

You Don't Want To Miss This!!!! Lake Shelbyville's Fantastic Fall Fishing  
by Steve Welch

Yea-hah the boats are gone. The tidal wave producing, roar of thunder called the cigarette boats and let us not forget the wave runners, who will cut you off in a moments notice and not even as much as a kiss good-bye. The boat ramps aren't full of boaters with little or no backing experience who quickly turn a wide four-lane ramp into a single one.

I look forward to Labor day each year, partly because all the pleasure boaters finally give us back the lake and the crappie move back to the shallows and remain there for about three months. It won't happen over night once Labor Day hits. First you need some cold nights which will start the lakes turn over period. The water temperature needs to get down into the low sixties on the surface. This causes the warmer water underneath to rise and flip-flop the lake so to speak. It spreads the oxygen throughout the water column.

Let us talk a little about searching for fish during this turn over period. I first of all always look for food first and stay locked in on what the shad are doing. The best places to fish during turn over are moving water and edges of main lake flats. Unfortunately on Lake Shelbyville that could mean a ten mile boat ride to bounce back and forth on both of these patterns so that is why I say stay locked in on what the shad are doing. The main lake flat pattern is just an extension of what I have been doing all summer so I am on these fish and know they will be there, but these fish won't win you a tourney so I am always checking on the river pattern. It will most likely be mid month or later before the river will be better than the lake but look out when it gets good it is very good.

All my past and present clients anxiously await for this to happen and just about anyone that has crappie fished on this large flood control reservoir in years past has noticed something a little different. The spring shallow bite produced many larger than normal fish and that usually will follow suit in the fall. All of this because last year the fish had twice as much water to swim in. The following year after a flood. The fishing is fantastic. I caught several fourteen inch fish this spring and limits of twelve inch fish, which will weigh a pound or better. It will take eleven or twelve pounds in a ten fish tourney to win this fall.

But the best thing about fishing on this massive reservoir in the fall is how shallow you fish. It is back to the popping cork all the way in the back of the small feeder creeks. You don't start fishing until you start to kick up mud with the trolling motor. Since you are so shallow you have to stay back from the stumps and cast. So I use an eight foot Wally Marshall rod and a trigger-spin reel with eight pound test mono and a sixteenth ounce weed less jig with a large number two or even a number one hook and a Southern Pro umbrella tube the big two and a half inch model. You just cast past the stump and pop the cork or swim it very slowly and boy oh boy do they hit it. A crappie in only a foot or so of water is very aggressive and they will nail anything in their way. You can actually see the fish they are that shallow. Even though you can only keep ten fish per angler we will catch nearly a hundred. Yes it is that good believe me.

Yet another good reason to get out and fish on Lake Shelbyville in the fall is all the beautiful trees that turn the prettiest shades of gold and red. So if you are contemplating on weather or not to hire a guide this fall and the wife wants to come the fall colors are a good selling point. But seriously I write about how easy this is and how many fish I catch. This pattern isn't for inexperienced boaters. The river has many hidden stumps and you must know where you are going or an expensive lower unit might be on your Christmas wish list. You won't find any of the places that I take my clients on any map and that is the beauty of the service that I provide. Very little boat traffic only those of us in the loop on the hot bite know when and where. We can set in the parking lot and speak a language that sounds foreign to most people. Like you know that tree up on the Monroe ford that had the old bank line pole on it just south of the new tree that the flood brought in over there by the mud slide on Homer's bluff. I would be able to motor right to it. I only guide now on weekends and my trips fill rather quickly so if you want to give this a try I guarantee you will walk away very impressed.

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