

Try and Master all Methods of Crappie Fishing for Success  
by Steve Welch

March can be a good month to get out everything in the rod box and try many different patterns. The weather can throw many curveballs and this has a dramatic effect on the water temperature and this moves the fish.

I have caught fish casting a cork over very shallow cover one day. For this I use a spinning outfit. The next day I am out on a main lake drop tight lining over a brush pile in twenty foot of water. For this I use an eight weight custom made crappie rod between nine to ten foot long. I have also been known to use my pendulum pattern on standing wood in deep water. For this I use a twelve foot rod. I simply let out about ten foot of line and swing it past a standing tree and let it swim back to me at about four foot deep.

The sun or lack of it has everything to do with my pattern for the day. If we have had two or three days of full sun and the shallows are warming then I am always checking the fixed or slip cork pattern. Big fish get in on this pattern especially early. I put a sixteenth ounce jig under the cork and put a tube or slider grub on it.

The sun will also make the fish suspend out in the bays with a lot of standing wood or in the mouth of a deep cove with a lot of standing wood. This is my pendulum pattern with the twelve foot pole. It is easier to pendulum your jig on the longer rod. I use this pattern most of the time all through the spawn. Not all fish move to the bank at the same time. There are always fish backed off on the first drop ready to move in.

If we have a nasty cold spell and we will, then I back off and tight line over deep brush on drop offs. Spider rigging this early can miss a lot of bites so I opt to hold my jig pole in my hand and put no action on it at all. I keep my baits small and always use scent. I like a custom made nine foot rod for this. It must be very sensitive to feel a sixteenth ounce jig in deep water. It also must be stiffer than my long rods I use for shallow fishing. You need to set a hook in these deep fish and get them out of the brush.

Spider rigging yet another method that you need to master. Merely sets six to eight, ten to sixteen foot rods in a rod holding system. Then you just troll very slowly with your trolling motor and target suspended fish. With this many hooks in the water it can be very deadly. You must check state and local laws as to how many poles you can use per angler. I mostly use this when I go south, they are very liberal on pole limits.

Another very good pattern in especially April is to target the suspended fish near standing trees only now take off the cork or put down the twelve foot rod and pick up a six foot spinning outfit. Cast this with a Charlie Brewer Slider grub and sixteenth ounce jig and try and fish down about four foot deep. The fish will chase a swimming bait in April since the water is warmer. The big reason to cast is that they can be spooky and even the twelve foot rod won't get you far enough away and all that is left is the small fish. I cast thirty foot or so and work it through standing wood or just above brush. This takes a very good feel and a quality outfit. Don't get an ultra light that is for bluegill fishing. You need a medium six to six and a half rod with a solid butt and fast tip. I use a quality spinning reel with at least nine bearings. They are a lot smoother than the less expensive and always remember the drag settings. It must be smooth to fish this light jig through cover.

The spinning rod and reel method is in my hand most of the year and that is all I use when fishing for crappie in the summer. This is also my method to fish when I go down to Kentucky Lake. You simply cast past the cover and count down and reel. The water is very clear down there and hovering over the fish at times can spook them.

Try and master all these patterns and do like I do and always have at least three rods per angler for these patterns. Remember to get a twelve foot rod to pendulum and dabble over shallow brush. A nine foot high quality rod to hover over deep brush and a six foot spinning rod to cast either a cork and jig or just a jig. Now take that times three and you can see how many rods I carry in my boat.