

## **Cold Rains Rising Water**

**By Steve Welch**

Lake Shelbyville is an Army Flood Control Lake which means it was built to hold water. During the winter they drop the lake from 599.9 ft. summer elevation to 594 ft. This brings the fish out to the mouths of coves and along old river channels.

April gives you hints of spring then takes it away at the beginning of the month. You get cold rains dumping cold water in the lake and this slows the fishes urge to spawn. The tail end of April we finally hit that 55-58 degree surface temp and the spawning urge outweighs all else.

Here is how I attack Lake Shelbyville in early April. I look for the clearest water I can find and that will be mid lake to south end. I side-scan deep channels and points on the front of spawning coves looking for schooled up crappie that have most likely lived there all winter.

These fish will be very deep so I have my 1/4oz. Deep Ledge Jigs on my shorter Norms rods so I can watch the jig on the screen of my Lowrance. I then lower that jig and plastic right to the level of the fish and swim it back and forth. The heavy jig allows me to do this making it look like a swimming shad.

I am watching both water temps and the coloring of the crappie each day because I know that shallow fish are easier to catch than deep fish. But I also know that cold fronts have a very strong effect on those shallow fish and my deeper fish are not as likely to get lock jaw.

I have seen years that the crappie start to spawn in early April and this year with the warm weather we might have an early start. Most years it is the last week of April up on the north end that starts first.

Here is how we attack the spawning beds in the shallows. First the crappie have learned that Lake Shelbyville water levels bounce all over the place so they tend to spawn in 4-6ft. around down trees and stumps.

We use two methods, first we have a long BnM BGJP rod and an ultra-light reel spooled with six-pound and one of my 3/32oz. Deep Ledge Jigs and either a Midsouth tube or my new partner Brush Pile Plastics Brush Chub. A thick bellied solid minnow type bait. Any variation of chartreuse and another color for contrast will do.

The second method is a slip bobber and minnow so we can stay even further off the beds and drift the minnow right through the area.

The spawn will run from late April right on through May on this big reservoir. The north end above the Findlay Bridge is shallow and warms quicker. Then you just fish down trees and stumps all the way down the lake and as we get more water in them then the coves.

The prime water temps are 58-68 with the blacks spawning first then the biggest white crappie spawn deep clear at the tail end of May.

This lake is so full of crappie that two hundred fish days are not uncommon. As for very big fish over two-pounds. We see a few but for the most part we see fish in the 9 ½-12 inch range all day long.

For those that could not get in on my spring crappie or walleye trips don't forget Lake Shelbyville is the best summer crappie fishing lake in the entire state so just go to my website at [www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.com](http://www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.com) and send an e-mail or give me a call at 217-762-7257.