

June is Your Best Shot at Shelbyville Walleye

By Steve Welch

Water temps are mid to upper seventies, lake has finally risen to summer pool, and shad are spawning. All these things spell for me walleye time. From Point five on north we have huge flats with abundant stumps fields on them. We also have gravel islands and points with plenty of gravel providing good hard bottom. Walleye love these areas and will feed in these areas until the water temps rise into the mid eighties forcing them into deep water. Most years the season runs from Memorial Day until July 4th. This year it seems like everything is running two weeks early so at the time of this writing we are doing very well on walleye and white bass.

June is probably the month that crappie get hard to catch due to the spawn wrapping up and they are getting themselves back into deep water. But right now in mid May we are limiting out on crappie in less than three hours and that is three or four man limits and then if we have sufficient wind we are targeting white bass or walleye. If wind is light I have some spots to get white bass but walleye can be tough.

Let's talk about a typical June guide trip. We start looking for walleye hiding in wood on flats and we use my new Deep Ledge Jig Spinner and simply tip it with an inch of night crawler no need for any twister tail. I make this jig in four weights 1/4, 3/16, 1/8, & 3/32 and then we put the smallest willow leaf blade available on it. They are deadly. Then once the wind picks up we move to shallow sandbars and throw 1/8oz. Big Dudes. Both of these lures have been tearing them up and we can expect twenty or thirty walleye each day and legal sized will vary from day to day. You catch a lot of 12-13 inch walleye to get a dozen or so 16-22 inch walleye and some days you will hit a couple of 24-26 which will weigh four to six pounds. Hey it is not Canada but we are getting walleye right here in Illinois.

Lake Shelbyville has got to be the best Walleye Lake in the state. We have had double stockings of sauger to get them established and then you team them up with an already ample supply of walleye and you have the makings of a great walleye fishery for years to come.

June has also got another great pattern and that is white bass jumps. Folks have been asking me these last few days when will we start seeing whites busting the surface. I told them three to four weeks from now or about June 5th. The shad are up in the smartweeds spawning right now and once their fry get about an inch long and look like a head with a piece of thread for a body they will have to leave the safety of the shallow weeds and work their way out onto the main lake. Then it is white bass bonanza. They will feed on these small shad all day long. They can't get filled up on them so they will push them to the surface in precise precision and feed on them for two or three hours. It is a sight to behold if you have never experienced it.

Imagine yourself in a thousand or more hungry white bass all on the surface and will hit anything they see. Then look a hundred yards away and another school of at least that many doing the same thing. Run over and park your boat right in the middle of them and get ready. You can flat out fill a 48-quart cooler in less than half an hour.

I get to fish every day and I still love this sight more than anything. Turning my clients into white bass junkies has got to be one of my greatest accomplishments. You are truly hooked once you experience this. These fish fight harder pound for pound than any other fish I know. A good day of chasing white bass in my boat is four to six hundred fish between three anglers. You will have sore shoulders and smiling all the way home.

Tackle we use for the busting white bass are very simple. I like the Blue Fox Vibrex Number three spinner. I think it gets bigger fish than just casting a jig and twister tail. For the walleye we use Big Dudes which are blade baits and my Deep Ledge Jig Spinners. Both of these rigs we use medium action spinning equipment spooled with ten pound Invisabraid or Power Pro Slick. I like to throw braided line because of the strength and extra feel but more importantly the extra distance I can get

with each cast.

My schedule is clearing up on guide trips and I have many openings in July for deep summer crappie and more white bass action. So just because it is summer don't think we can't fill the boat with lot's of fish. Feel free to go to my website and look at my open dates and while you are there join our fish forum, Illinois Fish Talk.