

Thermocline Summer Crappie Lake Shelbyville

By Steve Welch

I have been preaching this for several years now but August is right up there as my favorite crappie month. Why you say, predictable weather, cool southwest breezes and a thermocline that concentrates the fish.

About mid-July Lake Shelbyville has an algae bloom all over the lake and as it grows it starts to sink. The baitfish are all feeding on this so the predators are near-by. It sinks down to the thermocline where the water is so dense it holds it right there.

For the most part the thermocline will settle in at about 15-17ft. slightly deeper where the water is extremely deep. Now all you need is a few things to go out and experience the hottest crappie action you will see all year.

First thing you need is a huge brush pile situated on a point or ledge that gets that nice southwest breeze blowing right into it. This brush pile needs to be in at least twenty-feet of water and have branches extending up to the fifteen foot depth.

Second thing you need is my specially rigged slip bobber set up and plenty of live minnows. I use a custom rod eight feet in length with a good back bone. I like the eight feet because you can set your bobber stop at fifteen feet and still manage to under hand flip it without the bobber stop going on the spinning reel. This eliminates problems with the line getting caught on it.

I use a small spinning reel spooled 90% with four pound mono and then on the top I put about a hundred feet of Fireline Crystal fourteen pound braid. Any more than that and it digs into the line and causes casting problems. I then go down to a barrel swivel and put on a short nine to ten-inch Seagar Fluorocarbon leader fifteen-pound test. I use a number two Tru-Turn hook that bends easily. A quarter ounce weight and a slip bobber big enough to hold everything up. The leader will break way before the braided line will so all you need to rig is either a new hook or a leader. Most times you straighten the hook once snagged and do it again.

The third thing you need and this is important is that southwest breeze to move bait over the top of your brush pile and then to move your slip bobber latterly across the pile. This is deadly on the crappie suspended above the brush and boy oh boy do they stack up on these huge brush piles. It is possible to catch a four man sixty fish limit on your first stop. We move often looking for such a brush pile catching fish from each stop. By the end of the day you look back and say we must have pulled between one hundred to two hundred crappie over the side of this boat today. Never seen anything like it and it is August.

When I bought my Yarcraft big tiller boat I had this type fishing in mind. Enough room to fish four comfortable all in nice set down seats. An aeration system custom made to keep twenty dozen or more minnows alive and jumping out of the tanks. Enough live bait tanks in the boat so you never have to get out of your seat all day long. Which really helps with my older customers. The biggest and best electronics with side imaging to help locate the best fishing holes. A deep boat that gives my customers a sense of safety since this boat is an actual big water walleye boat.

Anyway if this style of fishing is something you might like and I can't help but think it is catching nice tasty crappie all day long. Then go to my website and check the front page for available dates and if you can't come in August just remember this pattern extends well into September. Then we just get out the jig poles and fish for them without bait the rest of the season.

While you on my website you might look at my Kentucky Lake schedule. I now guide down there for big crappie.

My website is www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.Com or my phone is 217-762-7257 home 217-840-1221 cell.