

Bring On the Wind

By Steve Welch

In September the wind tends to blow pretty hard and for a white bass fisherman that is a good thing. We are blessed with huge shallow feeding flats that the white bass push the bait right up on the shore where the wind is blowing into. I fish in wind so hard that a thirty-pound anchor won't hold me so I put out two. We simply let out about ten-foot of rope on the anchor in two feet of water. We slip very slowly down the bank and if we get into a bunch of fish I simply let out ten more feet of rope and it will stick me.

We routinely fish in less than a foot of water all month long and well into October. I love this style of fishing especially since big walleye also get shallow and use the mud line created by the wind to spring out from and attack their prey. It is the white bass that we catch for the most part and believe me we catch them by the thousands. I have already cleaned about ten thousand fish this year and have done over 160 guide trips and still have about 75 to go. It is a grind but the changing of the seasons and fishing styles is what keeps me excited. I truly love this shallow bite.

For this shallow bite you need special equipment. I use a custom made Norm's Rod that is eight feet long. You can reach him at 217-877-4529. His crappie rods are unmatched as well. I want an eight-foot rod so I can cast a light Blue Fox number three-vibrex spinner or my 3/8oz. Candystriper. With the eight-foot rod I can cast further and take up slack more quickly. I also use Fireline Crystal ten pound braided line. I like the visibility of the line and fish aren't supposed to be able to see it.

There are more reasons September is such a great fishing month. The huge pelicans return and hang around for about six to ten weeks. They are so majestic. Also the trees turn the most beautiful shades of red and gold. Lake Shelbyville is an Army Corp of Engineer Lake meaning no houses on the lake, just beautiful scenery and nature at its best.

Another great thing that occurs in September is the cooler evenings bring on a drastic change in water temps. You must get through the lake turning over but the wind helps you through that. I always say if you want to get around the slow bite that turn over causes find some wind or current.

The cooler weather starts the fall crappie fishing and we start by working the standing timber in the front half of the big coves as well as down trees on river channel banks. We normally catch about 75-100 crappie a day and it takes that many to get a three man limit because of all the nine-inch fish you catch but it is great action and very easy to find active fish. October and November the crappie fishing really gets good, as they love cooler water. I tell anglers that the time frame from mid October until a week after Thanksgiving the crappie fishing blows away the spring spawn.

The tackle I use to catch the September crappie is a twelve-foot rod that I use to pendulum past the standing timber. We simply let out fourteen foot of line and flip your jig six-foot past a standing tree and let it freefall past the tree and watch your line for any movement. The other rod that I use is my eight-foot Norm's rod. I use it with a slip bobber to fish the standing timber if I am catching fish on minnows. I like the stiffer rod to make long underhand casts with. I also use it on the deep down trees on the river channels. I target high branches that might be in thirty foot of water or more but the branches are about ten to fifteen feet down. This suspends the crappie on them and to fish them properly you need to be able to see your jig on your electronics. The shorter eight-foot rod is just right. It puts the rod tip right in front of my trolling motor where my transducer is located. I can also target deep brush and watch my jig so I can get the fish that are hovering on top of the brush. I want a stiff rod to accommodate the quarter-ounce Deep Ledge Jig that I use. You need a stout rod for better feel on that heavy jig and also you need a stout rod to snap the jig off a hang up. I also use Fireline Crystal on my jig poles so I can get the added feel and with no stretch line you can pop my jigs free from a deep brush pile. Folks have a hard time wrapping

themselves around a quarter-ounce jig to crappie fish with but believe me one trip with me and you are sold. You feel the brush so much better and I force a reaction bite from a crappie by bouncing my jig over a branch. Yes a lighter jig falls slower but with my jig I swim it from side to side within brush and try to hit branches. With the small number four hook and the tube keeper on the opposite side as most jigs this allows for a better hook setting gap.

All my specialty lures are available on my website and at Marve & Kathy's Bait shop and at D & M in Sullivan IL. I have Candy stripers that everyone now uses for whites and walleye and I have my Deep Ledge Jigs that we use for both crappie and walleye. I also have hair jigs that are larger to target big crappie called the Brush Bug and Mississippi Killers. These two new additions are the real deal. If any retail stores want to handle my baits just shoot me an e-mail. They fly off the shelf at the two I have them in now.

I have quite a few guide trips available so go to my website and look at the schedule and come on out to Shelbyville and enjoy the fall colors and fabulous fishing.
www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.Com