

My All Time Favorite Crappie Hole (Paris Landing)

By Steve Welch

I have been on many vacations during my long tenure as a crappie nut. Each and every one has been to go crappie fishing somewhere. Ask my wife, we never go anywhere without the boat in tow. I have taken her to such locations as Arkabutla Lake in Mississippi, Old Town Lake in Arkansas, Patoka Lake in Indiana, Mark Twain Lake in Missouri. We have had very good success at each and every location. None quite like Kentucky Lake.

I have caught bigger crappie on Arkabutla but since it is very hard to catch numbers and they weren't that much bigger I still prefer Kentucky. On Kentucky I can do both. I have had days that I have caught close to a hundred crappie myself. Most of those fish are over twelve-inches. They are like my home lakes ten-inch fish, very numerous.

I tell my Springfield Crappie Club buddies that all love Mark Twain that my best all time trip to Mark Twain doesn't make my top twenty on Kentucky. If you weigh in ten pounds for a seven fish stringer in a tourney you won't make top twenty. It takes between twelve to fifteen pounds to be in the running. My best was right at seventeen pounds for seven fish. I am sure locals have even better stories to tell.

It wasn't always that easy for me to find crappie on Kentucky Lake. I have been going down there for almost thirty years. My early trips I didn't have such luxuries as Gps and side imaging and a big high powered Ranger boat to cover water. Down they're covering water is a must. The lake is huge and the waves even bigger. A big boat is a must to handle the wind and big waves. My twenty-one foot Ranger is right at home.

Gps is a must down there, as you will never see any structure and you will be fishing under a marker buoy for your entire trip. Gps will allow you to return to that secluded brush pile out in the middle of the lake time after time.

My side imaging allows me to go places I am not familiar with and scan out to the side of the boat. I can see any brush pile almost two hundred feet out each side of my boat. So I can cover water like never before. The old days I just put on a heavy bottom bouncing weight and pulled the trolling motor along until I got snagged on something. Then I rarely found that spot the next day. I can find a hundred new brush piles a day without even wetting a line.

Kentucky Lake has taught me tricks I now use at home. I now fish a shorter pole spooled with Fireline Crystal braided line. I now use quarter-ounce jigs any time I am fishing ten feet deep or more. I am no longer trying to avoid fishing twenty feet of water or even deeper. I have learned that on my home lake these extremely deep fish are all mine. Nobody with the exception of my buddy Jerry is doing this on Shelbyville. He has seen me do it so many times both down at Kentucky and at home on Shelbyville that we really fish exactly alike. He even now has a double down seat in the front of his Ranger.

Other nifty little tricks I have learned while on Kentucky Lake came after I upgraded all my electronics. I use the shorter pole because first it gives me better feel, fishing deep but more importantly it is just the right length to fish it along side my trolling motor which has my transducer on the bottom of it. If I am not too far in front of it with my rod tip I can see my jig on the screen. This is right handy when you are fishing deep. Some of the biggest fish on a deep brush pile are right on top of the brush. If you let your jig go to the bottom you will get some good fish but you missed the fish up on top of the brush. This is also my reasoning for single pole jig fishing over spider rigging. I can put action on my jigs and tease the fish both right on top of the brush and down in the brush pile. This is why I use the heavy quarter-ounce Bighead jigs. With the heavy jig you can feel it bouncing over branches and this triggers strikes. Another trick I have acquired. Kentucky Lake is so huge that it has taken me years to be at home on it. I first started going down there in the eighties and we always went up by the dam. I would fish the top six or eight miles in

the many bays. Then I started going over to Barkley Lake since I heard it was shallower and had structure I could find easily. Then I started going to Jonathan Creek just because that is where everyone else went. The Blood River is fun but I am snake bit every time I go there.

Then I found Paris Landing. At last I am home. Plenty of guides, which means good fishing. More brush than you could ever fish in a week. The locals are all nice. The amenities and restaurants is top notch. The only thing I could ever find to complain about is the wind. The fishing is all done way out in the middle of the lake making you very vulnerable to wind. I try and time my trips to avoid fronts with wind.

It is the brush that makes Paris Landing way better than the north end of the lake. You can't go down a stretch of ledge fifty feet in either direction without finding a brush pile. This just isn't the case up on the north end.

I know many of the guides down there and it is Ken Riddick that I recommend to my customers. Mostly because you are going to fish like I do. A single pole hovering over brush. Not a spider rig system. To me that is just not fishing and I wish they wouldn't allow it in tourneys.

As far as where to stay it is Fishtale Lodge for me. Close to the lake and even closer to the food. Sharon will treat you like family and just tell her I sent you her way.

I have instructional Dvd's for sale on my website. www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.Com. One of which is Paris Landing. I am especially proud of it as it was filmed in January of 2009 and I caught nine fish two pounds plus on the video and tons of other fish too.

March and April are the spring months to get down there as it seems the fish spawn by the twentieth of April so this year give Paris Landing a shot. If not then Lake Shelbyville in May is hard to beat.

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