

April is Mother Nature's Reminder

By Steve Welch

I both love April and hate it. The beginning of the month you start out fishing your winter pattern. Then at the end of the month you fish like you will in May during the spawn.

So lots of fish movement and lots of cold rain and high winds to get through. I almost like March better. You get many days in a row of full sun but cold mornings. The best thing about April is May is just around the corner and water temps are warming every day, regardless of the rain and wind.

Last year we had a normal start and the lake was four feet under summer pool like it should be. Not really a rainy April and the water color remained good. This year the rain has pounded us and the lake at this current writing is at summer pool or six feet high and they can't drop it because down stream they also have flooding.

I have seen this many times and Lake Shelbyville is so large that clear water can be found on the deep south end of the lake. On the south end shallow is fourteen feet since it so clear so most anglers won't fish it. I routinely catch crappie twenty feet or more and I might be in forty feet of water. I call those my fish because few have perfected my deep fishing patterns.

I actually don't even wet a line these days until I know the down tree or brush pile has fish on it. With my down scan and side imaging I can see fish hidden in the branches and I know exactly how deep to fish. No fish on the tree we never stop. My Lowrance set up on my boat is about the best set up you will ever see. I have four systems and all networked together. I have structure scan on front and back. Since they are all networked I can watch my side imaging on any screen in the boat. I can scroll the screen back if I want to watch a good brush pile again and grab a waypoint. For deep water fishing this system is a huge benefit.

Like I said April has the fish on the move and we can get on good pre spawn action about the end of the month. Water temps are very important in the spring and once you see the surface temp. in the mid to upper fifty range you can then start looking for males moving to the bank. They simply go right to the first drop at the front of cove shoreline and wait until it is time to move right up to the bank to spawn. I like to cast a small Charlie Brewer Slider and cover water looking for active males.

In March and early April I fish very deep and I stick to shad colored or white baits. The water color I use is very clear but once we get to the middle of April I move back up to the north end or the stained end of the lake and I fish a lot more chartreuse colors. I like to fish the north end because you can fish in four or five feet of water. That is the normal spawning depth since Shelbyville is a flood control lake the fish have adapted and spawn a little deeper.

One thing you learn if you fish Lake Shelbyville is to remain flexible and open minded. Surface temps mean everything in April so search out the warmest you can find with the best water color you can catch fish in.

If we get the warm weather we had last year in April and normal water levels the walleye will start to move up on the flats towards the end of the month. Typically May and June are the best two months. Our walleye fishing is different than up north. We go bass fishing and flip around stumps on huge flats or points with a jig and crawler or blade bait. Last year we experienced the best walleye fishing Lake Shelbyville has ever had and this year all the experts are saying it will be even better. The lake has a strong year class of 14-20 inch fish and the saugers are really doing well.

I have done more fishing shows over the winter than I normally do and my schedule has been filling very quickly, so quickly that I have added a second boat. My schedule is booked solid right

now until mid June but my second boat has many openings and he is very competent.

However I still have good openings for walleye in June and tons of good spots for the summer white bass. If you haven't experienced Lake Shelbyville white bass you are missing out. This is the best white bass lake in the Midwest and we catch up to five hundred fish on a good day and each year I clean about fifteen thousand during the four summer months. So just go to my website and check for openings or shoot me an e-mail from the website.