

# Now is time for fall crappies

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Archers are now heading afield for deer, waterfowlers will soon occupy blinds and squirrel hunters are finding better success.

Still, anglers who have already set aside their fishing tackle until next spring may be missing out on some of the finest crappie fishing action of the entire year. The months of October, November and December generally bring excellent fishing opportunities for good-sized crappies.

Oddly enough, with all this good fishing to be found, there are relatively few anglers that take advantage of the fall fishing opportunities. In fact, there are times on some smaller waters where an angler might be the only one fishing on the entire lake.

But, this lack of fishing pressure should not be considered a measurement of angling success. It's possible that an autumn outing could bring one of the finest crappie fishing trips of the entire year.

In fact, many regular autumn anglers realize that now is the time to grab a minnow bucket and try one more fishing trip before putting the tackle away for the winter.

Biologists say that a number of downstate waters hold promise of good fall fishing action. Illinois fisheries biologists, suggest putting Rend Lake in Franklin and Jefferson counties on the list of fall fishing prospects.

Rend Lake holds a large population of crappie. This past spring and summer have brought excellent fishing from these waters. Many veteran anglers to these waters expect to see more of the same type of action coming from Rend Lake this fall.

Reports from local bait shops indicate that the good action has already begun at this location. Anglers are taking large numbers of quality crappies from some of the deeper brushpiles.

Carlyle Lake, too, has now returned to its rightful spot as one of Illinois' top crappie waters. The last couple of years has brought superb crappie action to this lake.

Another good bet would be Crab Orchard Lake in Williamson County. This 7,000-acre lake regularly produces top-notch angling action for fall crappies.

Anglers shouldn't overlook Cedar Lake in Jackson County. While this lake has always been known to hold large numbers of smaller crappies, anglers are also beginning to see more larger fish being caught.

Downstate anglers will also want to consider Kinkaid Lake in Jackson County. Biologists say that reproduction has improved over the past few years and anglers should find good fishing for one-half to three-fourths pound crappies.

Not to be overlooked is Coffeen Lake in Montgomery County. Anglers will find good crappie fishing all winter at this state-managed cooling lake.

Over the past several years Coffeen Lake anglers have witnessed an improvement in the overall crappie population. There is little doubt that Coffeen Lake will again offer plenty of good crappie fishing this fall and winter."

Springfield Lake is another top crappie water for downstate anglers to try. According to fisheries biologists, the Lake Springfield crappie fishery is looking good as autumn continues.

Anglers can expect to find good fishing for quality crappies from these waters. In addition, recent good spawns mean more good crappie fishing for the next several years.

And, the list of good crappie waters goes on. Lakes like Beaver Dam State Lake in Macoupin County, Litchfield's Lake Lou Yaeger in Montgomery County, Lake Jacksonville in Morgan County, Raccoon Lake in Marion County and Lake of Egypt in Johnson County are all top choices for the downstate crappie angler.

Other locations like the lower Kaskaskia River, the Smithland Pool on the Ohio River and the many backwaters of the Illinois and Mississippi rivers are also good choices for fall crappie fishing.