

## **A Successful Summer Chasing Crappie but Not Done Yet**

by Steve Welch

This has been one to remember for sure...a spring with no huge floods, a summer with no heat waves. The anglers that have been fishing Lake Shelbyville this year have reaped the rewards. I know all spring I would see more bank fishermen than I can ever remember. I was getting a three-man limit every day and most days a four-man and doing it in less than half a day.

Then summer came and the bank fishermen went away and so did 99% of the rest of the fishermen. My fishing just got better and better. I thought how could this be better than the spring? For the last few years I am a real fan of summer crappie fishing as it really is better than the spring.

By the time this article comes out I will have done about 150 guide trips since March and have about 90 to go. My average this year on getting our three or four person limit on a guide trip is up in the 97% plus range. I do a lot of work to be this successful but being on the water every day is what it is all about and thanks to all my loyal customers I am out there just about every day.

But like the title says, I am not done yet. The fall jig bite is my favorite time of the year. My Deep Ledge Jigs really shine as does the special rigging of my Yar-Craft walleye boat.

My partner and I designed a jig that hangs horizontally and with its light wire small number four hook you can get it into the thickest brush. But it is the weight that I like. We make four sizes but I use the 1/4oz. 99% of the time. Most anglers like a slow falling jig that they can pop up and down, in and above brush. You lose feel with the light jig and get hung more. With our jig you swim it back and forth trying to bump it into branches, trying to entice a reaction bite. I fish this jig in six-feet of water then turn around and fish it in twenty.

I tend to stick with shad colored baits until late fall when the water color I am fishing is darker. The fish move shallow and I am concentrating on the north end of the lake more. It has much more stain to it, since the feeder creeks come in there. In that water I will use chartreuse or even orange jig heads.

As for plastics I use baits similar in size to the baitfish in the lake. Our Gizzard shad are very big in the fall so we get out our bigger plastics and routinely fish baits three-inches long or bigger. I love to experiment with the huge Lake Fork swim baits and the Midsouth larger tubes.

As for the Yar-Craft, I have a twenty foot 2095BTX back-troller with a 200HP Mercury Verado tiller on it. This gives me plenty of room for three or even four anglers, which I have on most days. My bass boats never gave me this much room.

I have it rigged with three seats up on the nose to allow us to hover right over brush and all three of us tight line right down in the thickest cover. I use a nine-foot custom rod and my clients use a ten so all three of us are in a straight line across the nose of the boat. You must be close to the trolling motor where my down scan and 2-d sonar transducers are. This way I can see your jigs on the screen so I know if you are fishing too high over the brush or right down in it. This way I am in no way at an advantage to my clients and I want them to out fish me every day.

You must experience this jig bite, they hit it so hard it hurts your arm and all you need to do is hit them back. I tell clients you got a half second to smack them back and that I go to sleep at night setting the hook.

September will start the month off like the last two on a deep summer bite then once the water starts to cool and the thermocline breaks up the fish will move shallow following the bait and the jig bite is on.

I still have plenty of fall openings on Shelbyville and don't forget my Kentucky Lake trips to chase those big ones. Just go to my website at [www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.Com](http://www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.Com) and check the front page for available dates or give me a call at 217-762-7257.