere with swimming and entangle propellers, which hinders boating, and fishing.



Seeing Stars!

Starry stonewort forms large dense mats of vegetation that often out-compete native aquatic plants and have impacts on boating, fishing and other native animals.



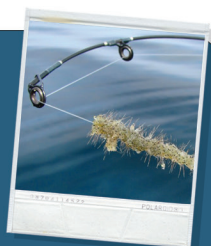
Mini Mussel Mania!

Zebra mussels foul up boats, motors, docks, and equipment left in lakes. Zebra mussels can survive out of water for days, so it is critical to clean, drain and dry docks, and watercraft before moving them to other lakes.



Gelatinous Blob Monsters!

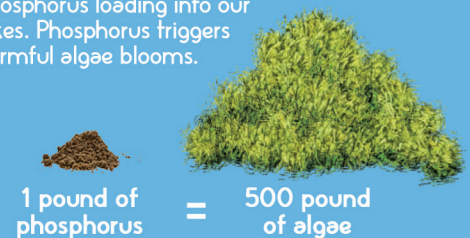
Spiny waterfleas are microscopic animals, that live in open water. They are often found clogged on fishing line in gelatinous blobs. They harm food sources that our native fish depend on.



Fish and phosphorus

Nutrient-loading within a lake threatens many fish species such as Walleye, Pike, Crappie, and Trout. Fish in our northern climate thrive in cold water with abundant oxygen levels. Decomposing algae on the lake bottom depletes cold water oxygen supplies.

Phosphorus is a nutrient found in manure, leaves, soil, and fertilizer. Under natural conditions phosphorus is typically scarce in water. Human activities, however, have resulted in excessive phosphorus loading into our lakes. Phosphorus triggers harmful algae blooms.



What can be done about phosphorus?

Limit stormwater runoff into waterways. Plant native trees, shrubs, flowers, and grasses! Forests and well vegetated lands serve as a giant natural sponge, filtering and retaining stormwater. A healthy variety of native plants with deep root systems retains soil, soaks up water and filters contaminants. Woodlands protect both groundwater and surface water. Native cover allows proper infiltration of stormwater into underground aquifers. The forests are our lakes best protectors!

Fight for your fish!

Your local Soil & Water Conservation District can help point you to best management practices to protect our lakes. Whether you own land or just enjoy using our lakes, there are steps you can take to protect your fishing hole and the fishing legacy in Minnesota. Our fish need clean water to thrive!

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Report AIS to:

dnr.state.mn.us/invasive/ais/contacts.html