

Walleye & White Bass

By Steve Welch

Mid May until mid-June is by far the best time to walleye fish on Lake Shelbyville. The shad have two or three successful spawns during that time frame and the walleye/sauger and white bass go on feeding frenzy's.

Now to catch them there are several ways. For the walleye I prefer to pull bottom bouncers and spinner rigs on line counter reels. This covers water and that you must do since only a fish or two live by a stump.

You can mark off stumps and get back and throw a jig at them and this is what 99% of the anglers do. In my experience guiding you never know how talented your clients are with a spinning rod. Trolling with a line counter reel all the guess work is done.

Through the years I have learned how to catch post-spawn crappie with the spinner rigs as well so my clients are constantly busy pulling in fish.

These trips from about May 15th on through late June are my most popular and they book six months in advance.

I tie my own spinner rigs and use both number three and four Indiana and Willow blades with four MM glass beads in various colors. The colors I use for the most part on the blades are chrome and blue, white and pink, hammered chrome or chartreuse.

I use 15lb. Fluorocarbon line to make my own and I make them only about 18-inches long. This way I can get them through stumps without hanging them up.

I fish from a Yar-Craft 2095BTX back troller so I can use my trolling motor on either the front or back of the boat. This boat has a 200hp Mercury tiller on it so there is no console to get in the way. I have rails that run the whole length of the boat with rod holders on them. This way we can troll four rods with no problems and with the line counters you don't get lines crossed.

We pull these spinners at 1.1 to 1.4 mph on my GPS so a 36 volt battery system is a must to do this all day long. I have two systems one on the back and one on the front and both are 36 volt.

A typical day is about 15-20 walleye or sauger in the three to five pound range and an occasional kicker in the eight to nine pound range. Plus three or four limits of crappie which is forty-five or sixty. This is why my clients book these trips so far in advance.

To be successful at this you need to put in tons of hours marking stumps on ledges and have the electronics to handle all of them. My boat has four Lowrance HDS systems with both down imaging and side scan capabilities on both the front and rear of the boat. All of them are networked so if you need to add or delete a waypoint it is done on all four at once.

The Lowrance down scan is so clear I can count how many fish are on each stump and how big they are. You can make out each root that makes up the stump and if someone parked a bicycle down there you could plainly see it was a bike.

The white bass are a different story. We start out in mid-June looking for fish busting the surface or seagulls and blue herons hovering over schools of bait. This is a ball just parking your boat in three acres of them and watching them hit anything you throw at them. I use one of my tailspinner lures we call the Candystriper and then go a foot above it and tie on a 1/16oz. hair jig in either white or chartreuse. You need a quality hair jig since those whites are so tough on them.

Once they are done busting the top we set up on points and ledges with a good hard bottom and fish my Candystriper like a jigging spoon. We cast it out about thirty feet and let it fall to the bottom then pop it hard off the bottom and let it freefall back. This is a ball those whites will hit it two or three times before it can get back to the bottom.

I try and limit my clients to 100 fish or so but since there is no limit I have seen many 500 fish days. These fish run about a pound to three pounds and pound for pound there is no match for them. They taste very good and I have clients that used to crappie fish with me that have now switched over to whites because they like the taste and there is no limit.

The best thing about the whites is that we can follow them all summer by fishing points on down the lake. Plus the summer crappie fishing is by far the best anywhere in the state. I look forward to summer fishing each year no bad weather, little wind to deal with, nice cool mornings and wearing shorts and flip flops to work.

If interested in a summer trip with me just go to my website at www.LakeShelbyvilleguide.com and check the front page for availability or you can simply call me at 217-762-7257.