

Crappie Still Going Strong, Christmas Around The Corner
By Steve Welch

Most folks think it is too cold to catch fish but actually crappie are quite active during the winter months. It is December that we routinely limit out in less than two hours. Last year my quickest three man limit of forty-five was thirty-four minutes.

The crappie bunch up on down trees and if you hit the right one you hit the mother load. We use my jig we developed called the Deep Ledge Jig and folks love it.

A few years ago I was kicking around the idea of developing a heavy jig with inset eyes and a small hook that would allow me to probe deep brush and feel each branch. We don't jig it up and down like most fish a crappie jig. We swim it back and forth in brush and down trees and try and ram it into a branch. Once on the backside of the branch that hungry crappie will just hammer it.

This jig has taken off so we decided to set up an on-line store on my website and along the way we developed a few other jigs to go along with it. We now offer the popular Deep Ledge Jig design in 1/4, 3/16, 1/8, & 3/32oz. I use the lighter jigs when I am fishing a jig under a cork but for the most part I use my 1/4oz. jig. We now have a spinner model for every Deep Ledge model and we put on the smallest willow leaf blade you can get. I have taken this jig to Kentucky Lake and it was a big success and the only jig I will use when I am down there.

We also have developed an in-line blade bait we call the Candy striper. We made it to catch white bass but I have been surprised on how many walleye and crappie we have caught with them as well. I can't make enough of them during the summer white bass season. We make them in three sizes 3/8, 1/2, & 5/8oz.

I use the 1/2oz. when I am fishing on ledges. I put the boat up on top of a drop off and cast the Candy striper out to the deep water and let it fall to the bottom. Then I simply pop it off bottom and reel up the slack bringing it up the drop. The whites will hit it a dozen times before it falls back to the bottom.

The 3/8oz. is for pendulum fishing bridge piers or standing trees for both whites and crappie. It falls on its face and the tail spinner just spins and drives fish crazy.

The 5/8oz. is for grinding on bottom on a flat with stumps. I catch big walleye and whites on it and use my bait caster to handle the bigger fish.

These catch anything lures are tied on to my rods all summer long and I get folks coming up to me all the time thanking me for this lure. You use it and see how it works you too will be hooked.

We developed an on-line store to allow folks to get any of my products and to pre-pay guide trips. They love the ease it takes to get product or to book a trip for a friend or love one. We also provide gift certificates for Christmas or any other occasion.

I am booking trips for 2013 now and my regulars are already jumping on them. If you want to book a trip just go to my website for availability. I wouldn't forget about this December though we are hammering them now.

We also developed a fishing forum that is packed with all kinds of info and I think the most knowledgeable electronic site anywhere. We call it Illinois Fish Talk and currently we have almost 600 members. So while you are browsing on my website feel free to join.

Fishing shows are just around the corner and I will be speaking at several of the instate shows. My first one is the Let's Go Fishing Show Jan. 4-6 in Collinsville. We have a very informative PowerPoint presentation that is packed with Lowrance HDS screenshots and how to fish Lake

Shelbyville for crappie, white bass and walleye. I will also be at the Illinois Fish and Feather Expo in Bloomington Jan. 25-27. The Tinley Park Show Feb. 9-10, The Arthur Show Feb. 22-23 and finally the Elmwood Show March 2-3.