

April Fishing Has Me Bouncing Back and Forth
by Steve Welch

Torn between two lakes I love and two species that I also love to fish for. That is the problem I face in April.

I am talking about opening day walleye on Clinton Lake and fishing for crappie on Lake Shelbyville. The lake that I have spent the last month on and by now feel pretty comfortable.

When I say opening day walleye that isn't quite all the picture. April first they open up the restricted hot water section of the lake. These fish haven't seen a bait since October. The water is approaching seventy degrees and the fish are shallow.

For the first three weeks of April I will switch from the crappies at Shelbyville and get in on this fish smorgasbord. We catch white bass, crappie, catfish, striped bass, and of course walleye. All caught casting.

The tackle that we use is quite simple. Get out a six-foot light medium spinning outfit and spool it with six or eight pound quality line. On the business end I use a sixteenth ounce jig that I get from Reeves Lure (217) 864-3493 and I then put on a Charlie Brewer Slider grub, www.sliderfishing.com, in either white and chartreuse or creamy chartreuse and black. I also use a small rattletail or a gay blade in either chrome or chartreuse. On these baits I can catch all the species I mentioned above.

The problem with this pattern is too many boats and too little bank. They beat them up pretty bad by the third week so I start looking to spread out or switch lakes and go back to Shelbyville.

Spring has warmed up the water by now and that hot water advantage you get at Clinton is no longer needed so it is back to Shelbyville for the whole spawning process which will last until mid June.

The fish will suspend in standing timber on the main lake and by now they will chase bait. We cast the slider grubs and run them down about four feet deep in deeper water, so a spinning outfit is still in the boat. I also have long rods to dip into the multiple trees and brush piles. I use a rod from ten to twelve foot long and we just let out enough line to get to the fish and fish vertically in the brush. I use tube jigs made by Southern Pro, www.southernpro.com, or super jigs made by Midsouth Tackle (870) 935-4914. The colors that I stick with have some sort of chartreuse on them and any other color be it black or white or red.

Lake Shelbyville is a giant flood control lake so crowded isn't a problem. Knowing where to go can be. Hiring a guide can certainly cut down your search time and you can learn a pattern that is maybe just done there and won't work on your water at home or maybe it would and you haven't tried it.

My advantage has got to be in the preparation. I get out there when the water is at winter pool and mark tons of brush on my GPS. I have nearly two hundred to run too in just an instant in my Ranger twenty-one foot bass boat with a powerful 225 Merc. I can flat out cover water.

My new Lowrance 332c and 102c system is just what I needed to advance me into the new millennium. I have it networked to my front bow mount depth finder and I have Navionics regional MMC card to give me depth contours and all old sunken roadbeds or bridges. All the fishing hot spots areas and I can use the Map-Create disc to further fine-tune my GPS. I have a thousand waypoints and believe me I will use them.

Although I have already booked a ton of guide trips I still have some good ones left and if white bass summer trips are to your liking I have been booking them as well. These trips are a ball for both you and the youngster if you want to bring a child. School is out and the white bass are the perfect medicine for an outing they will never forget. We generally catch over a hundred fish a day and sometimes those many by lunch.