

August Red Hot Crappie

By Steve Welch

By now I don't know where the water will be but at the time of this writing the water is ten-feet over summer pool which has put a twist in my thermocline crappie fishing. Why you say, simple current from the Corp trying to get the lake back to summer pool negates a thermocline forming.

Normally we are catching crappie at the thermocline which normally sets up at about eighteen-feet and this concentrates the fish just above that depth.

Now with no thermocline the crappie are at many different depths and we are catching the better fish about twenty to twenty-four feet deep over much deeper water. Some are just roaming around following schools of baitfish and others are hovering right over deep brush.

We are splitting the day between pulling spinners on line counters and using the slip bobbers once the sun gets high to fish the brush. It is a nice way to show anglers a couple very productive ways to catch crappie that they can use on their own.

Pulling the bottom bouncers for crappie I got on to a couple years ago that I noticed while I was turning the boat around on the edge of flats fishing for walleye out into deep water that we were getting nice crappie. We then started pulling the spinners through standing timber with great success as well as open water.

I put some notes together as to what depths the fish are relating to and how much line I needed to let out at one mile per hour or slightly faster to get a bait to them. I like this method better than pulling or pushing crankbaits simply because we are using live bait and therefore we get more bites.

I have rod holders all over the boat so clients set comfortably in their seat and watch their own rod or hold it and keep an eye on the rod tip you will see the crappie hit the bait. Reel it in and return to the depth the line counter tells you. Pretty simple.

I use number four Indiana and Colorado blades in chrome, white/pink or chartreuse with pearl or chartreuse 4mm beads. Then a number four circle hook tied on fifteen pound Seagar fluorocarbon line about fifteen to eighteen-inches long. We keep them short for less snags when pulling right through standing timber. The suspended bottom bouncer will hit the horizontal branches and reflect off.

Once the sun gets high in the sky the crappie pull into the thick brush and we then switch over to another tried and true method and this is a slip bobber and minnow set right at the top of the brush. The slight southwest wind we get throughout the summer both keeps you cool and pushes the slip bobbers across the deep brush. We call it the drift and it is deadly. I put a marker buoy right on top the brush and instruct clients to throw slightly upwind and then watch it drift right by the buoy. Once you get to the exact spot that hungry crappie is waiting you can repeat that process and catch several more and you multiply this by four which is usually the amount of fishermen I have in the boat and you can create a feeding frenzy of sorts.

I have seen these big piles hold fifty to a hundred fish and you just think it will never end. One right after another healthy crappie coming over the side of my Yar-Craft walleye boat. I had a client in the boat on

July 2nd and he and his wife got to see this and after two days of fishing with me he said this is what I envisioned after hearing so many stories from his dad about fishing with me. That always make you feel good.

Well it does not slowdown in August is my reply the fish just get deeper and concentrate more. August has been my favorite month to catch crappie for several years now since I unlocked the deep crappie bite and how to catch them.