

Doug Wynn's Fishing Report

For April 25, 2019

Report for Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley

Hey y'all from the Excel Bay Pro 203 "Fishful Thinking".

The past week has had a bit of everything weather wise but the surface temperatures of the lakes are on a slow rise. I ended up cancelling four trips last week due to high winds and thunderstorms.

Doing that makes the wallet beg for mercy but the last thing I'll ever do is put my clients in a dangerous situation willfully. I will say that we've been caught in situations where the wind shifted or was much worse than forecast. That's why I run the Bay Pro. We may get wet from spray but we will get back to the ramp safely.

My new Bay Pro 230 is nearing completion BUT my Suzuki 250 four-stroke engine is on back-order till who knows when. I can't say I'm very happy about that!

Crappie

The demise of fishing on Kentucky and Barkley Lakes has been much exaggerated. There are lots of great quality and quantities of fish here, carp or not.

I have reports of crappie being caught in water depths from two feet to 25 feet. Some of the shallow crappie are taking advantage of the afternoon sun having warmed the water up and have begun to spawn. The deep water fish have mature eggs and are biding their time till conditions are perfect so they can begin the cycle of life. As I've mentioned here before, the crappie spawn is an event that takes several weeks to complete. The black crappie spawn will begin and possibly end before the white crappie spawn.

The shallow fishermen are using a variety of techniques including minnows under bobbers, spider rigging, vertical jigging and longline trolling. The reports say it's about 50% minnows and 50% jigs that are catching fish.

My preferred method of catching big crappie is pulling crankbaits. The early morning surface temperatures of 60-62 degrees would make one think this method is only useful in waters above 70 degrees but that is far from the case. I will slow my trolling speed down to around 1.3-1.5 mph, slower than my usual 1.7-2.0 mph in warm weather.

Water depths of 12-25 feet have been my target zone. Strangely enough, we have ran Bombers, Bandits, Arkies, c55s, Flicker Shad and others with no takers. All of our fish are coming on PICO INT cranks. These can be found at Sportsman's Marina, Fast Eddies, Kentucky Lake Outdoors, Hi-Tech Outdoors and online. Colors have varied by

the hour. I always start with a variety of colors and depths and let the crappie tell me what's working. Start out with light/bright colors with a dark color thrown in.

Bass

From my own observations, I would say the bass are moving into shallow water to start spawning. The bass guys and gals are beating the bark off any woody cover they can find. Try shallow running crankbaits, Alabama rigs, Rattle Traps, spinner baits and creature baits. As the water rises above summer pool, more bass will head toward shallow cover but many will stay out on the first break-line closest to shore.

Bluegills and Redears

There are some pre-spawn fish starting to be caught just a bit deeper near their spawning areas. Try drop-shot rigs with a wax worm, a piece of red worm or crawler, or crickets fished at the bottom and retrieved very slowly.

Consider releasing the big fat yellow-bellied spawning female redears. We only keep them if they are deep hooked and bleeding. Letting them complete the spawn will mean better fishing for redears in the future. The big bronze-bellied male redears are much prettier anyway.

Catfish

We haven't started seeing catfish in our creel yet but they will show up soon. They should begin to spawn as the water temperatures get into the higher 60s. Worms or cut-bait fished on bottom will attract bites.

With the rising water, trash has become a huge issue with our trolling. It's next to impossible to keep leaves, pine needles, the little worm-like things off the oak trees, and just general garbage off our lines and baits. One of my clients a few days ago hooked into what we were 100% sure was a big crappie when it surfaced.

As he fought it toward the boat, I realized it was a large piece of bubble-wrap shipping packing. Much of the trash is lurking under the surface. I caution you to check your baits often. With crankbaits, you can see if the rod tip stops vibrating, you need to reel it up and clean the bait off. Longline jigs are much harder to detect trash on.

We are starting to see much more recreational boat traffic. I'm always amused to see the guy on the dock who has a minnow bucket with a couple dozen minnow in one hand and a 24 pack of beer in the other. I hope he uses up the minnows before the beer. A lot of folks aren't aware or choose to ignore the laws that make operating a boat under the influence subject to DUI infractions. That is just one of the many reasons I like to give other boaters a lot of room.

Watch out for all the floating trash off the banks. We saw a log a foot thick with just a tiny bit of it showing above the surface float past us the other day. Those are the high-water gremlins that love propellers and lower units.

Be careful out there. Wear your PFDs when the big engine is running. Leave the alcohol at the bank for later. Watch out for those who won't watch out for you.

Welcome to our slice of Heaven.

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