

Crappie Stacked Up And Biting

by Steve Welch

Give yourself an early Christmas present and hire a guide, but make sure in November you get a crappie guide because that is the only game in town. The whites can be caught but the bass are spotty and the walleyes have all but disappeared. All guides have their little niche that they excel at and mine is crappie fishing. I fish the Crappie U.S.A. tournaments all over the Midwest and have been a regional qualifier in two regions the last two years. I stay on top of all the current tricks used by all the pro's and fish against them in the pro division with very good success. I finished third this year at the Mark Twain invitational and fifth last year at Lake Shelbyville's invitational. A guide can put you on the fish immediately and take you up the creeks where you don't dare take your own boat without knowing the channel. A guide can show you how to use the long crappie rods and show you how to hold a boat over a brush pile you can't see so you can just set back and pull the fish in. That is all you have to worry about when you step into my Ranger 520. Clearly the best crappie boat made, with its huge deck and two hundred and twenty-five-horsepower motor to get you anywhere you want to go in comfort and style.

November is as good a month to crappie fish as there is. You are still able to go to the back of the creeks and fish in a few inches of water or you can hover over them out on the main lake at the mouth of creeks or on the high clay banks with the sheer drop offs. Pretty much everything works and since it does work so well and the fish are very hungry you no longer need any minnows. Just head straight for the lake.

In the backs of the creeks we throw a fixed cork or slip bobber depending on the structure. Fixed on the stumps and slip bobber in the brush piles. You only need to fish anywhere from eight inches to a couple of feet deep on your setting of the cork. I use big tube bait in the fall. I use either the biggest Mid-South or Southern-Pro bait I can get. Both are about two and a half inches long. I use black and chartreuse or red and chartreuse or glow chartreuse most of the time.

Out on the main lake I just get in to the biggest stump field I can find and dip around all the trees. I also use high clay banks and concentrate on the same depths all over the lake. Usually ten feet deep is about dead on.

The rods I use are anywhere from eight feet to twelve feet long. I like the shorter eight-foot rod to toss my cork rig. It is more accurate and lighter. I use a nine or ten-foot pole to hover over the deep fish out on the main lake and I like to fish a twelve-foot pole if I am fishing shallow and the wind is a problem. I can put more action on the jig with this long pole and still stay back and not spook the fish.

A typical day might see us fish both patterns but later in the month I stick mostly to just the deeper main lake pattern. The weather isn't all that bad and the trees usually are at their prettiest colors of red and gold. The boat traffic is at a minimum and all you have to watch out for is a few duck hunters. All the bass fishermen are done for the year as well. Only us die-hard crappie fishermen left. So take a break from deer hunting or bird hunting or whatever your excuse is as to why you aren't crappie fishing and give me a buzz and your worries are over.

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