

Doug Wynn's Fishing Report

For March 28, 2018

Report for Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley

Hello and best wishes from the tan Excel BayPro "Fishful Thinking".

Does anybody remember what sunshine looks like? I think I might have caught a glimpse of it a couple of days ago. Rain! Rain! Rain! The forecast doesn't look hopeful for a drastic change any time soon.

Of course the rain doesn't bother the fish but cool nights, no sunshine, muddy water, and low 50s surface temps do. It seems the crappie have gone into a holding pattern.

Bass seem to be thriving in the same conditions.

Crappie

I know it sounds like a broken record (round thing that contained music in the pre-CD days) but the crappie are still really tough for many, active for a very few. The best reports have been spider rigging and slow trolling with double minnow rigs and jigs. Spider riggers are moving 0.3-0.6 mph, the slow trollers slightly faster. The fish don't seem to be holding in cover like one would think this time of the year. They seem to be in loose schools in open water areas in 15-25 feet of water.

Some lucky fishermen have been finding some shallower. A friend from PA tried the shallow crappie bite over the weekend and found a smallmouth bass hotspot. His largest smallmouth was almost 5 pounds, a true trophy in any book. He also found some nice black crappie males but they were nowhere to be found the next day. It is taking covering large amounts of water, keeping the baits at varying depths, watching the electronics, and just putting in the time in the seat.

We found some nice female white crappie a couple of days ago plus a nice bonus catch, a really nice yellow perch. Most of us who grew up in the south only know yellow perch from the pages of a fishing book. They were an exotic fish to our parts, normally found much farther north. The last few years we are seeing them show up around bluegill beds and on deep ledges. If you have never had the pleasure of eating perch, you are missing the finest tasting fish in our waters, even ahead of sauger.

If Mother Nature will ever see fit to stop the rain, we should see a stampede of crappie toward shallow water spawning areas. There is a misconception among many fishermen who think the crappie spawn will occur over a few days then be over. That's just not the case. The black crappie will move in first then the white crappie. The whole spawn might take a month, depending on water levels and temperatures. The key is

water temps. Once the surface temperature hits the low to mid 60s, watch out. It will be on like Donkey Kong!

Try the minnows and jigs. The best colors seem to be a combination of a bright color and a dark color on the same jig body. Black/chartreuse, dark green/chartreuse, green/pink - mix it up. Don't be afraid to change colors often. The crappie will tell you what they like but if the bite slows, change colors again.

Bass

The bass have been tearing it up for many. Try minnow baits like jerk baits, Rattle Traps, and square-bills crankbaits on the shallow flats and points. The deeper fish on points and secondary ledges are falling to deeper diving cranks like crawfish patterns and creature baits. It sounds like a good time to be chasing bass.

Other Species

The ever-present yellow bass are still there. They can and will empty a minnow bucket in short order. They are great on the table so please consider taking several to the cleaning station.

Catfish are doing well for those who tend to concentrate on them. With warming waters, we will see the channel cats move shallow with the crappie.

The lake level is right at or slightly below winter pool. We should start to see the slow rise to summer pool start in a few days. Active boaters and shallow water can lead to conflicts between structure and boat. The boat is rarely going to come out ahead in that scenario.

Watch your electronics and maps and avoid running in shallow areas. We are blessed to have (for the most part) very accurate buoys on the secondary channel and in the bay mouths but one buoy out of place can lead to bad consequences as can one second of inattention.

Be careful out there! Wear your PFDs. Be considerate of those around you. Get your boat and gear ready BEFORE taking up a lane on the ramp.

Be observant of all creel and length limits. 10 inches doesn't mean 9 3/4 inches and the local judge loves the revenue short crappie brings in. You will be ticketed for EACH short crappie and they will cost you in the neighborhood of \$200 EACH. OUCH!! Size and creel limits are there to protect our valuable fishery.

Welcome to our soggy slice of Heaven.

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