

With 11 Recreation Lakes Hot Springs Village is More Than Just Golf

By Don Langston,
Chair of the Lakes & Water Committee

Hot Springs Village provides excellent boating and fishing opportunities for property owners, visitors and guests.

There are 11 recreation lakes in Hot Springs Village, all but one have a boat ramp providing easy access. Location of lakes and boat ramps can be found in the Hot Springs Village Lakes brochure or on the Hot Springs Village website www.hsvpoa.org | Recreation | Lakes.

Two marinas, one on Lake Balboa and the other on Lake Desoto provide boat rentals and fishing supplies.

The lakes in Hot Springs Village are stocked with bass, catfish, crappie, bluegill and sunfish by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. The fish populations are monitored by Game and Fish biologists and additional stockings are done if needed.

In addition to local regulations outlined in the Lakes brochure, all U.S. and Arkansas fishing and boating regulations apply to Hot Springs Village lakes.

Fishing on Hot Springs Village lakes is good but at times challenging. Many people who move to Hot Springs Village find that fishing techniques that worked where they previously lived, don't work on these lakes.

This is because Hot Springs Village lakes are clear, with limited or no natural fish habitat.

The POA Lakes Manager and HSV Anglers Club members place brush and other cover into the lakes to provide habitat.

The numerous boat docks scattered around the lakes also provide cover for many fish, especially bass and sunfish.

Below are some of the popular techniques for catching fish on Hot Springs Village lakes, but anyone interested in improving their fish-



Photo by Renee Steinpreis

ing skills and techniques are encouraged to get involved with the Hot Springs Village Anglers Club.

The HSV Anglers Club sponsors fishing seminars periodically and provides a mentor program for new members.

The meetings are always a source of information on which lakes are producing and baits that are working.

The HSV Anglers Club meets at the Coronado Community Center at 7:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month except January and July.

Fishing for sunfish and bluegill is popular and easy on Hot Springs Village lakes.

After it begins to warm in early spring until winter, sunfish are always around the docks and in the water willows that grow along the shallow shorelines. Best baits include worms, crickets and crappie jigs and spinner baits.

Hot Springs Village lakes have good populations of these sunfish and some are bigger

Ron Knight show his crappie caught on
Lake Cortez. Photo by Ray Thomas.



than your hand. The easiest and probably most effective technique for catching sunfish requires only some worms, #6 or #7 panfish hooks, #5 split-shot sinkers, bobber stoppers and a bobber.

Another approach is to cast a 1/16 or 1/8 ounce spinner bait or crappie jig next to a dock or water willow and slowly retrieve it.

On the topic of crappie jigs, most Hot Springs Village lakes have a good population of crappie. Small minnows are the preferred bait producing good results when crappie are

located, usually near the many brush piles placed into the lakes by the POA Lakes Manager and HSV Anglers Club.

They can also be caught using small jigs, small spinner baits such as roadrunners or beetle spins and small tube baits. Minnows can be purchased at either of the marinas.

Of course, the key to catching crappie on Hot Springs Village lakes is finding the brush piles.

The HSV Anglers Club is a good source of information on location of many of the



Dick Paulsen shows his largemouth bass caught on Lake Balboa. The fish was 10 lbs. 1 oz.

brush piles. They have maps showing location of brush piles in lakes Balboa, Coronado, Cortez and Desoto that are available to club members. Many club members also know locations of other brush piles and will usually share this information.

Hot Springs Village lakes also have good populations of catfish including channel, blue and yellow catfish.

There are some large catfish in the lakes with catches over 40 pounds recorded.

The best baits for catfish seem to be chicken liver or the commercial catfish baits. Best places to catch them are in coves where streams flow into the lake, along the dam and near the marinas.

The most popular sport fish in Hot Springs Village lakes is the black bass.

Hot Springs Village lakes have been stocked with both largemouth and spotted bass. Largemouth bass up to 14 pounds have been caught from these lakes.

Because Hot Springs Village lakes are clear water and have little natural fish habitat, finesse fishing techniques are usually more

productive.

This requires using six to ten pound test line and smaller profile baits.

The number one producing bait year-round in Hot Springs Village is a 1/8 to 3/16 ounce jig head with a Finesse worm colored watermelon or green pumpkin.

A good bet year round is the four inch Zoom Dead Ringer in salt and pepper color on a 1/8 ounce jig head.

Additionally, the watermelon or watermelon red color Finesse worm, rigged wacky style, and fished near docks and in the water willows is great bait.

To fish the wacky worm successfully, just cast it and let it slowly sink. After it has settled to the bottom for a few seconds, reel in the slack line if you feel a fish set the hook and reel it in. If not reel it in and cast again.

The Senko type bait rigged Texas style with no weight is another bait that can be very effective in Hot Springs Village. Cast this bait near docks or water willows and let it sink. Watch your line closely. If it begins to move reel in your slack line and set the hook. Finding bass on many of Hot Springs Village lakes can be very frustrating and requires that you learn where the brush piles, rock piles, humps in the lake and other structure are located.

During most of the year, more bass are caught on offshore structures than along the shoreline.

Of course fishing along the docks and in the water willows will always produce some fish and is great during the spring.

In late summer and early fall you'll see schools of bass on the surface of the larger lakes (Balboa, Cortez, Coronado and Desoto) which can provide some great top water action.

Fishing is great inside Hot Springs Village, but there are also excellent fishing opportunities nearby, including Lake Ouachita and Lake

Don Langston shows off his blue catfish caught on Lake Balboa. Photo by Jeff Meek, used courtesy of the Hot Springs Village Voice.



Hamilton; both have good populations of bass, crappie, walleye and striped bass.

The professional bass fishing tours (FLW and BASS) visit both of these lakes frequently and the Forrest Wood Cup FLW Championship Tournament will be on Lake Ouachita, August 11-14, 2011.

I hope you'll try fishing the Hot Springs Village lakes. If you need any help or have questions, the HSV Anglers Club will be pleased to help.

I've tried to identify the techniques that work consistently on these lakes. They may not always be the most productive, but they consistently work.

Detailed information of the various techniques identified is available in magazines, on the internet or from HSV Anglers Club members.

Remember that to fish Hot Springs Village lakes you need an Arkansas fishing license. If you use a boat, you need to purchase a HSV Temporary Usage Tag or an Annual Boat Decal from the POA or one of the marinas. The funds collected from these fees are used to maintain Hot Springs Village lakes.

If you would like more information about fishing these lakes or the HSV Anglers Club contact me, at 501.922.3263.



Photo by Renee Steinpries