

Doug Wynn's Fishing Report Crappie Gills N More

May 18, 2017

The buzz words for fishing the last week have been high winds and falling water. The lakes are down to about 1 1/2 feet above summer pool with a slow drawdown continuing. The winds and high water have been much more a factor for fishermen than the fish they pursue.

We are in a typical late spring weather pattern with occasional storms breaking up nice weather days of temps in the 70s and 80s. If you are not familiar with KY and Barkley Lakes, wind and storms can churn them into rough water that can rival any ocean inlet.

Keep an eye on the sky and your phone for bad weather reports. Don't wait for that last biting fish and get yourself caught in a storm. If you do get caught away from your ramp or marina, wait the storm out in a safe area rather than chancing a run across the lakes.

The white Excel has been seen daily in areas where we have the best chances to do what I do best---pulling crank baits for big crappie. My clients haven't gone home disappointed.

Crappie

We are catching good numbers of good sized crappie pulling crank baits along flats near deep water and drops. The trash that is being pulled away from the banks as the lake level recedes is making it tougher than normal to keep baits in the strike zone but we are doing our best. Many of the bigger fish this week have been male white crappie that are still in their spawning colors. The big females have for the most part laid their eggs and are moving to their summertime buffet areas where they will feed up for the next several months.

White and Yellow Bass

Along with the crappie we have been catching some BIG white bass, sizes we haven't seen here in a few years. It looks like the big whites are taking advantage of the minnows in "baitballs" that are showing up in the mouths of bays and on main-lake flats. Hopefully those minnows are Asian carp.

We are still catching several small to medium whites as well as their cousins, yellow bass. As the water temperatures move upward thru the 70s, we should start to see schooling white bass surface activity that we call "jumps"

Bluegills and Redears

The falling water is causing the bedding gills and redears to move with it toward the deeper areas and in most cases, their normal areas that they would have been using all along had we not had the high water. Good catches of redears have been reported by lucky anglers who got into the high water areas and spent a lot of time and casts trying to locate feeding redears.

I've had reports of good sized redears coming from yards and grassy areas in the high water on drop-shot and bobber rigs with redworms on bare hook or on small bug-type baits and popeye jigs. Once the water reaches its normal levels, we should see an increase in bluegill bedding activity as we move toward the next full moon on June 9th. 4-5 days either side of a full moon are normally the best time to be on the lake looking for bedding gills and redears.

Catfish

The channel cats and blues are starting to move into the shallow rocky areas where they will spawn for the next few weeks. Look for chunk rock and pea-gravel banks to start your search for them. Reports of good catches on leaches, night crawlers, and cut bait are starting to come in as many anglers are putting up their crappie gear for the year. Some days we will catch one or two good channel cats on our crankbait rigs.

Bass

The bass are coming off the beds and moving toward main creek points and ledges. Good numbers of spawned-out females are coming on creature baits and crankbaits. We are catching several male (buck) bass on cranks trolling for crappie. Look for cover at the mouths of bays and on the ledges just outside the creeks. We still have plenty of trash on the lake from the high water.

Keep a close eye on things as you are motoring the lakes. Some of the debris is large pieces of wood, some logs and entire trees have been seen. There's no better way to ruin a fishing trip than to tear up your boat or motor by hitting something you didn't see floating.

Wear your life jackets when the big motor is running, obey all maritime and game laws, and be courteous to your fellow boaters both on the ramps and the lakes.

Welcome to our little piece of heaven.

Doug Wynn

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