

The Crappie CAT

A Newsletter By and For the Members of the Crappie Anglers of Texas

From the Editor

Welcome to the very first (and hopefully not last) issue of the “**Crappie CAT**”, a newsletter published by and for the members of the Crappie Anglers of Texas (CAT). CAT was the brain child of Ernest Paty, who in September of 2007, made a few phone calls to several so called ‘crappie fishermen’ friends of his trying to sell us on the idea of the need of a crappie club based in North Texas. As usual, most of us, trying to appease the old man, said, “yeah Ernest, whatever you say”, but he wouldn’t let it lay. One day alone, he called me five times trying to sell me on the idea, while telling me why it would be important for me to be a founding member. Well, thank goodness he persisted, and now five months later thanks to that persistence, the CAT is almost 130 members strong. . . and growing. Our club is developing into a very diverse organization of people, from having extensive knowledge about crappie fishing, to members that are joining for the express purpose of learning about crappie fishing, and **ALL** are welcome. Hopefully it goes without saying that any organization in its formative stages, goes thru many ‘growing pains’...and we’ve already experienced some of that, but if everyone will just have faith that we’ll figure this thing out, I think I can speak for the Board, in that we’ll do the very best to make the Crappie Anglers of Texas, “**the**” club to be a member of. So sit back, tighten that life jacket strap, and get ready for the “crappie ride” of your fishing life, cause CAT is here to make sure that you enjoy every minute of it.

Presidents Corner

“Off and Running”. I’m so excited about the way the club has taken off. When we first started thinking about the club we hoped we might get as many as 50 members in our first year. Well folks, we blew by that the first week. As of today we have 128 members. We’ve had three meetings, had a couple of decent seminars and learned a few good lessons and had our first tournament. (a huge success in my opinion, well except I didn’t catch a fish). Speaking of the tournament, we had one

team from the Houston area and another from Austin. It speaks well for our future if we can keep interest growing from that far away.

We are aware that the last meeting had a little too much business and not enough fishing and we intend to adjust that in the future. We will continue to stress education both at the meetings and at the tournaments. Look for the benefits from every event. Even though it was cold, windy and the fish took the day off, the tournament exposed a lot of rookie fishermen to a learning environment. I know I learned some things. Take advantage to the opportunities these next few months will provide. Every club member should be able to fish with several more experienced anglers by year's end and will learn a great deal. The next two months should bring great fishing and more growth for the club. I can't wait.

Ernest Paty

Hats/Shirts/Patches

Due to popular demand, the Board of Directors has approved the purchase of hats and patches that have the CAT club logo embroidered on them, and believe me, these hats will compare to anything at BPS for \$15 - \$20. The hats will sell for \$8.00/ea and the patches are \$7.00/ea. We would like for all members to wear the "club colors" hats (navy/white or solid navy), so please consider that when considering a hat. The patches will have the logo on a white background (all embroidered) so that you will be able to add them to any article of clothing. We will have a catalog available at each club meeting so that you will be able to pick your shirt, jacket, etc according to your own taste. The club receives a 20% discount on all prices in the catalog, which is passed on to the club members. The only catch is that you will be required to pay when you order (not exactly a new idea). So when looking at the catalog, just take the price that you see for whatever you want, subtract 20%, and that's your cost. Easy huh....as long as you have a calculator. I'll take a couple weeks to get whatever you order, but I will try very hard to have it to you at the very next club meeting, as long as you don't order something pink or purple.....Ernest.

Thank You Jerry Hancock

Jerry Hancock of North Texas Guide Service, recently informed this editor that he is offering any member of The Crappie Anglers of Texas a \$50 discount on any guide trip thru his guiding service. And keep in mind that it's a \$50 discount/trip, not per person. So if your friends are thinking of joining the club and thinking about taking a guided crappie fishing trip, why not take advantage of Jerry's generosity and at the same time save enough to join CAT and have \$30 left over to buy beer. Makes sense to me. Thanks Jerry, the Crappie Anglers of Texas appreciates you.

CAT Newsletter Sponsorship

If you remember at our last meeting, I mentioned that we may 'sell' sponsorships to our Newsletter, but after a lot of thought (which gives me a headache every time), I think I've come up with a better idea. At our last Board of Directors meeting there was talk of having a raffle at each club meeting, that would give the CAT members a chance to get something really nice for not a lot of 'bread'. So if any of you tackle manufacturers/distributors, guides, boat dealers, DVD producers, rod makers, (you get the idea) want to donate something that is of a true value to the club

members, and agree to allow it to be put into a raffle at one (or more) of our meeting; have I gotta deal for you. The CAT Newsletter has a distribution of 130 hard-core crappie fishermen just waiting to see who you are, and have an easy way to link to your website. No, the Newsletter isn't exactly at your Time, Newsweek or 'O' magazine distribution level, but we do have a focused group of people. So if you're interested in putting your website link in the "Crappie CAT", contact me and we'll make you famous (if not necessarily rich). And by the way, your website link will run for one year from the date of your donation. Now, go try to beat that deal at WalMart.

For Sale/Trade (or something you just wanna get rid of)

The "for sale/trade section" will be in each issue of the "Crappie CAT", so if you have anything you want to sell or buy, let me know and I will see that it gets advertised. And our advertising rates are probably some of the cheapest you'll ever see. . . . FREE. When you advertise something, remember that pictures always help sell anything, so include your pics, but please don't send me all at once, your total collection of extraneous 'stuff' that you've put in your garage for the last 13 years, cause there is a limit to my typing abilities (and space). So let the sales begin.

Minutes to the Last Board of Directors Meeting

At great personal risk, the Board recently met on the evening of February 14, Valentine's Day to discuss club business. The meeting was called to order at 6:40PM. Articles of organization and by-laws were reviewed to make certain we all understand the rules governing the club. Of course we had reviewed these previously but they become much more useful and necessary as guidelines to chart a stable course for club growth and development.

Highlights of the meeting included:

- Reviewed, discussed and approved final tournament rules
- Trophy issue was reopened and it was reaffirmed to have such for tournament winners
- Tournament committee to recommend appropriate trophies
- Draw tournament entry forms and fees have to be submitted on or before the club meeting immediately prior to the tournament
- Decided to avoid lakes where an event fee is required
- Articles and by-laws to be posted on the club web site
- Clarify to the membership that the \$20 dues are for the calendar year
- Insurance should come from the general fund
- Discussed proposals on club hats and shirts and agreed on an initial offering (this was in direct response to requests for hats and shirts at every prior club meeting)
- Agreed on turn-key website provider, of particular importance was future growth and making information available to the membership
- Discussed the formation of a sponsorship committee

Inaugural Tournament for CAT; Lavon Lake Feb. 2008

When I got out of bed at dark thirty a.m. Saturday and looked out the window, I knew I either had a guide trip or a tournament that day. . . . because the wind was already blowing. And yes, you can blame the wind on me, cause it always blows when I fish. When Phil and I pulled up at the East Fork ramp at about 6:00, it was obvious that there were a lot to CAT members that were anxious to 'get it on'; with trucks, boats and people (dressed in every article of clothing they owned), milling around Paul O'Bier with money in their hands. Paul was accommodating, as he took everyone's money (little did we know that was omens of things to come) with a smile. At approximately 6:30 most boats started out with one common thought on minds. . . . "where in the hell do I start fishing" (not exactly the optimum way to start a tournament).

My fishing partner Phil Bradshaw and I stopped on a series of brushpiles that I knew about, intent on jig fishing. I liked my plan and was confident in it until I noticed that Jerry and Paul, along with James Rains and Eric Poppell had stopped about a hundred yards ahead of me on a point that I had also planned on hitting. . . "later in the day". At a hundred yards (if you're not paying too much attention to what you're doing), I found out that you can see and count how many times a boat puts their landing net in the water. . . . and both of those boats were putting their nets in the water all too often, at least in my opinion. Phil and I managed three fish (and missed three) on those brushpiles, and as I later discovered that we were the only boat that weighed in fish caught on jigs (memo to self: quit fishing jigs when you see two other boats using minnows and kicking 'big butt' on crappie).

And as you might imagine, Sheldon Shepherd had one of his 'episodes' and took his partner Tim catfishing instead of crappie fishing (poor Sheldon gets so confused sometimes). I didn't see them all day until right at the end, when we pulled up to them and asked what they had. Tim answered, "slime". Seems that Sheldon took Tim to the largest concentration of catfish that Lavon had to offer, and just to prove his point, hooked and landed a 30# blue on a 10' crappie pole with 10# line (memo to all members: please take time to show Sheldon a picture of a crappie so he doesn't make this mistake again). We never had the chance to talk with anyone else on the lake, but we knew exactly where you were. Wish I had taken a picture of the dam area. . . . it looked like someone had posted a sign on the dam giving away "free Budweiser and fried pork skins". I think just about every boat in the tournament was lined up, all in a neat, straight line....catching zilch.

Finally (and mercifully for most) time came to go to weigh-in. There was a good crowd of people that came just to see the weigh-in, and I want to make special acknowledgement to Brent, president of **North Texas Trophy Cats**, for the use of his tournament weigh-in trailer and PA system. Brent knows how to do things with class. Thank you very much Brent.

We had 20 teams enter the tournament, but unfortunately Lady Lavon treated most of them with total disrespect, as only six teams came to the scales with fish bags. And after the short weigh-in was finished, Jerry and Paul proved their knowledge and ability on Lavon, walking away with the win by a wide margin over any of the rest of us that weighed. Later Jerry explained that most of their fish (which by the way, **averaged almost 2#**) were caught on minnows off the point that was a mere 100 yards ahead of me.I hate me.

Thanks to all that participated, congratulations to all that weighed-in, condolences to those that didn't (your day will come), thanks again to Brent, and let's all start looking forward to the next tournament which is on March 29th on Lake Lewisville. That tournament is a 'draw' tourney, which means that anyone can be paired with anyone "luck of the draw" style. So go do your homework on Lewisville cause there's some dandy crappie being caught right now, and it'll only get better in another month.

And Here's the Stats

Big Fish - Paul O'Bier & Jerry Hancock - 2.190#
1st Place - Paul O'Bier & Jerry Hancock - 13.085#
2nd Place - James Rains & Eric Poppell - 6.655#
3rd Place (tie) -- Gary Sims & George Nelon - 4.715#
3rd Place (tie) - JayDon Reeve & Tracy Laird - 4.715#
4th Place - Phil Bradshaw & Guy Skinner - 3.150#
5th Place - Cliff Dalton & Danny Salazar - 2.80#
6th Place - Kurt Westenhoffer & Mackey Whyte - 1.815#



Some of the crowd that wanted to see if Paul and Jerry were really that goodand yes, they were. Notice how 'happy' everyone was (sorta reminds you of the gang of guys in high school just before they 'pants you').



You know, if it weren't for the front row, you'd think we were at a 'wake' where they were giving out trophies. I asked them to smile for the picture. Can you imagine what we would have gotten if I hadn't asked that??? I realize that some of these faces might seem familiar to you; like maybe in pictures at the Post Office?!?!



OK, this is as much smile as they can muster for winning \$1200.....
On your right, Jerry Hancock and Paul O'Bier 1st place, next to Paul is Eric Poppell and James Rains 2nd place, next to James is JayDon Reeve with Tracy Laird (kneeling), tied for 3rd place and next to Tracy is Gary Sims (kneeling) tied for 3rd place. I'm not so sure that this group would ever make "Best Dressed" in GQ magazine.



Oops, did I fail to mention that Paul and Jerry also took 'big fish'. Boy, when you got...flaunt it. Congratulations guys for a really kick ass job.

So that's it for this month guys. I hope everyone enjoys the Newsletter. Remember, it's also a "work in progress", so any suggestions (other than a tar and feather party for me) will be entertained. Thanks so much for your continued support of the best damn crappie club in Texas

Crappie Anglers of Texas!!!!!!!!!!!!