GEORGIA AQUARIUM ANIMAL FACT SHEET

Black Crappie

Pomoxis nigromaculatus

Range/Habitat

- The black crappie has been widely introduced throughout North America, making its native habitat difficult to determine. It can be found in the Atlantic watershed from Virginia to Florida, the Gulf of Mexico drainage, and the St. Lawrence, Great Lakes and Mississippi River basin from southern Canada to the Gulf of Mexico.
- This species occurs in lakes, ponds, sloughs, and backwaters and pools of streams.
- It usually is found among vegetation over mud or sand is most common in clear water.

Physical Characteristics

- The black crappie has a deep body which is strongly compressed laterally.
- It has dark green to black mottling throughout its body with a greenish back and silvery-green sides. There are no distinct vertical bars.
- The median fins are yellowish green with dusky, wavy lines and white spots.
- The black crappie averages 8 to 12 inches (20-30 cm) in length and can reach 5 lbs. (2.3 kg), but usually weighs less. The largest recorded size is 19.3 inches (49 cm). The greatest weight recorded is 6 lbs. (2.7 kg).
- The maximum reported age is 15 years.

Diet/Feeding

- The black crappie feeds throughout the day and night, but is most active from about midnight to 2 am.
- Juveniles (up to about 6 inches (16 cm) in length) consume zooplankton, including planktonic crustaceans and free swimming insect larvae.
- Larger individuals prey on small fishes and larger invertebrates.

Conservation Status

- The black crappie is not on the IUCN Red List

Additional Information

- This species does not tolerate murky water well.
- The black crappie is considered an excellent game fish. It is a popular sport and food fish in the southern part of its range.
- This species spawns in the Southeast from February to April when water temperatures reach 62° to 65° F. The males build the nests and females lay between 11,000 and 188,000 eggs.
- In the Southern U.S., its name is pronounced to rhyme with “choppy”. In other areas, the name rhymes with “snappy”.

Sources

http://www.fishbase .org
http://www.myfwc.com
http://www.enature.com
http://www.floridamarine.org
http://myfwc.com/fishing/fishes/panfish.html#crappie