

## Summer Crappie on Shelbyville

By Steve Welch

Once the spawn is done and the crappie make their way back to deep water. They bunch up on points to ambush gizzard shad our primary food source. You just need to find structure for them to ambush them from. I have four Lowrance HDS units on my boat all networked with side-imaging and downscan on both the front and rear of the boat. Believe me these fish can't hide.

During the first half of July we have an algae bloom on the lake and as it grows it gets heavy and sinks right down to the thermocline which is dense enough to hold it there all summer. This thermocline sets up in about fifteen-seventeen feet a little deeper in the deepest part of the lake.

Now all you need is a tree or brush pile that the very top of it is down about fifteen-feet. The bottom depth means nothing. Anywhere from twenty to thirty feet is fine.

During the summer months catching crappie is all about understanding bait movement. The huge schools just roam out in the big deep basins on the south end of the lake and the wind just pushes them around.

What you need is a brush pile that is on a bank that the wind is blowing into and you have hit the mother lode. We routinely catch our three person or four person limit every day for some sixty days straight. Plus we throw about that many back so for those of skeptical about this just go back several years in a row and look at my old pictures on my website of July, August and September summer trips of loads of crappie. Tons of action and kids young and old love it.

The rig I use is very simple. I have a custom rod made that is eight-feet in length. This allows you to keep the bobber stop off the spool of the reel that can snag your line. We set the bobber stop at fifteen-feet for the most part and don't really have to move it much for a couple months.

The line I use is fourteen-pound Fireline Crystal a braided line for extra strength. We then put on a quarter-ounce egg sinker, a bead to protect the knot, a barrel swivel and then about a foot long leader of Seagar fifteen-pound fluorocarbon and a number two Tru-Turn hook and a lively minnow. Plus a slip bobber big enough to hold everything up. If this rig beaks it always breaks at the leader or hook so I don't have to restring the whole rig. The hook usually bends when snagged so you just straighten it and start over.

I have a specially made live bait system on my boat that provides air to three separate bait tanks. This allows me to buy about fifteen to twenty dozen a day and it takes about all of them or more. We catch a hundred or more every day so you must have the ability to carry tons of bait.

The reason Lake Shelbyville is by far the best summer time crappie lake in the state is its depth and width. The depth keeps the fish active and the width allows the lake to catch the wind.

The wind both moves the bait from the middle over to the points but it also keeps you nice and cool. You never know it is eighty-five degrees out.

All this sounds easy but you must know where all these hidden brush piles and standing trees are so you can jump from one to the next all day long. We usually only stay about fifteen to twenty minutes on a tree we are catching fish on and move quicker if we are not getting any big fish. We have a split limit on this lake which means each angler can keep ten fish ten inches or longer and five fish under ten inches or fifteen total but they must be like I mentioned not just fifteen fish. This means you are throwing back a lot of short fish looking for fish over ten. The action is still fast and furious so everyone is having a ball.

If you want to give this a try then just go to my website at [www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.Com](http://www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.Com) and look at the front page for my availability list. Shoot me an e-mail from there or give me a call at 217-762-7257.

While you are there check out my open dates for Kentucky Lake. I guide down there in October and we catch some real big crappie. That trip is a ball you will love it.