

High Water Yet Again

By Steve Welch

For the third year in a row we are flooded again. This time we are up eight feet at the time of this writing. The lake came up twelve feet in a week. Now tell me that wouldn't send you scurrying all over the place to stay on fish. I have put in long hours even after the clients have gone home and went back out looking for fish. Now that the water is clearing up the fishing has taken back off.

If you have never fished Lake Shelbyville when it is high you will be lost. The lake will grow from 11,000 acres to nearly 20,000 and you will just look at all the water and say what am I to do. I am no stranger to this and have adapted very well. I know the crappie will remain in flooded willows until the water drops but there are hundreds of miles of flooded willows so where do I start. During the spawn you want to target cuts in coves and on main lake where they can get in and have no wind or waves bother them and they want to be in the sun all day long.

Once the spawn is over you want willows adjacent to deep water or right on the edge of a flat with deep water near by. Minnows are your best bet since the crappie primarily feed on shad all summer. I fish deepest willows I can find. You need to be in at least four feet of water.

It is the white bass that love the high water and for those of us that chase white bass all summer it makes it very easy. They to love the willows and any kind of gravel bottom, as do the walleye. We target gravel parking lots and they also love the boat ramps. The bait feeds on the algae on the steps at the boat ramps and the whites will be there to gobble them up.

Even though the high water adds obstacles to those that don't know the lake. It really makes it one of the premier fisheries anywhere. Our crappie population is booming as are the largemouth bass and walleye but it is the white bass that have exploded. I generally clean 150 every day and catch three times that much. I clean about 16,000 in the four summer months. It is the best species to take a kid out to fish for. Tons of action and they fight hard.

I was excited as can be to get in on what was to be the best walleye fishing this lake would ever had this year and June is the best month for it. The increased stocking and adding sauger has really brought the walleye fishing at Shelbyville to top-notch status. Unfortunately we need near normal water levels to target the many stumps on our huge flats. Without the normal water levels the fish can hide anywhere. For the most part they run with the white bass so if you fish for the whites you will catch a walleye or two, but not the mother load like we had last year. We got our triple limit of 18 on just about every trip in June last year.

Oh well it is a trade off on the high water because we normally don't do well on crappie during the summer months but when the willows have good water on them you can tear them up. I can catch white bass at any lake level there are so many of them.

Now that school is out and you are looking for a summer trip. The white bass fishing at Lake Shelbyville will once again be phenomenal. So give my guide service a call at 217-762-7257 or simply e-mail me at www.LakeShelbyvilleguide.com. We can fill the boat with our limit of crappie and then go really fill the boat with white bass. Who wouldn't want to take home a couple hundred fish all cleaned and ready for the fish fry.