

## Summer Time Slabs

By Steve Welch

Lake Shelbyville has got to be the best summer crappie fishing in the state due to its depth and ample width to get the southwest breeze we need to move the bait.

Once we get into July the lake starts to create a thermocline and this forces all the fish to live in the 15-18 foot range all summer. All you need is a nice big brush pile that is in 20-25 feet of water with the top of it about 15 feet down. A nice condo I call it big enough to house thirty or more crappie.

We use the normal southwest wind to bring bait from the main basin over to the deep brush pile where the hungry crappie are waiting to ambush them.

The best way to catch these crappie is to drift a minnow over the top of the deep brush using a slip bobber. We slide up to the deep brush and throw a marker buoy right above it then we move the boat off to the side and we cast our slip bobbers upwind and watch them drift over the pile. When you get four anglers that fish together the corks will all go down at the same time. Fishing the drift I call it.

The way we rig these slip bobber rods are spool the reel with fourteen pound Fireline Crystal and then use a quarter ounce weight a barrel swivel and then a foot of fifteen pound fluorocarbon for a leader. Put on a light wire number four hook and a slip bobber big enough to hold it all up. If it breaks it will break off at the leader and not the main line. Most of the time you will just straighten the hook and keep fishing. I use a Thill bobber stop because the string is small in diameter and then I tighten it up with a pair of pliers and then cut the tag end very short and hit it quickly with a lighter. This way the bobber stop will stay where you put it all summer long.

I use a custom eight foot rod so you can still fish 15 feet deep without allowing the bobber stop to get on the spool of the reel. We leave out eight feet of line and underhand flip it above the brush pile. If you reel your line in all the way and allow the stop to get on the reel it will tangle in the line and your cast won't be accurate.

I used to say that the fall is by far the best crappie fishing we have all year even better than the spawn. Why you say, simple stable weather. The best stable weather we have is July, August and early September. These fish get on the same pattern and stay there all summer long. We get our three or four person limit of 45 to 60 on the average 40-60 days in a row and sometimes in only an hour or so.

You can go back on my website and see all the pictures during the summer and then you know why I now say that the summer is the best crappie fishing we have all year long. Just imagine a hundred crappie before noon in shorts and flip flops with a nice summer breeze that you never feel warm in.

I love to fish a jig like everyone else but during the summer a minnow will out fish a jig hands down. Besides Lake Shelbyville is so clear I don't want the boat close to the brush pile to spook the fish. You could cast a jig and count it down and swim it across the brush but most anglers will let it sink too deep and get hung up. The slip bobber rig is perfect and who can't see a cork go down.

Summer time for me is family trips. Kids' young and old love the action we get on the tasty crappie and I love making memories for that family to cherish forever. Kids are why you become a fishing guide in my book.

To book one of these crappie trips just give me a call at 217-762-7257 or go to my website at [www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.com](http://www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.com) and check my schedule for available dates.