

Get Ready For Those Tasty Fall Crappie

By Steve Welch

I look forward to fall every year simply because fishing gets easy and the weather is stable. Once we get through the turnover period and the water temps fall below sixty. The crappie move shallow as does the bait. The crappie are so hungry that a jig is all you need. No longer are we using minnows so all I need in the boat is four jig rods and some of my Deep Ledge Jigs and some plastics in all variations of chartreuse and pearl.

I make my Deep Ledge Jigs in four weights for all depths. I use the 3/32oz. if the fish are hitting it on the fall and my 3/16oz. if I am fishing mid depth brush but when I get out the 1/4oz. I am on big fish and using ledges. I use the 1/4oz. to swim it back and forth in thick brush and when I am slow trolling on ledges.

I love that thump of a big crappie on a custom made ten-foot Norm's rod. You never know when that two or three pound fish will be on the line. It is the fall and winter that you really get into the biggest crappie in the lake. Three or four man limits come in the boat each and every day.

I have customized my Yar-Craft walleye boat so three anglers can all set on the front deck and we use the big 102lb. Minn Kota and the two Lowrance HDS Gen. three nine-inch screens to watch both down imaging, sonar and GPS mapping. With down imaging on the trolling motor I can see every branch on a tree when I pull up over it. Looks like an oil painting of a tree and you can actually count the fish in the branches. You can then see your jig drop right down to the fish. Like watching a video game.

To catch these fish we hover with the big Minn Kota and keep the boat perfectly still so we can fish vertically right down in the thickest brush. You cannot buy boat control like you can get with a cable operated Fortrex. Time on the water and plenty of practice to master hovering and believe it or not that is 90% of the game. We set over the brush and then let out enough line to put you down in it then we use my heavy Deep Ledge jigs with the small number four light wire hook and swim it back and forth in the brush trying to bump it into branches. This triggers a strike and those crappie really hit that jig. I think the large head on it makes them hit it even harder.

To find these trees in the first place I have two more Lowrance HDS Gen. three twelve-inch screens on the back of the boat with another side and down imaging unit. All the systems are networked so I can add or delete waypoints or watch any transducer from any unit in the boat.

I have added Kentucky Lake to my guiding destinations and this year I will be down on Kentucky the whole month of September and will be fishing in the Crappie Masters Classic on the 25th and 26th. My clients have enjoyed this addition to my guiding resume and those trips fill very quickly. I will be back down in 2016 for a month from mid March to mid April so I can be there for the entire spawn. Lots of two pound crappie will be coming in the boat, can't wait.

My fall trips on Lake Shelbyville are also filling fast and you can go to my website at www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.com and look at the availability list and then just give me a call or e-mail and we will get you signed up.