

Practice What I Preach The Fish Are On The Move

by Steve Welch

Every year during the winter I give seminars at numerous fishing shows and even though I don't have all the answers. There are some patterns that I have seen work every spring at Shelbyville ever since I started guiding some ten years ago. If you fish for a living you will starve if you can't produce day after day in any kind of wind or weather. Guides live off repeat business.

Water temperature in the spring is something you must pay attention to. I know that at fifty degrees you will see fish suspend around standing trees in the middle of deep coves about three feet down. It might be thirty feet deep but the sun has an affect on the top layer of water and believe me it is the big fish that pick up on this. Two weeks ago I fished over at Mark Twain with my good friend Phil Hagen. He is a licensed guide on the lake and certainly knew where the fish had been biting. It was this same pattern I am talking about. He took me too three of the biggest deepest coves in the middle of the lake and we fished two patterns. One was target the first ledge near the shore in about eight-ten foot of water and the other was target multiple cluster of trees in deep water and over there I mean deep sometimes thirty to forty foot. Every time I would approach one of these key areas I would always throw about six-foot past the tree and let it swing back towards me keeping it about three of four foot deep. This accounted for at least half of our biggest fish in the live well and all because I know that this works on my home lake and should work on any flood control reservoir.

This weekend it was back to Mark Twain all in preparation for the Crappie U.S.A. the nineteenth of April. Since I had a big bag of fish last weekend you would think I would go right back to the same pattern. Not me I noticed the water temperature had come up drastically and now we have fifty-five degrees. I know that males will start moving to the shore at fifty-five degrees and females will come up at about fifty-eight to sixty. So out comes the cork. Nothing works better than a slip-bobber with a sixteenth ounce jig and a tube in some shade of chartreuse depending on the water color, darker water use darker colors as the other half of your tube in stained or clear use white or lighter colors. Minnows work under the cork but you can move much faster with the jig and these fish are aggressive and will hit the first thing they see. This pattern will last for the rest of April and on into the end of May, then they will be on the move again.

Mark Twain has the best of both worlds when it comes to fish seeking out their preferred depths. You can fish the rock bluffs just a few feet from shore and be in six to ten foot of water. The key is finding the little cuts in the bank that fill in with wood when the lake comes up. Perfect spawning habitat Spring crappie fishing is move, move, and move. The fish will school up in the summer and winter but in the spring they spread out all over the lake in preparation for the spawn. I know it sounds like I am preaching but you have a trolling motor on that boat use it. I typically fish about a hundred trees a day and litterly exhaust my clients.

Back home next month in preparation for the Crappie U.S.A. the seventeenth of May on my home lake, Shelbyville. Filming a T.V. Show on the twenty-fourth should be interesting. Will have info on that for next month.