

June on Shelbyville, Run the Flats

By Steve Welch

The crappie have spawned and are making their way back to the deep basins they will live in for the summer. Shelbyville can be a little different. Since it is a flood control lake the creeks could have enough water for crappie to remain until water recedes or watercolor gets so clear that the bait will pull out. I have caught crappie up in the feeder rivers until June 28th on just a normal summer lake level. You get two or three feet extra water level in them and you can catch crappie from the willows all summer. That is up to the Corp and Mother Nature.

If we get normal rainfall and conditions are stable I am out on the flats looking for walleye and white bass. All predator species roam the flats in June. I have been throwing a Blue Fox spinner for walleye and whites and hook several largemouth bass and even a muskie or two. Bait is the key and a place to ambush that bait from. All species will use the many stumps that are left on these flats and they will use extreme drop offs to push bait up against it. Walleye will also use mud lines to hide in since they can see better than any other species.

This is where local knowledge is important. Everyone knows where the big flats are but how many have every stump on them on their GPS and just as important how many have all the points that have stumps on them on their GPS as well. I have spent over 13 years putting GPS spots on many different units. All of them I had saved on MMC cards so when I updated units my waypoints were safe. The other day I checked to see how many just Lake Shelbyville waypoints I had and it was 942. I had to separate all the lakes into a folder and dump them on a card and that way my Kentucky Lake waypoints aren't on the system slowing it down. I have over 600 of them.

Now you are on a big flat what do I do. I keep about five or six marker buoys with me and if I have the flat to myself I will mark several stumps then get back and make very short casts to these stumps. Very long casts will just get you hung up. I am running my baits along side the stumps using several different angles to entice the walleye to strike at it. I am also using the wind and boat traffic to set up mud lines on these same flats.

Trolling is another method of fishing for walleye. Anglers just pull roadrunner type jigs with a small piece of crawler on it. They cover water and that is their advantage but I prefer to cover my water targeting stumps. They pull through a lot of unproductive water trying to just get close to the stumps. Most of these trollers know where the drop offs are but few can pin point exactly where the stumps are, just a general idea.

The baits I prefer are as follows. The first is a bait made by the Wolfe River Bait Company called a Big Dude. It is simply a metal vibrating bait similar to a Cicada the Big Dude just has better hooks. I also like a number three Blue Fox Vibrex spinner. It too has problems with a main wire being too thin and it bends up easily which will make it not run right. We are making our own very similar and they hold up better. They will soon be for sale on my website. The third bait I have tied on is my own creation and it is simply called a Candy striper. This bait is available on my website and we sell a ton of them. It is similar to a Little George but we put a better in line blade on it so you can crawl it any speed you want. This is my primary white bass bait since we make it in different weights. The quarter ounce bait is for covering water on the flats in at least four feet of water. The heavier Candy stripers are for targeting the fish when they move to the extreme drops along side these flats. We simply pop them off bottom and let them fall down these drops. Everything loves them. I catch walleye, white bass, largemouth, muskie, huge buffalo and big channel catfish on them all summer. All spinners and Candy stripers need a good ball bearing swivel on them to eliminate twists. All my spinning outfits are spooled with fifteen-pound Power Pro braided line. It is very strong and you can cast braid a mile if need be.

If conditions are right and that means normal water levels and normal water colors, Lake Shelbyville is on track to have the best walleye fishing in its thirty-year existence. The numbers are there for walleye and the aggressive sauger stockings have produced as well. We are already

getting nice twenty-two inch sauger and they are only three years old. They made a big run up the Kaskaskia this spring to spawn so I think we will have a very good population of sauger very soon.

Like I have said through out this article June can be a very exciting month with lots of possibilities. Crappie in the creeks, walleye and white bass on the flats. Then not to mention our first shad spawn so you can chase the busting white bass on the surface. Last year we just watched for busts and since the fry are so small the whites can't get their fill easily so they stay up for hours and just bust on them. For those that have never seen this you can get into acres of busting whites and get one every cast, it is a ball.