

Hot Weather Can Only Mean White Bass

By Steve Welch

Most anglers would hang it up in August with ninety-degree days but the hard fighting white bass love the heat. They just crank it up and still bite. The only difference between early July is the surface busting is done and now you must depend on those electronics and the knowledge of the lake as to where they normally hang out.

White bass need structure just like and predator fish. The difference is they do their damage in numbers. They push bait up against a solid wall or against the bank. This solid wall will most likely be the deep sharp edge of a feeding flat and the north end of Shelbyville is full of them.

Wind is the key as the bait is easily pushed around and you just plan your attack on the shore that the wind has been blowing against. For the most part we have a south to southwest wind all summer so that means look at any flat with a river channel facing east and west and attack the north side of it. I go one step further and use my side imaging to go along these drop offs and look for schools of white bass and even more important look for schools of bait. I can then drop a waypoint on the thickest school I find and return to it. I then switch over to down scan and see what depth the white bass are suspended at.

For instance if I see the fish suspended at fifteen feet in twenty or more feet of water I then get out my 1/2oz. Candystriper and make a long cast past the school and then count it down ten seconds. This will get me just deeper than the school and while I am reeling the bait will rise and come through it. On the braided line I use you can feel the bait vibrating and it will hit the fish even if they aren't active. I then know my count down is correct if not I make slight adjustments to my count. I always believe in my electronics but I know white bass have a switch either they feed like animals or they ignore everything. I just know if I get one or two to strike I can work up a feeding frenzy by repeating the exact cast and count down.

If I see the fish right up against a drop I then cast my Candystriper up on top and pop it off bottom and let it fall down the drop. I try and fish it like you would a jigging spoon but by making twenty yard casts. You can't throw it a mile and still have perfect control. The Candystriper falls on it's face and the blade on the back twirls and the white bass just hammer it.

This year I have used the Candystriper to catch so many different species that I have it on my rod about all summer. With the high water the Corp will pull the lake creating current at the bridges and I have been using the Candystriper and making pendulum casts just past the pillars and along the main supports and then bringing the bait by them at about fifteen feet. Crappies love the blade on the back as do largemouth or any predator specie such as buffalo or channel catfish. I have also been fishing points with weeds on them and casting the Candystriper and running it through the weeds and I have been getting nice walleye all summer. Points on the south end and secondary points I have been targeting stumps and catching both walleye and largemouth.

I started out wanting a lure or two that I could sell in my booth at the winter fishing shows and all my lures have really taken off. They just plain catch fish and have a definite purpose in your arsenal. They are intended to fish deep when other baits don't quite fit the bill. I have also came up with a very good crappie jig that we had balanced and machined to run true and with it's slim design and small number four hook on a quarter ounce head you can probe deep structure and if you get hung up you can pop it free and save your jig but still have the power to hook a big crappie or even a largemouth or small mouth bass. This jig is unlike any other on the market as we had it custom machined on a C&C machine to ensure precise balance and to make sure at rest this jig hangs straight furthering the ability to fish deep structure without getting hung up. We named these jigs the Deep Ledge Jigs appropriately named for their purpose but I use them any time I am fishing deeper than four feet. Then I wanted to take that jig one step further and make a good hair jig as crappie love a big profiled hair jig especially in the winter. We then came up with the Mississippi Killer and the Brush Bug. Both are intended to give the fish something they have

never seen and to try and get big fish to hit it.

Then I knew how a small spinner on a jig would get a fish to hit on a pendulum cast. I took that one step further and put a small willow blade on it. After trial and error we decided this blade got the most action. Then we decided to make this same jig with a larger number two hooks so we could walleye fish with it. Now another jig was born for yet another purpose slow trolling for walleye since that is very popular on Lake Shelbyville.

Now the next step was to introduce these products to the local retail stores and thus far I have two establishments. D&M in Sullivan and Marve & Kathy's located at the Bo-Woods boat ramp just south of Sullivan. I also sell them from my website and even from the back of my truck since I am at the lake each and every day. They have become so popular that I can't hardly keep them on the shelf but welcome more retail stores to get involved so I can then go to the next step and that is getting them made commercially with our custom made molds. For now my buddies and my self make them and they all tell me I push them too hard. We are close to having enough business and take the next step.

So if any of you business owners out there want to handle these baits just contact me and we can set you up. Just shoot me an e-mail from my website at www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.com. Also my fall trips are filling quickly so don't hesitate to book one early and on another note I have been in touch with Gander Mountain and others and I will be giving a tutorial and power point presentation on the Lowrance HDS systems. So keep your eyes peeled on my website and I hope many of you will attend.