

# **Doug Wynn's Fishing Report**

**For March 29, 2019**

*Report for Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley*

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

I was able to get on the lake last week for the first time since October due to my back surgery rehabilitation. The conditions both days were typical of early spring. Wet, cold and windy. The water was falling, cold, and muddy. I had to try to develop a pattern on the crappie since my first guide trip of the year was this past Tuesday.

I hadn't been on the lake an hour until my trolling motor suddenly stopped dead. I was in 10 feet of water, had seen no markers, and was probably 200 feet from shore.

Carp net!! It was no more than 12 inches under the water and the only marker that I could see in either direction was no more than 40 feet from shore. A small foam flat marker probably 8 inches square was all that was to be seen anywhere along the net.

I was able to raise my trolling motor up and spin it backwards to allow the net to come free. Both the net and my motor were unscathed. I went out at least 200 yards in the direction the net ran and saw nothing marking it.

As I continued on fishing, about 200 yards farther out in the cove was another net I picked up on my side-scan. It was deeper than the first net and I passed over without hitting it but I did lose four trolled jigs as I hung them in the net.

Nobody is a bigger supporter of the hard-working commercial fishermen who are our only hope in the battle for the lake with the Asian carp. I just ask that the nets be marked so they can be avoided. A big portion of fishermen either don't or won't keep an eye out for them if they aren't marked often along their length.

A bass fisherman hung the same net I hung later and had to be rescued by the guys from Sportsman's Marina, who also hung the net while trying to free the bass boat. It's safe to say the net didn't end up in nearly as good of shape as it was when I left it. That's a big financial loss for the netter.

## **Crappie**

As the weather and water conditions improve, so will the crappie bite. The water temperatures warm up on the sunny days then drop back with the cold nights. Once we see the temperatures remain in the high 50s, the bite will be on. Some nice fish are being caught now by spider riggers and those who are longline trolling.

Every comment I'm hearing is the size of the crappie is larger than normal but the numbers are down. The fish are in much better health than they were this time last year. Our great shad spawns of last spring are paying dividends now.

Try spider rigging, vertical jigging or trolling near structure in water 10-15 feet deep now. I would stay with predominately darker colored jigs or with minnows fished a couple or more feet off the bottom. Lots of folks don't watch their electronics for suspended fish that may well be just a few feet below the surface. Your electronics are your friend and will tell you all you need to know as the whereabouts of the crappie.

## **Bass**

All reports say the bass bite may be crazy one day then nonexistent the next day. Try square-bill crankbaits around main and secondary points. I've always used darker cranks like crawfish colors this time of the year. With the lake below 355 elevation, there will be lots of shallow structure showing. Rocky north banks might be a great place to start on sunny days. Getting out of the wind may be a challenge.

The lake is reported to be staying at 355 for the next week. As long as we don't get a lot more rain in the Tennessee and Cumberland River Valleys soon and the lakes start to rise slowly as the water temperatures slowly warm, we might be in for a great spawn for crappie, bass and all other fish we might pursue.

With low water levels come the gremlins. They will be lurking in shallow water and just under the surface in areas that might look safe. Watch your lake topo maps as you navigate the shallow areas.

Be careful out there! Wear your PFDs. They won't help you if they aren't within reach. They should always be worn when the big engine is about idle speed. Be observant of other things around you.

As more nets are marked, it will be up to each of us to stay away from them. A netter told me if I am running at plane speed and realize I'm heading for a net, **DON'T SLOW DOWN OR STOP!** Keep going at plane speed and if you do happen to hit the net, the damage to net and boat should be minimal or none.

If you do hit the net, stop away from the net to make sure the mesh isn't wrapped up around your propeller. If it is, remove as much as possible then when on the trailer, remove the prop to check for any more net material. An expensive outboard motor can be ruined by line cutting the seals out of the lower unit and the lubricant be lost or contaminated by water.

The carp are there. The nets are there. Neither shouldn't ruin your trip or keep you from visiting our wonderful lakes. Use basic caution and you will have a wonderful time here.

Welcome to our slice of Heaven.

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