

Finally Some Cool Weather

By Steve Welch

I have pushed my way through a blistering hot summer and caught a ton of crappie doing so and I don't plan on quitting soon. September for me is no different than August until we get to the tail end of the month. Then we will see the water temps plunge and the lake will turn over. Once we get the water temps about 60-62 the lake will stratify and the thermocline will be gone. This will allow fish to be in just about any depth.

I start my month crappie fishing just like I have been doing since the end of June. Using deep down trees on channel banks and drifting minnows over them and catching tons of crappie.

The tackle I use for this is a custom Norm's rod eight-feet in length spooled with twenty-pound Fireline Crystal braided line then I put on a quarter-ounce weight go down to a barrel swivel and then I tie on a foot of seventeen-pound Stren Fluorocarbon for a leader and lastly a number four light wire Aberdeen hook and a slip bobber big enough to hold everything up. This is my summer rig and folks are amazed on how you can snap the rod and free your snag. The light wire hook just straightens bend it back and keep on fishing. I have tried several brands of braided line and keep going back to the Crystal. It has a wax coating that just helps the bobber stop stay in place and it is much easier to re-string it through the slip bobber. We catch everything on my summer rig and routinely catch a limit of largemouth while crappie fishing. Everything likes a lively minnow.

Then once we start getting those nice cool evenings followed by some very breezy days. I start searching for white bass again and of course walleye will be with them. The baitfish will get pushed up on the main lake flats with the wind and we will fish shallow and I mean shallow for them. I tell folks that I anchor in two-feet of water and cast towards shore. An exaggeration not really the white bass will push shad right up on the bank and when you catch them and set the hook you will pull their back out of water. Believe me this is a ball and we catch them by the thousands.

The wind can be so strong on these shorelines that I use a thirty-pound anchor to aid me in slowing down when drifting these long stretches of shore. I simply let out enough line to slowly allow me to slip drift and once we hit a school I let out about ten -feet and the thirty-pound anchor will hold me.

Wind is the key out on the main lake but the shad are also going back into any large cove that has a feeder creek in the back and the white bass and muskie follow. So we mix it up and do some flats fishing and cove searching.

The tackle that I use to fish these shallow flats are my 3/8 and 1/2oz. Candystripers, a number three Blue Fox Vibrex spinner or a Big Dude blade bait. For the coves I like my 5/8oz. Candystriper. I use a seven-foot Abu-Garcia Veritas medium action rod spooled with a Pflueger spinning reel and ten-pound line. For my 5/8oz. Candystripers I like to use a bait caster so I once again use an Abu-Garcia Veritas medium action rod and a Revo bait casting reel spooled with fifteen-pound mono. You tie into a muskie you want a heavier set up.

So September really is a month of transition and I really look forward to the great fall fishing that follows. Crappie back in the shallows, maybe a huge eye mixed in with the whites or an even bigger muskie lying on shallow shore back in a cove. It all gets me excited.

I have several openings as of the time of this writing and you can check my availability by going to www.LakeShelbyvilleguide.com and while you are there feel free to join Illinois Fish Talk our fishing forum that is growing leaps and bounds.