

The Latest and Greatest

By Steve Welch

One thing that being a fishing guide and tournament angler allows you and that is working with the best toys out there. This year I made the switch from Humminbird side imaging to Lowrance and it's whole network system.

Now all you Humminbird owners out there don't get offended, this is my personal opinion. Being able to network all your systems and look at any transducer on the boat from any system and all your waypoints all be synced together is a big deal. Not to mention the down scan capabilities just blows away anything I have seen from Humminbird. Then you throw in the capability to scroll back any system to get a better look at the structure that just went off the screen and retrieve a waypoint. Plus you can change the source and look at the structure scan on the back of the boat from the front depth finder.

On a recent trip to Kentucky Lake my partner and I could go into a cove and he would set up front and me at the console both of us watching separate HDS10's and me going close to ten miles per hour and shooting side imaging 120 feet each way and splitting the screen and watching down imaging and both of us grabbing waypoints left and right. The Lowrance system adjusts its speed to allow it to draw out any object out to the side of the boat or under it in perfect clarity.

The lake that I guide at Lake Shelbyville has trees on river channels and in mouth of big coves that stand in nearly fifty feet of water. These trees still have most of their branches on them, some reaching to just under the surface. I go right over them with my HDS set to down scan on full screen and it looks like an oil painting of a magnificent tree suitable for framing. I then get over these trees and fish the top branches or whatever depth I see the fish holding. People will pull up to me and ask if I am broke down because surely I couldn't be fishing in fifty feet of water. Oh but I am and tearing these fish up. Nobody on Shelbyville has that capability or confidence to do what I am doing. Mostly because they can't see what I do.

Once I start to fish I no longer even look at 2-d sonar. I can clearly see the branches on anything I am fishing and the fish hiding within. It is harder to see your jig on down scan but I can. I can see moss hanging from branches or down at Kentucky lake I can count the stakes within a stake bed and with down scan you know immediately when you have slid off the stakes and you know immediately if any fish are in the stake bed or brush pile. I have so much confidence in the down scan that I no longer wet a line on what I intend to fish until I go over it first and see if any fish are on it. Talk about saving time.

With my GPS system I can make my waypoints in several different colors so I make my normal brush piles in blue and the biggest, thickest brush piles in red and if I have ever caught a two pound fish in it I make that one green. Stake beds I also make a different color. That way I can run to the biggest piles on cold fronts. The stake beds on sunny days and of course always run my two-pound spots.

I manage my waypoints for each lake I fish so I don't overload the system. I load my waypoints on to a MMC card and just keep my lakes separate. I have over 900 on Shelbyville and over 400 hundred on Kentucky.

I also like the snapshot feature. I can scroll my screen back to get the optimum picture of a brush pile or whatever I want to see and take a snapshot of it to later down load on my computer. On a recent trip to Kentucky I found a tire on end standing in twenty feet of water. I down loaded it and put it on Crappie.Com. I bet some strange comments came back on that one.

I have been booking trips this year just so people can watch this system before they might purchase one for their own boat. Matter of fact this year the guide trips are coming in by the tons so if any of you are thinking about getting a trip now is the time before it is too late. I have plenty

of walleye and white bass trips for the summer and my second boat still has availability for good crappie trips. He has the same system I do and is very accomplished. Just got to my website at www.LakeShelbyvilleGuide.com and you can shoot me an e-mail from there.