

Doug Wynn's Fishing Report

For March 5, 2018

Report for Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley

Hey from the Excel Bay Pro 203 "Fishful Thinking".

Ever have one of those times when you feel like staying in bed would be the best solution? That describes my current scenario. I'm dealing with a flare-up of pneumonia that has been trying to put me down since December.

The Excel has stayed garaged and my phone has been ringing off the hook from friends checking on me and telling me how tough it has been on the lake. Lots of folks who have scheduled trips to the area have also called to get an honest view of how I think things will be over the next couple of weeks.

I don't have a crystal ball but I do have several decades of experience. That said, I can only speculate as to how the lake level rising then dropping will effect fishing based on my past times on the water in those conditions.

Crappie

The best way to describe crappie fishing now is feast or famine - mostly famine. Some of the best crappie fishermen I know have been struggling. Some others have been lucky enough to hit that one brushpile or stakebed that was holding keeper fish and caught several in that spot. They are covering a ton of dirty water. Some have described the water as looking like you could plant corn in it. That's pretty dirty.

Covering an entire bay and fishing all the cover that can be found has been the pattern. A few lucky fishermen have found crappie suspended over deep water areas. While some fish are falling to plastics with crappie nibbles or tipped with small minnows, most are coming off minnows fished on double rigs spider rigged or fished vertically right in the cover.

The report from every one is the fish will be located in one area today but not to be found tomorrow. A friend fished several hours Saturday in a variety of cover and depths before finding suspended fish in over 20 feet of water. They ended up with 20 nice keepers in a couple of hours on jigs and crappie nibbles.

Start your search at the deepest cover in the back half of the bays and creeks. This cover will be used as fish move in shallower and as they move back out with the dropping water level. Lots of folks are hoping the high water will bring back some of the glory days where a minnow fished under a bobber around any cover will produce huge crappie. While that may happen, I feel the current water temperatures in the lower 50s

and the water rising fast then dropping back out is going to keep the fish in mid-depths instead of very shallow.

I love to fish the current water temperatures by longline trolling with curly tail plastics and roadrunner type heads. The amount of trash that is suspended in the current dirty water column will make this style of fishing a hair-pulling lesson in frustration.

Bass

The word is the current water conditions is helping the average bass fishermen catch good numbers of small to medium bass. I'm sure some large bass are being caught but I'm just not hearing about them. Creature baits fished around shallow cover and crankbaits fished on points inside bays and creeks have been producing fish. The suspended trash (leaves, pine needles, grass) wont be as much of a nuisance to bass fishermen as it will crappie fishermen.

I'm not seeing how long it is going to be before we can start to see noticeable drop in water levels. I had a conversation this morning with a friend from north Mississippi. Any water in the rivers and lakes in his area that has to be dumped is going to come north thru the Tennessee River. His observation is everything there is brim full. That means there is still a bunch of water that is going to have to come thru our dams.

With the flood-stage levels all downstream of us, I doubt the level will get back to normal in a couple of weeks. Just my guess.

Every report I have gotten is the lakes are COVERED in trash and serious-sized debris including some whole trees. This debris is going to make running the boat a higher speeds a big risk. Take your time, watch out for hazards, and try to enjoy your time on the water. Wear your PFD. Be careful!!

Welcome to our high-water piece of Heaven.

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