

Doug Wynn's Fishing Report

For December 17, 2017

Report for Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley

Hello from the tan Excel Bay Pro 203.

I've had several folks ask over the last couple of years "What is the name of your boat?"

I never thought about boat names except when I hear the song "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald" or when I watch a TV show like "Deadliest Catch" or "Wicked Tuna". Boat names aren't real common in the fishing fraternity around these parts but since I tend to march to a different drum (ask my wife), I thought a name for the new boat might be great for a new start.

After checking out all kinds of sources, I came to the name I saw on a run-down house boat on Green River Lake: "Fishful Thinking". I think that best describes what my boat is for and what I'm thinking any time I have it on the water. So from now on, any time I register my on-water hours as a Captain for the US Coast Guard, they will be on the "Fishful Thinking".

Sauger

It seems funny to be starting with a fish we don't see nearly as much as we would like to since the population on KY and Barkley seems much less than a generation ago.

A recent client from southern Indiana had told me he would call as soon as the Ohio River got right for the start of the annual sauger spawn run. The call came early last week and we set the trip up for Friday. All week I had been battling the respiratory bug that is going around. All-night coughing spells had made my ribs terribly sore. A minor mistake in my taxidermy studio Tuesday night might have been avoided if I had not just started using a new razor-sharp knife.

The new knife and minor mistake equaled a trip to the ER for 5 stitches in my left thumb (don't you hate it when that happens?). So, here I am, sick as a dog with stitches I'm supposed to keep dry. What should I do since I got the call I had been waiting for? I did what any other red-blooded American fisher-person would do - I headed to southern Indiana with a ton of warm clothes, a couple of latex gloves, and a pocket full of Halls cough drops.

Did you ever see a GPS unit that had a seriously painful sense of humor? Mine does. It took us to the middle of a river-side corn field, 5 miles from our destination. We were glad we didn't have to use 4 wheel drive to get back onto our true path.

My cousin Rickie was with me when we finally met our host at a river-side ramp in below freezing temperatures. The ride up the river to the dam was bone-chilling. Our host Justin explained our set-up, double minnow bottom bouncer rigs with 3 oz of weight. Our first drop was stopped by a fat sauger not 15 seconds after it started. For the first hour the action was furious. Justin spent most of his time taking fish off and baiting hooks. It felt strange to be sitting in a chair, having somebody else run the boat and take care of the fishing tasks.

We had to try drifting with the current to finish out our 30 fish limit in 6 hours. I will say this - I have never witnessed cooperation between a group of boaters like we witnessed Friday. There was a group of about 10 boats that were all doing the same thing in a small area. Everyone was pleasant and friendly. We all talked among ourselves like we were all long-lost friends. If boats got too close or even touched, there was no conflict, not as much as a raised voice! Crappie fishermen on Jonathan Creek and Blood River could have learned a lot from this bunch!!

It was a wonderful day and since I had used the occasion to keep mental notes on gear, boat placement, and tactics, I plan on trying the same tactics here on our local rivers. I won't be running guide trips this season for sauger on the rivers but I did gain some insight that will be used in my quest for summertime sauger on the lakes and guided trips on the rivers next fall and winter.

Crappie

I've been getting so-so reports from KY Lake and some killer reports from Barkley. The longline bite has been hot for some on Barkley in depths of up to 20 feet. Try pulling roadrunners and curly tail jigs at speeds of 0.8-1.0 mph on flats with some cover. There seems to be many more baitfish in some areas of Barkley that are resulting in great catches.

Spider riggers on KY Lake are catching good numbers of mainly short fish with a small percentage of keepers. Try double minnow rigs or jigs with crappie nibbles around cover in 8-15 feet of water.

We all know what happens in a few days - Christmas will be here and much too soon for my checkbook. Gift buyers for outdoor type are always pulling hair out to decide what to buy the sportsman. If this describes you, don't feel like the Lone Ranger. Get on line and buy that outdoor geek a gift certificate or gift card. That way they can make their own choices and many times take advantage of after-Christmas sales that will maximize the purchase power of the card.

Crappie Gills 'N More is offering gift certificates toward fishing trips. Most folks will use the certificate for an entire day while some will pay a deposit or portion of a trip.. I'll be glad to work with you either way. Get the certificate then have the lucky recipient contact me for preferred dates. Early bookings mean more choices.

One more thing about the Christmas season. KY Fish and Wildlife is starting a shallow water habitat program and will be glad to take your used tree so it can become the nesting habitat of mature fish and the protective cover for the little guys that the spawn produces. Contact the F&W office on Hwy 280 and ask for Adam Martin. (270)753-3886

I hope each and every one of you have a safe and joyous Holiday Season. Remember the reason for the season.

Be careful out there. We should all give thanks for our slice of Heaven here and how lucky we are to live in a free country where we have the rights to use it.

Capt. Doug Wynn
Crappie Gills n' More
5 Rivers Taxidermy
157 Chase Loop
Benton, KY 42025
(270) 703-7600
doug@5riversdux.com
www.crappie-gills-n-more.com