

September A Month of Transition

by Steve Welch

I have been beating up on those white bass this summer more than ever. My website has really taken off and with that comes a lot more summer guide trips on the whites. I usually just do a half dozen or so and set and wonder why no more people want to cash in on what has to be the most fish they have caught in a single day in their lives.

This year and it has to be that my website is catching on I have been doing my full allotment of twelve guide trips a month. I have had twelve a month now for the last five months. I work a job in the HVAC business on Tuesday through Friday then back on the fish on Saturday, Sunday and Monday. You have to have an understanding wife and a love for fishing and the discipline to get out of bed at four in the morning every day.

September doesn't have to be any different as far as pure numbers of big white bass. The location just changes. All summer in the ninety-degree heat I have been out on the main lake fishing channel drops and flats with wind on them.

September starts the transition towards winter. We have a lake turnover to get through and the bait will make a run up the feeder creeks and to the back of your biggest coves. All species cash in on this. Whites, musky, crappie, bass and just about anything that swims. This is also the only time frame that I will do a guided musky trip. You can find them in the skinniest water that they will be in all year and a Jake or a Buck tail can be a killer on them. Since it is action that my clients want I get very little takers on the musky trips.

My September trips have me up the Kaskaskia River and in the backs of any cove that has a small creek coming in to it like Wolf Creek. This is my best shot at a really big white bass. The fish in the river are all in the pound plus range and some over two. The lake record of over four pounds came from up there. The best part of those trips is the non-existence of boats. After spending three months out they're fighting the big cigarette boats and the three-foot waves they pound you with. I now have some solitude and before very long even the lake will be turned back over to us the fisherman.

I mentioned transition in my title and that means lake turnover. It usually happens when the surface temps get down around sixty. It lasts for a week or so and fishing can be slow. I have had clients ask me frequently what do I do in this situation. First I look for current if that isn't available then wind on a big flat. Some current exists in the Kaskaskia so that is where I will spend my turnover period.

The tackle is quite simple since the fishing is shallow. A standard two-jig rig or a Gayblade. Both cover water and both mimic bait fish. A two-jig rig is just a quarter-ounce jig tied a foot above another one and then you put a twister on one and a shad body on the other. The secret is to keep your rod tip high and reel very quickly and no casts with twenty foot of slack in your line. You need to pick up slack and reel it back. It is only a couple of foot deep. Strikes are vicious and on the lake musky will be mixed in with the whites so be ready for a break off.

The next best thing about September is that the crappie gear is now back in the boat. Up in the river you can fish brush between your white bass spots and get yourself a nice mixed bag of fish.

The best thing about fall transition is crappie time. The late fall and winter crappie fishing is by far the best of the season. All my last years guide trips in mid October through November were triple limits and hundred fish days. Then once we get into December the big fish start to show up in your bag at the end of the day. It is always my last few trips that I get a fourteen-inch fish or even bigger.

Thanks again for my most successful summer ever and I hope to be just as busy in the fall and then see you all at the winter shows.