

In March You Need To Head Down to the Land Of Giants  
by Steve Welch

I now have about fifty trips down to this huge lake and have about that same amount of two-pound Crappie from here as well. It is Kentucky Lake that I am referring to.

I started going down there in the early eighties and we always went to the north end because it was closer to my home in central Illinois. That is still good fishing up in the Kentucky dam Village area or Sledd Creek. In recent years I have started going a little further south, partly due to my time schedule and mostly because I want to get as close to the spawn as I can before my guide service gets going full swing in April.

I am referring to the Big Sandy area or Paris Landing. The spawn is a full couple of weeks ahead of the north end.

Kentucky Lake is one of the only lakes in North America that runs from south to north so the warm water comes up from the south and that speeds up the spawn process. Also the lake has gone through a transformation in the past six to eight years and there are now a lot more black Crappie. What this means to us the fisherman is that the blacks move shallower earlier and stay there longer than the whites. This helps someone who doesn't have a ton of waypoints to make a milk run to in deep water. You can just cover water and throw a Charlie Brewer Slider.

There are a ton of stake beds in the Eagle Creek arm and by fishing them you don't have to risk going out into the main basin and risk-hitting bottom. The mouth of Eagle that runs out into the Tennessee has many shallow places and you must stay in the navigational markers.

I will be down there the last weekend in March and god willing I will have some nice fifty degree weather. The grass is usually good and green and the trees just budding but the water temp. is what I am most worried about and current. The lake can flood out and if too much current is going under the bridge the fishing will suffer. Water temp. I would like to see it above fifty-five that will get them pulling into the bays. If not I am subject to the main lake winds and watercolor.

I am one of those that have a ton of waypoints down there and get around as good as the locals. I do however place a phone call to my buddy Gary Mason he has been a guide down there for some time. He can be reached at (731) 593-5429. I might suggest if you were going down to hire him for your first day. A guide can sure quicken your learning curve of strange water and he can certainly do that. I fished with him a couple of springs ago myself. My wife bought it for a birthday present and I took my buddy Winterbottom. We caught a ton of fish and had nearly three limits of fish that day with him. Most fish were over twelve inches but unfortunately no fifteen-inch fish.

I love going down there because every spring some true giants are caught. There was a four-pound fish caught last spring and I am sure there is one in there with my name on it. I just love to get that first taste of spring and maybe get a sun tan while the rest of you lie in wait up here in the north.

I attack these shallow stake beds in a two-fold approach. First we cast with the sixteenth ounce jig that I get from Reeves Lure Co. (217) 864-3493. I tip them with a Charlie Brewer Slider Grub, usually I use white with a chartreuse tail or I use creamy chartreuse with a black tail. These baits will out fish a twister tail hands down if you are casting.

After we catch the aggressive males we slide up on the stake bed and fish right off the bottom with my long twelve foot pole vertically jigging a tube bait in pretty close to the same colors as the sliders. I use the big umbrella tubes made by Southern Pro. [www.SouthernPro.com](http://www.SouthernPro.com). I like the fact that they are bulky and that makes them fall slower than a traditional tube. I still use the sixteenth ounce but use the larger number two hook on it.

This vertical approach usually gets the bigger females. We fish about twenty such brush piles a day and don't be afraid to hit them again after an hour or so. Fish are always moving in and out in the spring. A good day for me is about fifty fish with most being over the ten-inch minimum. I catch more at home lake of Lake Shelbyville but the size is why I am down there not numbers.

The best time frame varies but the locals will tell you that late March will get you bigger fish and April will get you more and then it is over about the twentieth of April. You can get them until mid May up on the north end, then most of the guides switch over to Bass or Bluegill. I love going back about Memorial Day weekend to fish for the huge red-ears. They get gills down there that pushes two pounds.

I still have many good Crappie guide trips left and come on out and listen to the Fishing Classes

that Midwest Marine in Rantoul is putting on. I speak on March 28th at 6:30. You can call them at (217) 892-3474 and get a complete list of all the speakers. They are having pro come in every week starting on February 21st.