

Summer Time Crappie Lake Shelbyville

By Steve Welch

I love catching crappie on a cork. Just brings me back to my childhood and watching that cork go down is magical. Lake Shelbyville my home lake is by far the best summer crappie fishing lake in the state due to its depth and width.

A strong thermocline sets up about the end of July and this brings all the bait fish down to the 15-17ft. depth and congregates them. The crappie follow and so do the bass and about everything else.

The crappie bunch up on big brush piles because they hold bait. We just run from one to the other harvesting crappie off each one. I have seen brush piles that hold so many fish you can get your three or four man limit from your first stop. One hundred fish days are every day.

I am always asked when I should come crappie fishing on Shelbyville and I know they mean when is the spawn but little do they know how good the summer bite is. August has now moved up to a tie with my favorite periods to crappie fish which include the pre-spawn period in April and the fall return to the shallows period in late October and all of November.

What makes Shelbyville so good is the cool southwest breeze we get to move the bait from the middle of the deep main lake basins over to the points and ledges fed by these breezes.

Deep basins is also a key to summer action. Lake Shelbyville is 60ft. plus deep and wide enough to catch the wind which always keeps the water fresh. Ski boats also keep it churned up, you just learn to ignore them.

The thermocline gives us the depth we are going to fish now all we need to do is set up a rig to always be in that depth.

I use a special rod eight feet in length so your bobber stop can stay off the reel thus eliminating tangles. We just underhand flip the slip bobber about twenty feet and let it drift across the brush.

I use Fireline Crystal 14lb. braid down to a barrel swivel and a short 9-10-inch leader made from 15lb. fluorocarbon. A number two Tru-Turn light wire hook so it will straighten easily. A quarter ounce weight to get it down and a slip bobber big enough to hold it all up.

The lateral movement of the slip bobber across the brush is what makes this work so well. I have regulars that come frequently during this slip bobber action and we can all throw to the precise area and drift across at the same time then see four corks go down at once. This is how you can flat out put a ton of crappie in the boat in a short period. Boats are always setting off in the distance in amazement of how many crappie we are catching.

Anglers' young and old love this simple approach to catching not fishing is what I tell them. A few tricks go into it though. First setting up the marker buoys properly is very important. I will sometimes spend several minutes getting them just right. I try and mark the highest point on the brush thus I know crappie will be suspended around that point.

Then boat placement is very important. You spook the fish just marking the brush pile but that must be done. The fish will return but further spooking them must be avoided. I always put the boat off to the side and not throw any turbulence from my trolling motor across the brush from there on out.

Once someone keys in on them I then look across the lake and pick out a tree to triangulate and then keep my boat exactly there and instruct everyone in the boat to attack that spot that just held that fish. Crappie like to hang out with their buddies on a big brush pile so this is how you pick apart a brush pile that is twenty feet square.

Once we stopped getting any fish over ten-inches we simply move down to the next brush pile and repeat the process.

My big tiller boat is perfect for this style of fishing. It is big enough to hold four fishermen including myself and everyone has a comfortable seat. No getting up on a tall fishing platform this is a deep walleye boat. Once you are seated you never have to get up again. This is very popular with my older clients. This boat is truly a guide boat.

I have an on-board custom made aeration system which allows me to carry 25 dozen minnows and keep them very lively. Summer fishing is all about minnows.

If boating over a hundred crappie a day is your thing then go to my website and look at my available dates on the front page and while you are there look at my open dates for Kentucky Lake. I guide down there as well and we get some big crappie. Plus my fall dates on Shelbyville are filling up so don't wait. You can also call me at 217-762-7257 home or 217-840-1221 cell.