

## Crappie Fishing Best Month By Far By Steve Welch

Even though I love to crappie fish during the pre-spawn period in April on Shelbyville it has to take a back seat to November. That for me spells Deep Ledge Jig time. I never have live bait with me in November you simply don't need it. A few years back I got with my partner who's fulltime job is a mechanical engineer and we came up with a new style jig that is heavier than your standard jig and has a small hook to make it nearly weed less. I like the heavy 1/4oz. jig because it tends to catch bigger crappie because they can see it very easy and they hit it twice as hard as a lighter jig. I love the fact that it is perfectly balanced to allow me to bump into brush and then climb over the branch and the crappie just nail it once it gets on the back side. We also designed it with inset eye cavities to allow us to put on prism eyes and they stay on. We put a clear coat over them to further insure they stay on. We call this jig the Deep Ledge Jig and I make them in four weights 1/4, 3/16, 1/8, and 3/32oz. It is the 1/4oz. that I use 90% of the time even in water as shallow as four feet. Any shallower I prefer to use a cork so a lighter jig is used.

We take that 1/4oz. Deep Ledge Jig and tie it on to 8/3 Fireline Crystal braided line and a stout nine to ten foot rod. I have mine custom made because the 1/4oz. jig needs a stiff tip section. We hover over brush and fish vertically over the brush pile. I have a special three man seating system that allows my two clients and me set on the nose of the boat and fish forward instead of pulling along side like we do all summer. We do this because I can see my clients jig and mine on my big Lowrance HDS with a ten-inch screen. That way we effectively fish the brush pile correctly. You always fish it by taking the fish off the top first before you just lower your jig right down in the brush and taking those buried within. You learn this at Kentucky Lake the big fish like to take up residency on top the brush pile and you wouldn't want to miss them.

We can get away with hovering over the brush in November because the crappie are hungry and aggressive but not during the summer months. During summer we use heavier branched trees that allow the fish to suspend in the thermo cline and they will spook if you pull over them and cast a shadow with the boat. So I have a special rig I use with a slip bobber and a minnow and we simply drift them through the trees. In fall the crappie are hungry and more on thick brush in shallower water then summer.

We put a Midsouth tube on my Deep Ledge Jig and color of that tube varies with water color. In dark water I tend to use a black or red jig head and some variation of chartreuse with either black, purple or brown as the other half of the tube. Stained I use a lighter color such as pink, orange or white and chartreuse as the other half of the tube. Clear water I tend to use Smoke Glow or pearl. Smoke Glow is translucent and it glows in the dark. I then insert crappie nibbles in the tube with my bait pump. This helps when fishing is tough.

So if any of you are interested in getting in on the best crappie fishing you will see this year feel free to go to my website and look at availability. They are going fast so don't wait.

I know some of you are thinking about Christmas ideas already. The fisherman in your family will love my Deep Ledge Jigs or my Candystriper that we use for white bass and we also have gift certificates available. You can go to my website and from there go to my on-line store and make your purchases. While you are in there feel free to join Illinois Fish Talk my fishing forum. It is packed full of fishing info and electronic knowledge.