

We Call It The Thump

By Steve Welch

Every year I look forward to November & December. I can leave in my three person seating system, throw out all my rods but my best three Norm's custom rods leave in some of my Deep Ledge Jigs a few Midsouth tubes and just go crappie fishing.

We tight line over brush and down trees and fish vertical right down in them so we can feel that crappie THUMP!!!!. Between the braided line I use and the heavy 1/4oz. Deep Ledge Jigs on the stiff rod those fish hit it so hard you think you have a whale on the end of the line. I will never tire of feeling that. I go to bed setting the hook each night.

I tell my clients no paper mouths in this boat. You feel that thump you have a half second to cross his eyes. Then if the jig did its job the hook will be set firmly in the top of the crappies mouth right through the bone. No getting away.

November is by far the best month we have all year long for crappie fishing. We typically get a three person limit in only a couple hours and do this day after day with streaks of forty days in a row not uncommon.

The minnow tank I have hauled around since late April is gone and replaced with a propane heater to take the chill off your hands. The end of November and all of December can be a little chilly but if you have a warm pair of coveralls and dress in layers you will be very warm.

I have the perfect boat for tight lining. Most guides use a bass boat and all three crowd up on the front deck and stand all day. My boat a Yar-Craft walleye boat with a tiller motor for even more room has custom made offset pedestals that allow three of us to set on the nose and hover over the brush. This way nobody has an advantage. My live well is right up on the nose as well so once you catch one you just turn and drop him in. A very comfortable way to fish all day long.

We all three have ten-foot rods and we fish right down in the thick brush by holding the boat ever so still. This is my job and I can hold a boat with my trolling motor with the best of them. I use a 36 volt Minn Kota Fortrex and just bump the power ever so slightly to hold us right over the brush. You cannot buy this kind of precision by using a Terrova and its spot lock feature. They have their uses but hovering with this precision is not one of them.

The rods I use are custom made by a buddy of mine. Norm makes them much stiffer than you can buy on the market so we can use my heavy 1/4oz. Deep Ledge Jigs. We use them working ledges on Kentucky Lake as well as deep structure on Lake Shelbyville. They are perfectly balanced to allow the jig to hold horizontally. We make them in four weights and even make them with spinners on them.

It is the 1/4oz. that everyone loves you can bump it right into a branch by swimming it back and forth thus creating a reaction strike. Plus since the hook is so small you can fish it in very thick cover. Some anglers are convinced you need a much larger hook and tell me they lose fish with mine. I tell them to look at the rod they are using. You need a stiff rod to set the hook hard enough.

I make several colors for the jigs and I tend to use white in clear water and my chartreuse or orange in dirty water. I put on a Midsouth tube on it and like the jigs I use a bright chartreuse or orange in stained water and pearl or smoke glow in clear.

My boat is rigged with brand new Lowrance Generation three twelve-inch screens and I have side scan and down imaging on both the front and rear of the boat. I am running four depth finders so you don't have to split the screens and they are all networked so if I spot a good brush pile with my rear units I can mark it and my front units have the GPS location and waypoint put right on them as well.

The advantage of having side imaging is you can scan a brush pile from fifty feet away and see the fish hiding within it. Mark exactly where the fish are and throw a marker buoy right on their head.

At the time of this writing I still have seventeen days in November open and all of December. You can just go to my website at www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.com and scroll down on the front page to see my available dates. So if you want to get out and experience the best crappie fishing action you might ever see and the need to feel that THUMP for yourself then give me a call.