

White Bass Jumps and Walleye on the Flats

By Steve Welch

After chasing crappie for three months, I like the change of pace of walleye and white bass fishing. I love the pure fight that a white bass gives you and the challenge of finding walleye in Illinois--who ever heard of that--we're not in Canada.

In June we have two very important things that happen. First is we finally hit summer pool and a solid 70 degree surface temp and above and second we have our first of two or three shad spawns.

We need the water level to be just right to put enough water over the stumps on the flats that we all use on the north end and once we get that the walleye really start stacking up on them. Then once the shad fry get about the size of a head with a piece of thread on it they move out of the coves and the white bass go nuts on them. I tell clients when the fry are that size it is like eating potato chips you can eat a ton of them and always want more. The white bass will push them to the surface and with precise precision they attack. They will knock them clear out of the water and we just watch for diving seagulls or blue herons and motor the boat right in the middle of a thousand or more busting white bass. We then put on the Blue Fox Vibrex spinners and go to town. We reel them fast and keep them right on top or just below and boom you will get hammered every cast until they go down and then you just scan the horizon and you will see another school and motor over to it and repeat the process.

Most of you have seen the huge stringers of white bass on my website and wonder just how could you catch that many fish and not hurt the fishery. Believe me Lake Shelbyville is by far the best white bass lake in the Midwest and if we don't keep their numbers down they will over run the lake. I have never seen so many fat, healthy white bass pushing three pounds as we have this year. A good outing with my two clients and me is four to six hundred fish in a day. The clients I had today said they were going to have to ice their shoulders when they got home and that was only two hundred.

For the walleye you just need to have a good knowledge of where the stumps lie on a given flat. They use isolated stumps on sandbars and mud flats. I tell clients it is like going bass fishing only we do it with night crawlers. We use my new Deep Ledge Jig Spinners and put a small twister tail on it and about an inch of night crawler. Too much crawler and they just nip it and don't get the hook. We then toss it up in the stumps and work it through the root system at different angles trying to entice a hungry walleye to pounce on it. We catch a ton of good bass doing this and white bass as well so you get a nice mixed bag.

Lake Shelbyville is in the best shape of her life in regards to walleye fishing. We have had a double stocking of sauger to get them established and this with the millions of walleye already in the lake, Shelbyville is by far the best walleye lake in the state.

The tackle we use to catch the white bass are bait casters spooled with seventeen-pound line so I can put a jig a foot above my candy striper and catch two at a time. Line any lighter you will break them off they fight so hard. We also use medium/heavy spinning outfits spooled with ten-pound mono and my candy striper only. We use these rigs if they are on bottom on ledges. For the busting fish we use the same spinning rods but we tie on a Blue Fox Vibrex or a Panther Martin. Both are in-line spinners. I like to use them over a standard two-jig rig, as I believe you get bigger fish with the spinners.

The tackle we use for the walleye are the same spinning rods and either a Deep Ledge Jig Spinner and crawler or a Big Dude blade bait. We target stumps on flats or anything that has a gravel bottom.

The white bass fishing will be good on through the summer and fall and the walleye fishing will be good all of June and most of July before they go deep but they will resurface in the fall. I am

finally getting caught up on my guide trips so I have many openings in July and on through the rest of the year. All it takes is going to my website and giving me a call or an e-mail to reserve an open date. You will be blown away on how good the fishing is on Lake Shelbyville for sure. My website is LakeShelbyvilleGuide.Com. and phone is 217-762-7257.