

Hot, Hot, Weather White Bass

by Steve Welch

Lake Shelbyville the lake that I guide on has got to be the best White Bass fishery in the state. If crappie were all I guided for I would starve during the summer months. They are as elusive as walleye. Not the nine-inch fish just those big brutes we get in spring and fall. Fortunate for me as soon as the crappie quit the whites take off. We start out in June chasing them early in the morning up on the lakes biggest flats. We look for bait and busting fish and we can flat stick them in the cooler. A typical day will have a forty-eight quart cooler full in two hours if we get into a good bunch of busting fish.

I always use a cooler with ice during the white bass season. They will not live in a live well and clean much easier on ice.

Wind is everything when you are using the flats. The bait has to be in the area and if you just watch the water you will see them. I use a flat that has had the wind blowing on it for at least twenty-four hours. Like crappie fishing it is run and gun. We will constantly be moving to find bigger fish. Like sized fish will school together. This might just be a matter of moving a hundred feet on a flat full of bait and feeding fish. Once we get into mid July the flats will not be as good. The thermocline has set up and the best oxygen will be in that fifteen to twenty-foot range. Don't get me wrong you can still get shallow fish early in the morning but they will be very close to the sheer drop-off that goes right on into the old river channel. July and August has got to be my best months for the whites. I can use my electronics to find the bait and the whites will bunch up on them.

I no longer have to cover near the amount of water. The fish will be stacked up on channel drops and I have taken about two thousand fish from the same spot over a period of five weeks and never put a dent in them. That is a huge school.

The boat traffic that just killed me in June is now my friend. It pushes the bait and the fish deep and all we have to do is hold the boat over them. That can be tough with forty-foot cigarette boats and sixty-foot houseboats motoring by as you are out in the middle of the lake.

We fish the Slab Spoon and the drop-shot rig still I just put a heavier weight on the drop shot to better feel the bottom. I will also vertical jig a quarter-ounce jig with a Charlie Brewer slider grub on it. July and August also has me catching those huge buffalo. A twenty-pound fish isn't even a big one. I have had fish pushing forty. They will about pull your arm off. It seems that they are right in there with the whites and if I am vertical jiggling the spoon or jig and happen to feel a stump in twenty to thirty foot of water then I know I will be getting a big buffy soon.

So don't be discouraged about the heat and boat traffic the whites love the heat and feed very well right on through the summer. Give them a try especially get a kid out there. Pure action and they fight as hard as any fish out there. You will have a fishing partner for life.

I have many good trips left for the summer whites and I am booking fall crappie trips already.