

Those Dog Days of August, What to Do

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The summer's heat bears down on you and you think there is no way anything could actually be hungry. White Bass however love the heat and August has them deep on ledges in huge numbers, bunched up and hungry.

I love chasing the July busts on the surface like everyone else but it is August that has me chasing the bigger fish. The surface temps and available oxygen makes the Whites go deep and settle in around the thermo cline, which is the depth that has the best oxygen levels. On Lake Shelbyville this is usually anywhere from fourteen feet to eighteen feet.

The trick is recognizing them on your electronics and the terrain they like to inhabit. Main lake channel ledges is their favorite and all you need to know is learn you a few spots and move with the wind.

One day you might see me on Point six either on the extreme south end of the big flat or the next day on the extreme north end. I might be out in the middle of the lake but I am on the Whites guaranteed. I also like many other ledges on the north end from just south of the Findley bridge all the way around to Bo-Woods boat ramp area.

In August pleasure boaters can make it tough to handle a boat out in the middle of the lake so I have found that the boat traffic is much less the farther north you go. That, more than anything, is why I stay on the north end, because the Whites are everywhere on this same pattern.

I have all the tricks and goodies to find the deep White Bass. I have not one but three GPS systems on my boat and Humminbirds side-imaging to scan out to the side of the boat. I can see the huge schools of baitfish and that is all you need to stay successful fishing for the Whites.

They are nomads that travel with their food so like I said you need a few good ledges in different directions to accommodate the movement of food. Once found you have hit the Mother load. They are fierce eaters and you can fill a big cooler in just an hour or so.

The tackle and rigging we use to catch these deeper fish consists of a bait caster spooled with twenty-pound and a Bomber Slab spoon in either the three-quarter ounce or seven-eighths ounce. I like chrome or white. Then I go up the line and tie on a treble hook that is dressed with a little buck tail. I tie this on a short one-inch loop knot. This is my catch-everything bait in the summer. You can cast it parallel to the drop off and let it fall to the bottom then just pop it off bottom and let it fall back again. I love fishing this way as I have caught a ton of big fish doing this. The bigger Whites will hit it as it falls to bottom. The real treat is all the bigger species of fish that have adapted to staying under the feeding whites. Huge Buffalo and I mean huge lurk under the Whites as do Blue Cats, Channel, Walleye. You just never know. One thing you do know is the fight is on. I have had days that twenty or more big Buffies, the nickname we have for them have subcommand to the jigging spoon. My biggest of forty-two pounds was a ball. I have also caught Channels pushing twenty pounds and Blues even bigger.

The second pole we rig is a simple half-ounce weight tied on bottom and then go up the line a foot or so and tie on a small circle hook on a short one-inch loop knot. This rig we use spinning outfits spooled with ten-pound test. We simply put a minnow on and fill the cooler. This is the rig that catches most of the fish for the cooler but I like the spoon so much that I let the clients catch most of the fish and I concentrate on the big fish.

Nothing makes a client's day better than to watch their child fight one of these huge Buffalo. I generally hook the fish and hand the pole over and let the kid fight the fish. If I have clients that want to just catch the big Buffalo then we all just vertical fish for them under the boat. I have learned how to spot them on my electronics and can pretty well tell you when to get ready. They either hit the spoon as it falls back to the bottom or they fall prey to the dressed treble or they just plain get themselves snagged. That is where the real fun begins. If you get one of those big Buffies down towards the tail they will shoot to the surface as

fast as a Tarpon and clear the water some two or three feet.

Who knew that a fishing guide could turn a trash fish into glamour and actually do about twenty or more guide trips a year just for the Buffies. I have had many requests to add the Big Buffy slash deep White Bass to my video collection so I am presently working on it.

So if you thought it was too hot to fish you are dead wrong. The White Bass slash Buffy combo trip might just be right up your ally. Give my guide service a buzz and we will set something up.
www.lakeshelbyvilleguide.com