

Flooding Finally Going Back To Normal

By Steve Welch

It has been a trying summer with water levels topping out at ten and a half feet over summer pool. We have been dropping four-inches a day for months now and at the time of this writing we still need to drop five feet. We should be back to summer pool by mid- September.

This will bring the fish out of the thousands of hiding places and position them on the main lake points and ledges near the river channels buried down in thick brush.

The beginning of the month we will doing what I call the drift. We set up a slip bobber rig at the exact depth you need to be right on top of the brush. We then use the wind to drift a lively minnow across the brush. Then a hungry crappie will rise up to inhale your minnow.

Once we get past the turnover and the water temps are below sixty the crappie will move shallow and get very aggressive. We no longer need to stay off the top of them so I get out my custom made Norm's ten-foot rods, my Deep Ledge Jigs and my favorite plastics.

We hover over the top of the thickest brush and probe down in them with my jigs waiting for that hard thump of a hungry crappie. Hovering is a learned trait that takes lots of practice but it is precise boat control that gets you more bites.

The Deep Ledge Jigs are perfectly balanced and have a small hook on them which allows you to get down in the brush and not get hung up. We actually try and bump them into branches to get a reaction bite.

I have a Yar-Craft 2095BTX walleye boat with a Mercury 200hp tiller on it. This boat gets plenty of strange looks but is very functional for guiding. No console getting in the way and the big tiller has power steering so it is quite easy to run. I have installed a special air system to give my minnows exactly what they need. I also have on-board oxygen system. You simply plug in your bait tank anywhere you want in the boat. I can keep fifteen dozen or more minnows just jumping out of the bait tanks with this system.

I have also installed two extra pedestals up on the nose of the boat which allows myself and two clients to set comfortably up on the front deck and hover right over the brush we need to catch crappie from.

I also have it set up with electronics second to none. I have four Lowrance HDS Generation Three units that are all networked. I have two twelve-inch units on the back and two nine-inch units on the nose. All four systems have side imaging and down imaging which allows me to see brush several hundred feet out to the side of the boat and mark it with a GPS waypoint from your current boat position. It also has down imaging and both of these gives you pictures that look exactly like you would see them. A tree looks like a tree and you can see every branch and see all the crappie hiding within that tree. They are all networked so I can watch any transducer from any unit and I can add or delete waypoints and they appear or disappear from all four units.

Everyone relates crappie fishing to the spring but is actually the fall period from late September on through early December that is the best crappie fishing. We have stable weather that allows you to go

to the same brush pile day after day and harvest a dozen or so and then move to the next pile and do it again all day long. We have strings of forty days or more of getting our three or four person limits and some days in less than two hours.

My website at www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.com has all my open dates for both Lake Shelbyville and Kentucky Lake. I now guide on it as well twice a year for a month each time. These trips are very popular as well.

If you want a nice fall day on one of Illinois most scenic lakes then give me a call or shoot me an e-mail and we will set you up with the best crappie fishing you will ever experience.