

Walleye/Sauger Lake Shelbyville

By Steve Welch

Lake Shelbyville has really turned into the prime spot to catch walleye and sauger these last few years. Raising the fry up to a decent size in the rearing pond has insured a healthy population and last year with a mild spring they harvested the biggest crop ever and put about 350,000 in the lake. The sauger and walleye have also had successful spawns in recent years to further enhance the population.

I have enjoyed much success in recent years guiding for walleye that now these trips are the hardest to get. My clients start booking them six months in advance and this year like the last two I am booked solid for the four to six weeks that I actively pursue them.

I start out by rigging my boat to fish for them. A couple years ago I got rid of my bass boat and purchased a walleye rig to handle much rougher water and allow my clients to feel much more secure. I now have a Yar-Craft 2095BTX tiller boat. This boat is made by Bass Cat and they have a supreme reputation for building quality. This boat has a 200hp. Mercury Verado four stroke equipped with hydraulic power steering. I get it all the time how on earth do you drive a tiller that big. Actually it is very easy.

This boat is equipped with a 36 volt trolling motor on both the front and back so I can operate it from either end. We pull in-line spinners for the most part on bottom bouncers. We use heavy 1 1/2oz. bouncers so you don't have much line out so we can turn quickly to get back on the hundreds of stumps on the edges of the flats. I make my own spinners with heavier line and much shorter in length to allow us to pull right through the stumps and not get hung up.

We use line counter reels so we can run four rods and not get them tied up with each other and they also don't allow my clients to let out too much line which gets you snagged more often. We do this by allowing me to tell them how much they need to let out.

Also with the line counter reels I have figured out how to run these rigs right through standing timber in the mouths of coves to catch crappie. So we mix it up doing this and running flats.

Each flat is a different depth and so are all the stumps so I know how much line you need out to get you running by them. I have put in tons of hours marking all these stumps on my GPS so all we need to do is run from one stump to another hoping a big walleye is home.

My boat is rigged with four Lowrance HDS depthfinders that have both side imaging and down scan on each end of the boat. I can scan out to the side and look for schools of fish then quickly turn and go right through them.

Most anglers that pull spinners use nightcrawlers but we opt for minnows. Reason being is that with crawlers you also catch a ton of drum perch and yellow bass. With minnows when you turn on a flat out in the deep basin you pick up some nice post spawn crappie. This allows my clients to go home with both their limit of crappie and their limit of walleye. Now you see why these trips are the hardest to book.

Since we use so many minnows during the day we installed an on board air system with quick change disconnects that allow you to set your own personal minnow tank right next to you. Plus we have a big tank that can easily hold twenty dozen. This was another reason I did not want another bass boat. No room for the bait tank.

Even though the crappie spawn is not done by May 10th we switch over and usually pull the spinners for about four to six weeks or slightly longer if the water is high. Then it is a few weeks chasing the busting white bass and then back to the summer slip bobber crappie bite. It is all

good and why I like Lake Shelbyville so much. The summer crappie bite has to be the best and most consistent of any lake in the state. We get our three or four person limit each and every day.

For those of you that want to catch more crappie in a single day than you ever have and do it in the comfort of nice weather and a cool breeze then mid- July on through mid- September is for you. Lake Shelbyville is so big that it gets nice south western breeze to keep you cool even on a ninety degree day. I used to tell my clients that the spawn in May and the fall bite in November are the two best times to get crappie and they are good but it is the summer months that get the nod in my book. If interested just go to my website at www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.com and check the front page for availability.