

## High Water On The Big Pond by Steve Welch

It sure helps to have years of experience fishing on a lake that goes up and down 16 feet from winter pool to where it is now ten-feet above summer pool. This is my 19th year guiding anglers and I have learned a few tricks along the way.

Anglers always ask me why on earth do you need 3000 waypoints on Lake Shelbyville. My answer is for years like this. I have waypoints on every main lake point and have mapped the edge of all the flats where they drop into deep water. These waypoints are stumps and they hold fish during the summer months. Right now I am fishing for walleye/sauger and most years you can cast to these stumps with a jig and crawler or a Big Dude blade bait.

This year with the high water I had to pull out one of my tricks that I have learned along the way. That is pulling bottom bouncers and spinner rigs. I fine tune it a little different than most walleye guys because we are also targeting crappie as well as walleye/sauger

I use a two-ounce bottom bouncer so I don't have a bunch of line out behind the boat. This makes it possible to run your offering right by the stump that I just saw on my Lowrance depthfinder located on the foot of my trolling motor. We pull along all day long at about .9 to 1.3 miles per hour. I travel along the drop offs going up and down it bouncing from stump to stump.

Instead of running a two-hook rig and a full nightcrawler I run a single hook rig so I can use a minnow and this gets me all species including crappie, walleye/sauger, white bass, largemouth bass, channel catfish and even muskie have taken an interest.

I make my own rigs with seventeen pound mono and a small number six-circle hook. I use blades in number two and number three in both Colorado and Indiana and I use 4mm and 5mm beads. I make my rigs about eighteen-inches long, kind of short by most walleye guys standards but I am pulling them by a bunch of stumps and you get hung up a bunch. The shorter leader and the smaller hook help with the snags.

One thing I have found this year is that sauger are a lot different than walleye and you can pattern them much easier. Lake Shelbyville has miles and miles of flooded willows when the lake gets high and walleye love them and you can catch them shallow all summer.

The problem is miles and miles of willows and where to look. The sauger can be targeted by doing what I have done for the last decade. Get as many stumps on drops on your GPS as you can. Then all you need to learn is there depth preference on any given day.

I can catch sauger in 14-16 feet on a cloudy day tucked up under a stump on a ledge but on a sunny day I need to drop down to as much as 30 feet. Saugers actually bite very good midday in full sun and light winds if you realize how deep you need to be. I caught a huge sauger a couple weeks ago 27 feet down and this fish weighed 5.3. That alone is pretty impressive considering sauger have only been in Lake Shelbyville about four years. The fish was 25 1/2 inches long.

I have also come to realize just how much sauger love pink or white colored baits. I have caught very little this year on chartreuse or orange, two of the walleyes favorite colors on this lake. They also don't like big blades and a bunch of flash so this is why I run two's or three's blade sizes. I find it hard to find a white blade with a small pink stripe on it so I paint the stripe on the white blade.

We run white and pink blades early in the morning on a sunny day but switch to chrome and blue or pink and chrome once the sun gets bright in the day. On a cloudy day we run the white and pink on most all of the rods and orange/chartreuse blade on one rod. Crappies love this blade.

On the number three blades we run four 5mm beads and on the number two blade we run three beads since this blade is smaller. I use white, glow, chrome or pink colored beads.

With the lake expected to remain high all summer I will be running these spinner rigs all summer long. Except for the two to three weeks that I will be fishing for busting white bass. Spinner rig fishing is a laid back style and everyone can do it. I use line counter reels taking all the guesswork out of how much line you need to let out. I have even taken it one step further and figured out how to catch suspended crappie with these rigs. I know that if you let out 20 feet of line at 1. mile per hour on a two-ounce bottom rig you are running about 14 feet deep. The crappies are suspended out off the drops and you can flat out hammer them doing this. They might be 14 feet down in 40 feet of water. They want moving bait and will attack a

spinner rig. White bass will just about knock the rod out of your hand and a sauger will just load up like a big snag unless you are fishing a drop off in twenty plus wind and then they are very aggressive and will hit it as hard as a white bass.

This lake is full of nice sauger right now and I am catching anywhere from 15 to 30 a day along with a ton of crappie. This gives my clients a big bag of good tasting fillets to take home and so far they are loving this style of fishing.

I have a bunch of openings left for the summer so just go to my website and check the front page for availability. [www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.Com](http://www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.Com) or give me a call at 217-762-7257 home or 217-840-1221 cell.