

Doug Wynn's Fishing Report

For May 31, 2018

Report for Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley

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

It has been a week of holiday boat traffic and weather. Sunday was the absolute worse boat traffic I have ever experienced on KY and Barkley Lakes. Due to a guide trip obligation, I was at ground zero, Pisgah Bay, for part of the morning and early afternoon.

I had no idea there were that many pontoon boats in the world. Throw in the Bajas, cruisers, houseboats, jet skis and kayaks (yes, there were some brave enough to be in the mix in kayaks) and it was total bedlam that I would normally avoid at all costs. To my knowledge everyone survived.

Crappie

Here today-gone tomorrow. It's that time of the year where many species are transitioning to their summer patterns. Crappie are most notable.

My guide group Sunday were four guys from Chicago who wanted to catch fish but also have a great time. We broke out the crankbait rods and Pico cranks and gave it our best shot. Many places we fished gave up nothing. A couple of spots proved productive and we caught some nice crappie, both blacks and whites. Before the trip was over, the guys couldn't resist doing cannonballs off the decks of the Excel. Thank goodness for the emergency boarding ladder option.

Monday we gave it our best shot before the storms but the crappie had disappeared from the areas that were productive Sunday. I'm sure the constant boat traffic had a lot to do with that.

Reports from other fishermen are the crappie bite has been tough. Some fish are still being caught slow trolling and vertical jigging deep cover in the mouths of the bays. Try double minnow rigs and plastics with crappie nibble scent baits. Water 15 feet and deeper are where one should target. Submerged structure or depth changes like ledges and creek channels are a must.

Pico cranks in Mudbug, Simply Awesum, Green Machine and Blue Boogie have all been top producers.

Bluegills/Redears

The full moon for May has come and gone and the results for most were disappointing when it came to bedding gills and redears. I spent an hour very early Sunday morning side-scanning at least 50 bedding areas and found a grand total of 3 active beds. One of those beds was vacant when we fished it Monday. That has been the typical scenario all spring.

Redears have been easy for a small group but tough for the rest of us. Many of the bedding areas we fished Monday had been taken over by yellow bass and catfish. That would indicate to me the gills had been there and left after the eggs were deposited rather than the bull males staying to protect the eggs and young. Puzzling change of normal spawns.



Some gills are still in shallow water and can be caught on crickets, worms and jig/wax worm combinations. Look for pea gravel and rocky areas. As June arrives, so should the willow fly hatches. Those will fire up the gills along with most every other fish species. Check out bridge pilings as well as over-hanging trees for the hatches.

Catfish

I'm seeing more activity from catfish on our crankbaits in deeper areas of bays. Those fishing chunk rock and rip-rap areas are having good catches on leeches, worms and stink baits. Don't count out the raw chicken chunks soaked in red Jello.

Check out areas closer to creek channels and the main ledges on the main lake. Catfish love current so the days where there is more water being pulled thru the dam will be better for the catfish bite. Check out the app "TVA Lake Info" for levels and generating schedules. There is up to date info elsewhere here.



Monday I had the pleasure to have J Paul Jackson of "Migration Nation" outdoor TV on the Bay Pro 203. He has taken the position of Business Operations Manager with Excel Boats and has been instrumental in getting the new Excel plant to locate in Lake County, TN.

He was new to the drop-shot rig for bluegills and redears. He caught on like a pro and out fished me on the few bedding gills we located. The surprise of the day was catching big bluegills on a Pico crank in 15 feet of water.

I had told him we had been catching everything in the lake that would hit eat a minnow on crankbaits. His first ever crappie cranking catch was a huge white drum on a 16 foot Southern Crappie Rod. We had a blast with that until it came time to net it to get the Pico away from the giant.

Bass

Bass reports have been few and far between, as have been the catches for most. They too are transitioning to main lake ledges as well as the main points in creek mouths. Try large swimbaits, flutter spoons, creature baits as well as large crankbaits.

Be careful out there. Wear your PFDs. Watch out for those who won't watch out for you. Try to learn ramp etiquette and practice it.

Welcome to our slice of Heaven.

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