

August Fishing Has Them Deep
By Steve Welch

My flats fishing is done until turnover sometime next month. The lake now has a distinct thermo cline and the fish are in the fifteen-foot plus mode.

I have to adjust my guide trips about mid July and give up on the early morning flats bite. I now concentrate on sharp drop offs and keep a keen eye on my electronics. I am looking for huge schools of roaming white bass. This will fill the live well and keep my clients coming back for more.

Last summer I had it made. I would start each and every guide trip in the same location. Some days we wouldn't even have to move. I had found the mother load. A school of white bass that not only had big fish but plenty of them. We could consistently boat fish in the pound and three quarter range and sometimes get a two-pound fish. Those are good-sized whites when you consider we are catching over a hundred a day.

This method of catching these fish is ninety-nine percent location and one-percent presentation. You just plain have to know what you are looking for on your depth finder. But just as important you need to know tendencies of the whites. I know that they will scatter in the early morning hours forcing shad to the surface and then return to school up on the drops about mid morning or when the boat traffic pushes them down. Most people quit fishing for them and load the boat and go home. If they can't find them busting on the surface then they just can't find them.

I too love to catch them while they are busting. You can't beat the action when they are turned on. But what most don't know is that vertical jigging for them can be just as fun and hectic. I tend to get bigger fish this way.

Once I get a school on the depth finder I will tie on a quarter ounce jig and a white Charlie Brewer Slider grub and let it go to the bottom. Then radically jig it up off the bottom six-foot or so. Then follow your line back to the bottom. You will get two or three hard bites before one hooks up on it. You can catch them one after another for hours. No having to chase the busting fish all over the flats. Just stay there and hover over them.

The second lure I use is to tie on a one-ounce jigging spoon on my bait caster spooled with seventeen-pound test. Then go up the line and tie on a jig and twister about three feet above the spoon. This allows you to catch two at a time. They will fight each other for bait and it isn't uncommon to get double or even triple hookups.

This bait allows me too cast long distances if the school moves or troll along the drop with the bait right under the boat vertical. So you are always in contact with the school.

This has got to be one of the easiest ways to teach a beginning angler how to fish. Location tactics can be tricky but the actual fishing process is as easy as can be.

I know the dog days of August can wear on a fisherman but you have to hone your skills on the deep fishing and you will be ready when the crappie start.

Crappie can be caught on Lake Shelbyville in August but I prefer to troll for them. The fish are in deep water suspended and trolling covers a lot of water. Concentrate on high clay banks that have deep water next to them. I use Glass Raps or number seven Shad Raps. I then go up the line and tie on a Bill Norman front runner. The crank will get you down and the front runner will catch you the fish. I stick with bright colors on bright days such as fire tiger, but opt for gold or shad colors on dark days. If the fish are deeper than the cranks will troll then I use a snap weight to get me a few more feet of depth. Remember the water is clear this time of the year and the fish will come up for a bait.

I have other locations that I can get crappie relating to brush on drops but you can't hover over them so I cast the slider grub but go down to an eighth ounce weed less jig. I use a countdown method to come into contact with the brush.

These are the methods that I will be using to put fish in the boat at the upcoming Crappie U.S.A. classic.