

Hello from the white Excel BayPro 203.

I was off the water a few days early this week. When I got back on the lake, I was shocked at the drop in water temperatures. We found temps from 61-63 degrees in bays on the east and west side. Most areas we were having good catches a week or two ago are suddenly havens for literally millions of Asian carp. We found several areas that had masses of carp 1/3 of the water depth from the bottom.

While trolling waters from 12-20 feet deep, we would encounter massive schools of fish that would make our poles bounce continuously, like we were getting bites on the baits. There was zero doubt in our minds that the baits were bouncing off the carp but not hooking them. As our disgust level grew, we moved out to deeper water around structure.

We started picking up whites, yellows, small largemouths, and a few keeper crappie. As we made our way along a charted path, I hooked a nice fish on what I call a dropper rod, which has a three to four ounce weight with a small crankbait trailing. As the fish got close to the boat, we realized it was a Silver Asian Carp 18-20 inches long, HOOKED IN THE MOUTH ON AN ARKIE 220.

We took some photos as the fish came along side but as soon as it was netted, the bait came unhooked from the roof of its mouth. This is the third time my boat has boated Silver carp this year on crankbaits that were hooked soundly in the mouth, one deep inside its mouth. I keep hearing Asian carp won't take a bait or hit a crankbait from the wildlife professionals. The funny thing is this non-existent situation is happening in Kentucky Lake often as well as other lakes in the south that are infested with these invaders.

I don't know for sure but I have a good idea that the glaring drop in the numbers of shad and other minnows being seen on electronics are a direct result of the competition for food sources between a three-inch shad and a 50 pound Bighead carp. Who do you think is coming out on top in that competition? Best lay your money on the carp most every time.

Crappie

Good catches of short crappie with barely keeping-size larger fish are coming from shallow areas on large flats. Some reports have fishermen catching as many as 100 crappie per day to reach 20 keepers with many of those barely above 10 inch minimum. Best baits have been feather jigs, plastic minnow imitations, and live minnows being spider rigged slowly in front of the boat.

Some larger fish are coming from deep cover in 18-25 feet of water. Double rigged minnows have been working best. Some decent catches are coming on crankbaits trolled at medium depths around deeper structure.

Bass

I'm hearing some poor reports from some bass anglers and good reports from others. Those who are still trying the summertime patterns of large crankbaits and creature baits on deep main lake ledges are doing OK on days when there is noticeable current. Shallow catches have been hit-or-miss where there are schooling minnows around shallow cover. Try topwater baits like spooks, chuggers and even buzz baits around cover or schooling activity on rocky points and banks.

Catfish have been slow. We haven't caught many the last couple of weeks on crankbaits and those targeting them are having slow go of it.

A couple weeks back, I threw a zinger in my report at a crappie fishing friend of mine who had ran out of gas due to a faulty gas gauge and had to be pulled back in to Sportsman's. Thursday, as we were braving three-foot rollers to get from the LBL side back to Sportsman's, we were flagged down by a guy who showed a sense of urgency.

As we eased in closer to check on him (and his three buddies), he was trying to use his trolling motor against a hard wind and 3 foot seas to pull his 22-foot Ranger back to where he could buy gas. Seems his gauge was working but he thought it would be easy to just stop anywhere and get gas on the lake. Sorry folks, there are very few places open during the week and just slightly more open on weekends after Labor Day on these lakes.

It took me an hour and 1/2 to pull him the 4 or so miles to Lakeside Marina and Campground. My speed was barely over 1.5 mph in the main lake swells. We had several waves break completely over the bow of the Excel. Our fishing day was cut in half but the guys in the Ranger showed their appreciation for our efforts. I just hope when I'm the guy who's flagging with urgency, somebody will be willing to cut their fishing day short to help me.

Locals and out-of-towners like the guys we pulled in, should always make sure the gas gauge is never below 1/4 tank on these lakes. Had bad weather or darkness fell, those guys could have very well been out there a long time waiting for rescue. Also keep in mind, your cell phone may or may not have a signal.. Some areas of these lakes have no signal for certain carriers most of the time.

Be careful out there. Watch for sunken objects that may show themselves or be just under the surface with the lake at 354'. Take time to help somebody who needs help. Take plenty of warm clothes and even an extra change. One missed step and a dunking can be funny in summertime but deadly in fall/winter time.

Even if you are not the type who thinks you need to wear your PFD, you owe it to your loved ones to wear it now. Standing on the bank of the lake hoping the body of a loved one is recovered soon has to be the most gut-wrenching thing a family could ever go

through. With a minimal amount of caution and preparation, your odds of being that person go down a bunch.

Welcome to our piece of Heaven.

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