

Walleye/Crappie Combo

By Steve Welch

Once water temps hit the 70 degree mark you will start to see baby shad eating on moss at the boat ramp. Once they get an inch or so long you will see the walleye and white bass ambushing them on the huge flats that exist on Lake Shelbyville my home lake.

I start the month out fishing for crappie on spawning beds then on the fifteenth I just transform my boat over to pulling spinner rigs. Out come all the rod holders and the line counter reels.

I purchased this boat a Yar-Craft big tiller boat to fish more for walleye. I am the only guide that pulls spinner rigs in this fashion. All the other guides that even fish for walleye cast for them. You just catch more by covering water with the spinners.

Like I said at the beginning on May you are right in the middle of the crappie spawn. It starts out on the north end up around the RR Bridge on up to the Wilborn boat ramp. Then as the lake warms down on the clear south end you can track the spawn all the way down.

We fish for the spawning crappie by using my 12ft. BnM rods and an ultralight reel with a small 3/32oz. Deep Ledge Jig and a Midsouth or Brush Pile plastic Brush Chub. In some variation of chartreuse since we have stained water. We also use minnows under slip bobbers.

Once I put in the line counter rods and start pulling spinners we are then targeting post-spawn crappie along with our main focus of walleye and sauger. I have learned that with a 1 1/2oz. bottom bouncer at 1 mph if I let out 23ft. of line you are fishing 15ft. deep. This allows us to pull these rigs right through standing timber in the mouths of spawning coves catching crappie then go back to the flats and concentrate on walleye. Thus a combo trip that can send you home with your limit of both crappie and walleye. Making these trips the hardest to get in my boat. They have been booked for months and I tell folks if you want in on this give me a call in December for 2017.

I make my own spinner rigs that are shorter and with heavier line to allow is to pull them through stump fields and standing timber. I use number four Willow and Indiana blades in chrome, white and pink or chartreuse. We then use small colored beads for contrast and a number four circle hook tied with a Snell knot to hold the hook at the right angle.

Clients love this approach because you don't need any fishing skills and with my tiller boat you are setting in a comfortable seat all day pulling in fish after fish of all kinds of species.

I have done my homework and at winter pool or just plain side imaging all day long I have hundreds if not thousands of waypoints on stumps that might hold walleye. I then just go from one to the next changing angles to try to entice a hungry walleye to feed.

Depending on how much water the flats have on them dictates on how long this bite will last. I have seen years that we have 6-10 feet over summer pool that the bite lasts long into July. If we are at normal water levels usually you can stretch it out to June 20th with Memorial Day until June 12th being the prime time to come.

Once we get to Father's Day or June 18th I then put in rods to cast for the busting white bass and if we start to see the numbers of old I then chase just them for the next several weeks fishing top water busts or end of points with my Candy Stripers.

We are waiting on the water temps to get into the mid to upper eighties so the summer crappie bite gets going. The slip bobber summer crappie bite is by far the best fishing of any lake in the state. We limit out every day for nearly three months. Mid July on through all of August and first half of September this bite is red hot and once again the fishing skills needed to watch a cork go down in minimal. This is why I have kids or wives and mothers in the boat about every day in the summer. The cool breezes we have you will not even feel the heat.

My website has all my open dates listed for summer trips. Just go to www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.com or give me a call at 217-762-7257.