

November, My Second Spring

by Steve Welch

Crappie fishing has always been associated with the spring, but for me, November is my second shot at the best crappie fishing we have all year. Sure, May is great with the fish on shallow spawning habitat. November, however, has the fish concentrated on brush in the ten to fourteen foot range and close to the bottom. They will remain on this pattern until the lake starts to drop to winter pool in mid-December.

Today's electronics and GPS systems have given us more confidence to fish in deep water. I have one of the best set-ups for electronics most of you will ever see. I have the biggest Lowrance GPS/ Depth finder you can get up on my trolling motor. It has a ten and a half-inch screen and is in color and it has a thirty gig hard drive that has just about every lake in the country. So you can have contours and old roadbeds and other hidden structure. I have a second Lowrance GPS/ Depth finder on my dash. This unit is used totally for navigation and it is linked with the front unit so I can share waypoints. I also have another Lowrance in my dash that I use for my depth finder. It has a color screen and if you haven't seen the new color units in action, then you are behind in technology. My fourth system is a Humminbird side imaging system. I can locate hidden trees and especially lay down trees out to the side of the boat.

Lake Shelbyville has been up at near flood stage all summer. All my hidden brush piles are in too deep of water. I have had to compromise on all my fishing locations. What I am doing is fishing the hundreds of main lake down trees. Problem is that you can't even see the old root balls. With the Humminbird, I can scan a shoreline from a hundred or more feet away and get a perfect picture of the downed tree I am looking for. I can even tell if it is just a trunk and all the branches are gone or I can tell if it branches out underwater in several directions. Of course, for crappie, I want many branches. I have been really using this piece of equipment as of late.

With today's electronics, I can see my jig go right down the screen and can stop it at the top of a brush pile. I can tell you if that brush has fish on it by how dark red the image is on the color unit. On stake beds down at Kentucky Lake, I can tell you when the fish have left by the lack of the same dark red color; brush is a little tougher to tell.

Unlike May, with Mother Nature still trying to hold on to winter and slowing the spawn down, November has quite the opposite effect. The fish can feel the urgency to fatten up for winter and once that water surface temp gets into the mid fifty to high thirty range the fishing can be downright incredible.

November can be somewhat cold early in the morning, but by midday the temps rebound quite nicely. I have been in shirtsleeves one day and snowmobile suit the next.

I always tell my listeners in my winter seminars that November is my ten-foot month. Just let ten foot out of your rod and find some wood and you will catch fish. I use eighth ounce jig and a tube with some color of chartreuse and either red or yellow or white, it doesn't matter, just keep it in front of fish. They are so aggressive; they will eat just about anything.

It has been a long season for my guide service since I started guiding in March and I have worked seven days a week at guiding and at my other part time job of HVAC and plumbing. I still look forward to November and wouldn't think of traveling anywhere else. Lake Shelbyville is one of the best lakes in the state, especially in November. December is a different story. I can still get in on great crappie at Shelbyville until about mid-month but then I go to Paris Landing as many times as I can through the end of March, then I must return to Shelbyville. I will save the Paris Landing article for next month.