

## **On-Line Store Up and Running**

By Steve Welch

Over the years I have experimented with just about every fishing lure known to man and finally I know what works for me, make your own. So then folks that were going with me on guide trips wanted them so my on-line store came to life.

I always liked fishing a tail spinner type lure for white bass but found something slightly wrong with each one. So the Candystriper came to life. I experimented with several blades until I got what I wanted and now I have a bait that you can pendulum fish, you can burn it across shallow water, or you can pop it right off bottom and let it fall back. I make it in three weights and four colors to accommodate many depths and watercolor.

When I came up with this bait I intended for it to be a white bass lure and it is a very good one. What I didn't know is how many other species love it. I caught a ton of crappie on it this summer fishing bridge piers and standing timber by flipping past the structure and pendulum it back. With the treble hook you wouldn't want to fish it in dense cover but on piers and standing wood it is hard to beat.

I knew walleye would love this lure as well and it quickly became my go to lure for just about anything I fished for during the summer. I had two days this past summer that my clients and I caught over thirty legal walleye and many days we had twenty or more. I got my biggest Shelbyville walleye this summer a nice 28-inch eight-pound fish. All caught on the Candystriper. We also had four fish topping in at five pounds that same day.

Those lures became so popular that anglers were waiting for me to get to the boat ramp before they would launch to buy them out of my truck's backseat. I even saw a group of guys from Indiana pull up to us and ask us why we were catching so many more fish than they were and my clients simply said you don't have any Candystripers they are like magic. They asked where they could get them and we told them the bait shop at Bo-Woods had them. An hour later they were back. They tied their boat to shore and walked two miles to that bait shop to get some.

Like I said we have three different sizes for various depths. If the fish are up on top or in less than six feet of water I use the tiny 3/8oz. If I need to hit suspended fish out over a drop I like the 1/2oz. because I can pop it and let it freefall back while retrieving. If a straight retrieve right on bottom or in extremely deep water I use the 5/8oz. We also tie a dressed treble a foot above it to catch two fish at the same time. Most use a small jig but I like the dressed treble it is lighter so your bait casts smooth without trying to flip end over end.

My experiences down on Kentucky Lake caused me to learn how to fish a jig vertically very deep and I quickly learned those fish had no problem with a 1/4oz. jig so my next lure was born. The Deep Ledge Jig. My partner is a Mechanical Engineer and a very good fisherman as well so together we came up with a perfectly balanced jig with deep inset eyes and a small light wire number four hook. Everyone on Shelbyville now loves them. Folks were skeptical at first so we made three other weights for the non-believers. We have a 3/16oz, 1/8oz, and a 3/32oz. and I use them for other applications but not in winter when the fish are deep.

To love the Deep Ledge Jig you must first learn the whole process. I use a very stout eight-foot rod. You simply don't see them in stores so I have a buddy of mine custom make them for me. A wimpy rod won't do. If I get hung up with the heavy jig I simply snap my rod tip and between the braided Fireline Crystal line I use and the small number four hook and the stiff rod my jig just pops free. This and the extra feel you get with the heavier jig makes fishing deep fun.

I have also learned a totally different way to work a jig when vertically fishing. With the heavy jig and the superb feel of the braid I hold my rod very still and try and bump it into branches then drag it over them because the crappie will just hammer your jig once it gets to the other side. I am very good at slightly moving my boat back and forth and getting my clients and myself strikes. I tell them the fish

pops you pop you have a half-second to hit them back and wood feels different than a pop.

I also use a shorter rod so I can watch my jig on my Lowrance HDS 10. This is also critical; we line up our jigs with suspended branches on down trees or right on top deep brush. Bottom depth means nothing because on Shelbyville we might be in fifty feet fishing treetops down just ten-feet under the surface.

Since the birth of the Candystriper and the Deep Ledge Jig I have sold thousands just this year and now I have them in Chip's Marine, & D & M Sporting Goods both in Sullivan and the Atwood Armory located just north of Atwood as well as my on-line store. I am glad I get great local support of these lures and constantly get great reviews from those that use them.

I am back guiding full time again this year and presently taking reservations for the upcoming year. I fished 257 days in 2011 and let's make 2012 even better. So just go to my website at [www.LakeShelbyvilleguide.com](http://www.LakeShelbyvilleguide.com) and check out my new store and while you are there join our fishing forum called Illinois Fish Talk. It is loaded with up to date fishing reports, some very good electronic gurus and I am on there every day as well.