

**BUILDING BEDS****More Crappie  
Guaranteed!**

by Tim Huffman

Livewells full of fish is the goal of most fishermen. However, it isn't always easy to find and catch the little rascals. They seem to disappear or get lockjaw. One way to guarantee that you catch more fish is to build crappie beds.

**What's a Bed?**

Beds are homes made for crappie. They can be Christmas trees, softwoods, hardwoods, tires or plastic configurations. Bed construction is limited only by local regulations, work and money that you want to put into it.

Beds are important because they give you specific spots to fish. Hopefully, most fishermen won't find and fish the beds for a while but with today's electronics and people watching when you are catching fish, it's for sure others will eventually find them.

**Bed Basics**

(1) Economical Beds. The inexpensive way to build a bed is with wood. Finding large limbs or small trees on the bank allows you to drag them out to a spot, weight them (usually with concrete

blocks), and sink them.

This sounds easy but it is a lot of work. It takes time, muscle and the help of a friend to safely make good brushpile beds.

Hardwoods are best for beds because they last the longest. Next are softwoods. The last choice is Christmas trees because the evergreens take a while to become active, causes a lot of hang-ups and aren't long-lasting.

(2) New-Age PVC Beds. Wood beds work great but the newest fad is to place PVC pipe beds. These are popular because they are easier to handle, won't cause as many hang-ups and can last forever. They are especially good for people wanting to place a few beds around a dock or in a small lake. However, placing them in big water is just as effective but you'll need more of them. The disadvantage of PVC beds is cost.

(3) Placing beds should be done when there are few fishermen on the lake. Winter is a great time. If you pre-mark spots with a GPS you can place them safely at night. The key to placing beds includes keeping them out of the way of boats and skiers, in a potentially good crappie area and recording landmarks or GPS coordinates. Finding open water cover is more difficult than you think.

(4) Place beds at different depths for different seasons. Use shallow to mid-depth for spring and fall. Use mid-depths and deeper water for summer and winter beds. Also consider the wind. Try to place them at different spots so that no matter which directions the wind blows you'll have a couple of protected beds to fish.

**Making a PVC Bed**

The easiest PVC bed is one of the pre-built beds like the Porcupine Fish Attractor. It is a sphere

with holes and pieces of PVC pipe. Each pipe is glued and placed in a hole in the sphere. A concrete block is added for weight and the satellite-looking unit is dropped to the bottom. The Porcupine is available in different sizes or you can buy just the spheres and purchase your own PVC and cut it to length. Results using these units have been great.

Tennessee fishing guide Jim Duckworth, has made placing beds an important part of his work. Due to the number of beds and his availability to scrap PVC pipe, he creates his own beds. His favorite bed includes a five gallon bucket, rigid 3/4 to 1 1/2 pipes, and a roll of 1-inch flexible pipe. Here's how he builds it.

Start with the five gallon bucket. Add Quickcrete to fill about 1/3 to 1/2 of the bucket then add water and mix. Stick about five to seven pieces of rigid pipe into the bucket. Length is typically 4 feet but can be longer or shorter. Add four to six pieces of the rolled plastic with it curling from the bucket down toward the ground. These pieces should be about 3 feet long. When you are finished the rolled plastic looks like spider legs coming out of the bucket.

Wait 24 hours, pull the rolled plastic up to the rigid plastic and tie them with a rope to make transporting easier. When at the lake, carefully mark your spot, remove the rope and toss the bed into the lake.

**More Tips**

I'm a firm believer that wood works better than plastic but plastic beds make much more sense. Fewer hang-ups, long-lasting, easier and safer to place, less work and more difficult for others to find make them a good choice.

Crappie will come to a bed immediately. We placed one in Kentucky Lake, went back in less than two hours and caught a 1.5 pound crappie.

The beds should get better with age.

To contact fishing guide, Jim Duckworth, call 615-444-2283. To buy Porcupine Fish Attractors, call 1-800-305-9866.

Editor's note: 'Grizzly Fishing for Crappie & Bluegill' is a new video hosted by Tim Huffman and Louie Mansfield. Filmed on Reelfoot Lake, it details different ultra-light longpole methods and includes tips, equipment details and fish cleaning. DVD-R format. Send \$15.95 to Huffman Publishing, PO Box 26, Poplar Bluff, MO 63902.



*Guide Jim Duckworth uses plastic PVC beds to improve his chances of consistently producing fish for his clients. His favorite are ones placed in shallower water for great pre-spawn, spawn and post-spawn action on a float-and-jig.*

**15<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL TINLEY PARK  
FISHING & OUTDOOR SHOW**

FEB. 9 &amp; 10 • 9AM-5PM (SAT. &amp; SUN.)

Tinley Park High School, 6111 W. 175th St. **COME TO A GREAT  
FAMILY SHOW!**

OVER 85,000 SQUARE FEET OF EXHIBITOR SPACE: RODS - REELS - TACKLE  
BOATS - MOTORS - RESORTS - FISHING CHARTERS - GUIDES - SHORE LUNCHES  
TINLEY PARK OUTDOOR SHOW GETS BIGGER EVERY YEAR!

☆☆☆ PARTICIPATE IN THE RAFFLE FOR A BRAND NEW BOAT WITH TRAILER &  
OUTBOARD MOTOR BROUGHT TO US WITH THE HELP OF BASA'S MARINE! ☆☆☆

For more details see: [www.TinleyParkFishingShow.com](http://www.TinleyParkFishingShow.com)

This show supports all of the student athletes at Tinley Park High.

**Scattergun Sports**

Optics by Alpen & Mueller, Northwind Decoys, Ammo,  
Double Bull Blinds, Dead-Down-Wind, Game Calls,  
Fishing, Archery Supplies and Repairs, and More!!

511 W. Shirley St. • Raymond, IL 62560

Telephone: (217) 229-3668 • Email: [scattergun@consolldated.net](mailto:scattergun@consolldated.net)**SMILEY'S SPORTS SHOP INC.**

Archery • Guns & Ammo • Fishing Tackle • Live Bait  
Ammo by the Case Price • Full Line of Abu Garcia  
Full Service Archery Shop

See us on the web at: [www.smileysportsshop.com](http://www.smileysportsshop.com)



2049 Ireland Grove Rd. • Bloomington, IL

**309/663-1133****St. Louis Antique Arms Association**

Since 1971

**2008 ARMS EXPO**  
**BUY - SELL - TRADE**  
MODERN & COLLECTIBLE FIREARMS  
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

**FEB. 15-17 • SEPT. 20-22  
& OCT. 31-NOV. 2**

Expo Located at VFW Post Hall #3944  
10815 Midland Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63114

From I-70 exit Lindbergh Blvd. South to Midland Blvd.  
Turn left (East) on Midland Blvd. Approximately 0.5 miles.  
From I-270, exit Dorsett Rd. East (Road changes to Midland Blvd.  
East of Lindbergh Blvd.) stay on Midland Blvd.  
Look for green helicopter in front by the driveway.

Dealer setup: Fri. 12noon to 4pm • Sat. 7am to 9am  
Open to the Public: Fri. 4pm-8pm  
Sat. 9am-5pm • Sun. 9am-3pm

Vendor Info. Contact Norm: 314-739-5706  
See our Website: [www.stlarms.com](http://www.stlarms.com)

ILLINOIS RESIDENTS PROPER INTER-STATE TRANSFERS HANDLED.  
FREE ADMISSION TO LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONAL  
AND FIREFIGHTERS WITH ID.  
WE ARE AN NRA AFFILIATED NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION.