

June Is Here, What to Do

by Steve Welch

Lake Shelbyville can throw you a lot of curve balls with water levels up and down in the spring, but once June gets here you might think that would be over and I hope it is. I have fished through torrential downpours, sleet, hail and snow and it was May the flower blooming, mushroom picking suppose to be nice month.

If we get our water back to normal and stay there we can get back into the creeks and get limits of nice crappie then hit the lake and fish some flats for the whites or maybe fish the points for some walleye.

June must keep you ready to do about anything. That means you need to have three long rods to throw corks in shallow water, three spinning outfits to throw sliders and gay blades on the flats for the whites. Then you must also carry a bait box full of crawlers to be ready to walleye fish.

You have to either love or hate fishing a flood control lake but it is June that makes it all worth it. I can think of no other lake that you can fish for crappie in two-feet of water and the males still be black as coal from the spawn clear up until end of the month. June 30th is the latest that I ever got our boats limit in the creeks. That was at summer pool levels if we get a couple of foot higher well then you can catch the crappie out of the flooded willows all summer long.

Typically we hit the ledges on the lake at some point during the day and you can catch about anything. I have caught big catfish, walleye, white bass and large mouth bass while fishing for crappie.

For me live bait is a must in June. I believe that the crappie coming off the spawn want protein and that means a nice big shiner minnow. Jigs will work but minnows get the nod from me. I use a ton of live bait during the summer months for the whites.

Here is a more in depth look at all the species I fish for in June. For the crappie I have two patterns. If we can get up in the creeks first we see if the willows and smartweed have enough water on them. If they do then we get out the twelve-foot rods and let out a foot of line and we run parallel to the weeds. The fish will charge out and hit your jig. If we are at summer pool then we target brush and stumps and for that we use a slip bobber and an Eagle Claw hook with a lively minnow. The second pattern for them is back out on the lake. Like I said the ledges and river channel edges hold everything that swims. We fish them vertically with a jig and minnow over brush. These fish have been through the spawn and are in their summer pattern.

For the walleye we tip a jig with a crawler and a twister and we use our long crappie rods and we drag them slowly behind the boat over points and across flats. The long rods keep the baits away from the boat if we turn tightly. I also fish the stumps on these points and make short flips into the stumps and the walleye will bury themselves and a crawler is too tempting.

The white bass are roving up on the flats so a gay blade will cover water and it drives them crazy. Let the wind dictate on which flat you will be using. I also use a Charlie Brewer slider grub on a quarter ounce jig.

I never bass fish but the same pattern that I use for the walleye is deadly on the bass as they are in the same stumps and up on the flats and points as well. They love night crawlers.

This spring has had many good fortunes for me. My partner Rick Polley and I won the Bass Pro Crappie masters on Lake Shelbyville in April. Then I won the Crappie U.S.A. qualifier on Lake Shelbyville two weeks after that. Both tourneys qualified me for their respective classics. Crappie masters is on Harris Chain of Lakes in Florida and Crappie U.S.A. is on Patoka Lake in Indiana.

I hope you all get out there and get in on the smorgasbord of fishing that is June.