

November Jig Crappie Fishing, Feel The Thump

By Steve Welch

I wait for it all year that thump of a hungry crappie that knows winter is coming so he better fatten up quick. All my rods for slip bobber fishing are gone so are my white bass rods. It is time for my favorite rods to come out. My custom made Norm's jig rods. They are stiffer than what you can buy and I need them stiff so I can fish my 1/4oz. Deep Ledge Jig. I use a ten-foot rod with a small ultra-light spinning reel spooled with 8lb. Fireline Crystal braided line. This gives you the best feel and I believe they just hit my 1/4oz. jig so much harder. Between the two and the sensitive Norm's rod those crappie hit so hard it about knocks your shoulder off. Nothing subtle about it for sure. We simply call it the THUMP!!!!

The thump is what I live for, why I guide and fish some 225-250 days a year. I am a crappie fishing nut and always will be. Don't get me wrong I love to catch about anything but it has always been the tasty crappie that I love the most.

When I got my Yar-Craft I wanted to set it up for three anglers to set on the nose so we could hover over brush with the long rods and everyone have the same advantage. So the triple seat system came to life. Cost me a lot of money to have custom made offset pedestals made but worth every penny.

The minnow tank has been replaced by a Mr. Heater propane heater so you can take the chill off your hands. We don't need live bait once that water temp. falls below 60 and I like about 48 for my favorite water temp. for big crappie. The colder the better. Crappie remain active until ice up.

Three or four person limits are not a problem and I routinely get on streaks of forty days or more getting the boats limit. November and early December are peak times to get a wall mount on Shelbyville. Most of the fish I have caught over fifteen-inches have come in the cold weather months.

Like I said we typically use my 1/4oz. Deep Ledge Jig and a Midsouth tube in some shade of chartreuse. With the heavy jig we can swim it back and forth in a brush pile trying to run it into a branch to get a reaction strike. This works better than simply jigging it up and down in the brush since baitfish do not swim that way anyway. Swimming it back and forth is much more natural.

We make the Deep Ledge Jig in four weights and with a small willow blade if you want. They are for sale on my website on-line store and at many locations around Lake Shelbyville.

This how a typical day goes. I have several thousand waypoints to pick from but in November long trips are not necessary. We pull up short of a brush pile since the big twelve-inch Lowrance units on the back are telling us one is near. Then we all go up on the nose and get out our rods. We use the trolling motor to slowly creep up all the while watching the Lowrance depth finders on the nose. I have one split on down imaging and sonar and another unit on GPS mapping. The sonar will give the brush pile away a few feet before we get over it because it is a round cone and the front edge of the cone will show the brush before we get over it. Once over it the down scan will show you fish hiding within the branches and what depth they are at.

Then I instruct my clients to let out the right amount of line and then hold your rod very still and we will slowly move the boat back and forth trying to bump a branch. When you feel that thump of a hungry

crappie and believe me you will you have a half second to thump them back. Then don't reel just lift the rod and swing him in. I set the hook so hard my clients don't want near me. No paper mouths in this boat I say you have to hit them and then get them out of the heavy brush. You do it right and the jig is firmly in the top of their mouth in the bone.

With the El-Nino we are going to have this winter they are forecasting a mild winter so we can stay out way into December. My schedule is posted for my open dates on my website and at the time of this writing more than half of November is still open and December is wide open. I would not wait since all my regulars come calling in November they know what you soon will if you come on out and sample the best crappie fishing we have on Shelbyville. November feel the THUMP!!!!