

Doug Wynn's Fishing Report

For July 14, 2018

Report for Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley

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

We are starting to see the beginning of the slow fall in lake levels. As much as I love the fall fishing, I mostly dread to see the lakes at lower levels. Not only do the lower levels present the possibility of encountering a gremlin lurking just below the surface, it also forces us to change the fishing tactics that have been working for a while.

In another month many will be back into school mode and the weekday lake activities will slow way down. As a fisherman, I always see this as a positive. That said, it also means a lot of crappie fishermen who hung up their tackle a couple of months ago will start to feel that itch to get back on the lake.

For the last week I've been concentrating on Lake Barkley exclusively. I love Barkley but it can be very intimidating to those who don't fish it often. Going from Point A to Point B will often mean a round-about route due to skinny water and known gremlins. A GPS chartplotter should be standard equipment for any fisherman these days.

I usually scoff at wives' tales or superstitions when it comes to fishing. I've always heard the tale about bananas on fishing boats. Seems in the sailing ship trade days, bananas were a commodity that was prized. When the ships got to the areas where bananas were grown, the large bunches of bananas would be hauled aboard. The surprise was along with the banana bunches, along came a spider. Seems there were large poisonous spiders among the clumps that caused havoc on the ships. Hence "No Bananas On This Ship".

With all the long days on the Fishful Thinking, I've been experiencing bad cramps in my legs. I bought bananas to snack on, hoping to help the cramps. We've been drinking bottled water by the case daily.

Wednesday we had a great day, bananas and all. Friday the day started out red hot for every species BUT crappie. I couldn't buy a crappie! BANANAS!!! It's the bananas!! I had two left so I gobbled one down and offered the second to my clients. They declined. I thought of all the times I've talked about trash on the lake and how much I dislike it. I held that banana and thought since it's an organic, I'd just be returning it to the ecosystem. That would justify me chunking it overboard as a sacrifice to the crappie deity. Over the side it went. I stood there hoping an Asian carp would choke on it.

Almost immediately one of the clients hooked but lost a good crappie. Bad sign! Soon all was forgiven and we ended up with 15 NICE crappie in 3 hours. Happy clients! Happy me!! NO MORE BANANAS!!

Crappie

Same story--different week. Pulling Pico cranks in 15-25 feet of water around contour breaks and structure like brush and stakebeds.

Crappie are very sensitive to current. Up to a high-volume current they are positively influenced by it. This past week has seen many days of almost zero current and it has made things tough at times. Many times of lack current the crappie are suspending away from the structure. Apparently if the current won't bring baitfish to the crappie, they go looking for the bait. Catching one here-one there is still catching fish and they do add up at the end of the day.

Pico cranks in Geezer Clown, Bone Orange, Green Machine, Simply Awesum, Mudbug, and Red Craw have all been getting it done. For the suspended fish, Red Craw and Shad in Bomber 6A have been good.

Catfish

My breakfast buddies at JoJo's cafe in Benton finally found some river blue cats this week below the dams. Kool-Ade soaked chicken strips have been their bait of choice.

We are cussing the catfish most days when pulling cranks. The catch is mostly channels but several white cats are also showing up. Most days our catfish equal our crappie catch.

Bass

Current = catch. The bass guys are wearing out the channel ledges and intersections of creeks and the main river channels. Large crankbaits, over-sized creature baits, flutter spoons and huge plastic worms are all taking bass.

We've been catching some real nice bass in among the suspended crappie schools. Topwater action early and late around cover will draw strikes.

White and Yellow Bass

There have been a lot of surface action or jumps in the mouths of bays. The jumps don't last long but can be a lot of fun if you are lucky enough to be within casting distance.

In-line spinners, spoons, small crankbaits, and curly tail plastics will all draw strikes.

All of my trips since my last report have been teaching trips. These are my favorite trips. I love to share some of my knowledge with those who are interested. When I hear about a person who is tiring of the chasing bass and want to slow down to learn to catch crappie, my teacher alarm goes off.

I never tire of answering questions about how to set up the boat, how I use my electronics, what tackle I use and what I look for in a prospective place to catch crappie. If you are truly interested in learning HOW to catch crappie and not WHERE, I'll be glad to book a trip. Many local folks just want to know WHERE I catch fish. I'm not interested in sharing much of that information. I've worked much too hard to learn those spots.

My September and October trips are booking fast but I still have several dates.

Be careful when on the lakes. Wear those PFDs when the big motor is running. Leave the alcohol on the bank but take plenty of water and sports drinks so you can stay hydrated in this extreme heat. Watch out for the other boaters who won't watch out for you. Take time to help somebody who might need help on the lakes. You might be in their shoes one day.

Welcome to our slice of Heaven!

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